

imposed upon the people of Canada despite the opposition of every premier of Canada and every region of Canada—

**Mr. Wappel:** And the people of Canada.

**Mr. Tobin:**—and the people of Canada. Then there are the cuts to VIA Rail, again a fundamental service to Canadians, that could give us a chance to go into the future confident and prepared for the year 2000. Those cuts are opposed by every premier of Canada, opposed by the people of Canada. I say to members opposite, and particularly to members who support this cabinet, the back-benchers, that the eyes and the ears of the people of Canada are on those back-benchers. They are watching them. They are weighing their words. They believe the time has come that members have to speak and reflect the values of their constituents and stand up and be counted, not in the name of opposing a particular political Party or supporting another, but in the name of the legitimate aspirations of Canada.

I say to those who choose to remain silent, and I know that many share my views, the people of Canada are becoming increasingly impatient and you ought not to try their patience too far. Make a stand for parliamentary reform, make a stand for Canada, stand for yourself because I know, in your conscience, those opposite cannot support these brutal cuts to VIA Rail.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Before I recognize the hon. member for Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis, I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement Government Orders will be extended by 15 minutes.

**Mr. Layton:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte has today reopened the debate relating to subsidies for VIA Rail. These subsidies totalled over \$600 million in 1988 and supported travellers on some lines to the tune of hundreds of dollars per trip. The hon. member supports the motion that was passed by a committee to the extent that a moratorium be applied to the reductions in the costs of VIA Rail. My question to the hon. member would be: How does he propose to pay for it?

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker—

### *Supply*

**Mr. Layton:** No, I am going to ask two or three questions. I know that the member is anxious to be on his feet and answer another question, but I really wonder about my young friend's position on this. Is he aware that every \$100 million we add to the debt is one day going to be on the backs of our children and grandchildren? How would he propose, other than by fiscal management which this government is introducing, that we reduce the cost of government and reduce the debt in the future?

**Mr. Tobin:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my “not-so-young” friend, who has been here since 1984, that in my experience since 1980 governments at the end of the day have to make choices. I find it really somewhat amazing that my colleague opposite would say: “How are you going to pay for this?” Canadians are asking how it is that when the government makes choices it has no problem displacing three million Canadians—and those are the government's own estimates, not mine—three million Canadians who rode the rails in 1988 and will not do so next year because there is no space for them. Canadians are asking how the government has no trouble displacing those three million Canadians for \$600 million a year, and the government equally has no problem spending \$1 billion so that we can give a couple of Canadians a ride on the American space shuttle program.

The space program cost \$1 billion. I am just giving some examples. It cost \$1 billion to get the Minister of the Environment elected in a by-election. To give one guy a ride, a ticket to the House of Commons, the government laid out \$1 billion during a by-election. I did not hear members opposite saying: “That is an awful ungodly price to pay for Lucien Bouchard”. We could ride six million people, over two years, for the cost of getting the Minister of the Environment into Parliament.

• (1050 )

What I am saying is it is very misleading for the member to stand and say that a figure that represents 0.6 of 1 per cent of the total budget is a tremendous amount of money, and then ask what are we going to cut and how are we going to pay for it. I am suggesting and what the committee is suggesting is that the government is going to have to spend more than the \$600 million. If it truly believes that Canada alone among nations must go into the year 2000 without a rail passenger service, then follow this decision. Let us follow this decision. Let us put more cars and millions more people on the highways,