

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Member that his 90 seconds have expired. The Hon. Member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Parry).

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[Translation]

OLD AGE SECURITY

REQUEST FOR FULL PENSION INDEXATION

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) received a telegram yesterday containing the following resolution, and I quote:

Whereas according to a survey conducted by the National Advisory Council on Aging, Government allowances constitute half of the total income of the elderly in Canada;

Whereas the elderly have paid and are still paying, with good grace, taxes and income tax to ensure they have some protection so they will at least be able to meet their basic needs;

Whereas the Mulroney Government was elected on its promise to eliminate the ceiling on indexation of Old Age Security Pensions imposed by the Trudeau Government;

Whereas Mr. Mulroney has admitted that the measures announced by Mr. Wilson are a violation of the promises made by the Progressive Conservative Party in 1984.

The Quebec Senior Citizen's Federation demands that the Mulroney Government reinstate full cost of living indexation for Old Age Security Pensions, retroactive to January 1, 1985.

Yesterday, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mrs. Bertrand) refused to meet this group. Next Wednesday, the Leader of the New Democratic Party will be meeting the group in Montreal.

As New Democrats, we challenge the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp)—

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise the Hon. Member that his 90 seconds have expired. The Hon. Member for Bow River (Mr. Taylor).

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AGRICULTURE

FARMERS' FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, during the last three years more than 1,400 families lost their farms, while in 1979 there were only 25 foreclosures. Why the difference? Well, in 1979 Canadian agriculture was prospering, with good crops and good prices. As a result, in order to widen their base and increase their productivity, ambitious farmers borrowed capital from banks anxious to lend. Then came 1981 when the prices for wheat and cattle dropped below the break-even point.

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During 1982 and 1983 prices stagnated and interest rates soared, pushing up farmers' debts. Some banks foreclosed, and now there are some 50,000 Canadian farmers experiencing serious financial difficulties. Unless something positive is done, some 1,700 more may go under, and the banks will own a lot of land.

Why do the banks expect repayment when a farmer has no crop? Farming is a long-term business, and not a one or two year operation. If the banks would make their loans over a 20 or 25 year period, most of the farmers would survive. We cannot afford to lose these farmers. Surely when we can send a man to the moon we can solve this problem. Remember, the land will not be moving away, and I do not want the farm families to be moving away either.

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CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

TREATMENT OF COMPANY PENSIONERS

Mr. Bill Gottselig (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House the plight of over 600 CP Rail pensioners and over 400 pensioners' widows in my riding. We learned last week in Moose Jaw that tentative contracts signed by CP Rail and three of its national unions included agreements which eliminated VIA Rail passes for CP employees as well as for pensioners or their widows.

The present employees of CP Rail have the union bargaining team to represent their concerns and have supposedly received something in exchange for the elimination of the passes. While this may not be acceptable to the rank and file of the brotherhoods, they can now vote on whether or not to ratify this agreement. However, what choice do the pensioners have? Who speaks for them at the bargaining table? These pensioners worked hard for many years, often under adverse conditions, with low salaries. They now receive low pensions without the benefit of indexing and, to add insult to injury, they are now to lose their rail passes.

I call on all Hon. Members of the House to contact CP Rail and union officials in their areas, to indicate total disapproval of this agreement. I further call on CP Rail to take leadership in this area, and immediately reinstate the VIA Rail passes for all pensioners.

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[Translation]

THE BUDGET

COMPLEXITY OF PROVISIONS—IMPACT ON SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED BUSINESSES

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard-Anjou): Mr. Speaker, with the exception of accountants and tax lawyers whom small businessmen will have to hire to understand the entire implications of the new budget, very few Canadians will take advantage of those measures allegedly meant to create jobs. This