

Oral Questions

phone book? Why is there an unlisted number for those stations?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I just pointed out to the Hon. Member that the representations that will be judged are those that will be made to the Canadian Transport Commission. It is there to assess the various claims and propositions put forward by Members of Parliament, local residents, or whomever, and to judge whether effective service is being provided. The Hon. Member for Churchill is less than charitable and less than informative in his unwillingness to recognize the major investments being made in northern Manitoba by CN and VIA Rail, substantially improving transportation and passenger services. If he were doing his job as a Member of Parliament he would be prepared to offer a full range of services, rather than picking out one particular point with which he happens to disagree.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL SECURITY

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT PAY 50 PER CENT OF INCREASED SOCIAL BENEFITS FOR YOUNG QUEBECERS

Mr. Louis Duclos (Montmorency-Orléans): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Minister is probably aware of the fact that young welfare recipients in Quebec are asking to have their benefits of \$152 per month raised to the same level as benefits received by welfare recipients over thirty years old.

Could the minister inform the House whether under the Canada Assistance Plan, the federal Government would be prepared to pay 50 per cent of the cost of increasing welfare benefits paid by the Government of Quebec to young welfare recipients in Quebec?

Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, the federal Government would automatically pay Mr. Lévesque's Government, in other words, Quebec, 50 per cent of any increase the Government of Quebec decides to give young welfare recipients. However, although the present monthly amount of \$152 is very low, the federal Government does not have the right, according to the Constitution, to ask or suggest that Quebec increase that amount. On the other hand, if the Government of Quebec, through Mrs. Pauline Marois, should take the initiative, it does not need our permission, and we would automatically reimburse 50 per cent of the amount involved.

[English]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

CONSEQUENCES OF REMOVAL OF LOCAL STATION AGENTS

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Transport. In responding to his last remarks, I recognize the importance of the agreements in northern Manitoba.

If you take away the local agent, which is what the application by CN is, how do you make use of the improvements? What do the people who live in those communities do when the local agent is taken away and the local station is taken down? What do tourists who come to town do when there is no local service?

● (1450)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I expect that that decision would be made once a decision has been made by the CTC. Unlike the Hon. Member who seems to see everything in a pessimistic and negative way, I am confident that the Canadian Transport Commission will carefully weigh all of the evidence presented to it. If, in its judgment, it feels that the station agent should not be removed, it would so decide. If it decides otherwise, then we would obviously take whatever action is required to make sure that there is a full range of services.

The unfortunate part of the Hon. Member's question is that he is already making an assumption what the decision will be before the CTC has had a chance to hear the evidence or make a judgment. I would expect that we would all be much better off if we allowed the CTC to listen to the evidence. If some form of remedial action is then required, I would assure the Hon. Member that I will act in the best interests of the people of the area of Churchill, as I have in the past.

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AGRICULTURE

REQUEST THAT MEAT IMPORTS BE CURTAILED

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Bearing in mind that the red meat industry is in some difficulty with respect to prices and that the long and historically established western packing industry is certainly in some considerable stress, I would like to ask the Minister what action is he taking with respect to curtailing the dumping of northern European beef into Canada, and particularly that from the country of Ireland.

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, if I understand correctly, the inquiry which is deciding whether or not countervailing action should be taken should be finished soon, if it is not finished already. I have not had time to check on it in the last couple of days. I will return to my office shortly and check to see what the situation is at the present time.