

the Ridley Island grain and coal terminals near Prince Rupert. Work on the development of these superports is well under way.

Almost as many person-years, more than 70,000, will be brought into being in the three other Provinces of the Canadian West which will, of course, be the principal ultimate beneficiaries of the initiative as a whole. About one-quarter of the funds to be spent by the railways over the years 1983 to 1992 will be spent, we estimate, in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Alberta's share alone should amount to \$2.7 billion. And the largest shares of these expenditures, by the way, should be in metal and wood fabrication, which can be expected to contribute to that diversification of the Alberta economy which is desired by Albertans in general. Manitoba and Saskatchewan will also receive equitable shares of the work to be done. Some 25,000 jobs will be created in these two Provinces in such projects as new repair facilities in Moose Jaw and Winnipeg. Again, as in British Columbia and throughout the nation, there will be related multiplier effects felt by other economic sectors.

● (1120)

[Translation]

The provinces in Central Canada—Ontario and Quebec—will also share in the economic activity resulting from the western transportation measure. We expect that 37 per cent of the \$16.5 billion which the railway companies will be spending will go to Ontario and Quebec. In the short and medium term, the main impact on Ontario and Quebec will be the purchase of rails, rolling stock and locomotives. All this will be the result of an increase in railway capacity in Western Canada. Expenditures on transportation equipment in Ontario and in Quebec should account for 60 per cent of a total of over \$6 billion that will be spent in these two provinces. During the decade, these expenditures, with those in other sectors, are expected to create 135,000 person-years in Ontario and about 60,000 in Quebec. At this point I would like to say that the entire western transportation measure will have no harmful effects on the distribution and routing of grain to Eastern Canada. Up to now, all major studies have shown that the grain transportation and handling industry will experience healthy growth and will continue to do so within the foreseeable future.

[English]

The cumulative economic impact on all four Atlantic Provinces could be 23,500 person-years, half a billion dollars in labour income and total industrial sales of \$1.6 billion.

Those are some of the dry statistics of what I regard as the short and medium-term effects of the economic activity to be generated throughout the country by this most important new Government initiative. It is a plan, I believe, which allows all parts of the country to make significant contributions to this vital national project. It will strengthen all of the regions by building on their own strengths and existing natural advantages.

Western Grain Transportation Act

But I would be remiss if I did not also share with you some of my hopes and expectations about the way the western transportation initiative will strengthen the Canadian economy as a whole. This program is much, much more than a job-creation program although it is surely also that. The 375,000 person-years of work it will bring into being, which will be, as I have said, equitably distributed throughout the country, are an important element in the Government's program for Canadian economic recovery from the world-wide recession.

But the western transportation initiative is also an investment in Canada's future. In the first instance, to be sure, it is an investment in the long-term development of the new Canadian West. You have heard this before, of course, Mr. Speaker, but I assure you that it deserves repetition. The existing rate structure for western rail transport distorts the western Canadian economy and locks it unreasonably into patterns of the past, restricting its flexibility in responding to the challenges of the future. The deadhand of the past restrains the West from making the best use of its natural economic advantages. This is a loss not just to the West; it is a loss to us all.

Without an improved western transportation system, these distortions will continue to exist. As long as the existing rate structure remains, the West will be restricted in its ability to diversify its economy. There will be a disincentive to western Canadian farmers to diversify their production.

Western Canada has many other products that will be in growing demand on world markets as the recovery strengthens, presenting an opportunity for the rapid growth and development of the western economy. As always, the geography of Canada means western producers of all products, grain and non-grain, face a major challenge—getting their products to those world markets. Maintaining the Crow rate compounds the problem by leaving our competitive western producers at the end of an inadequate transportation system. The changes to the Crow provide the impetus and financial leverage required to put in place a transportation system that gives western Canada access to world markets and will enhance our image as a reliable, cost-competitive exporter.

The economic development of the entire west is at stake. And the development of the West on its own terms, utilizing its own economic opportunities, making its own economic decisions is something which can only benefit all Canadians.

● (1125)

[Translation]

Too often, economic issues are discussed as if participants were either winners or losers. That has never been, and should never be, the basic principle of our Canadian economic union. This union should be seen as an agreement under which all Canadians are winners within the context of a wise and properly administered policy. The western transportation measures are one of those wise policies by which all Canadians stand to gain, both now and in the future. That is why these measures deserve the support of all Members of this House.