

S. O. 31

VIA RAIL

IMPORTANCE TO ATLANTIC CANADA

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy—Royal): Mr. Speaker, VIA Rail is important to the maritime provinces. The Atlantic Limited is the flagship of their operations there. Besides providing a means of affordable transportation and serving as a crucial link in Atlantic Canada's identification with the rest of the nation, it is a major employer with growing revenues and significant ridership.

Maritimers have well supported it. The Government should well encourage that support.

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THE LATE FATHER SEAN O'SULLIVAN

Ms. Sheila Coppins (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay belated tribute to a friend, classmate, parliamentarian, and priest, Father Sean O'Sullivan, whose untimely passing last month left a nation in sorrow.

Father Sean's name was synonymous with courage. In his last fight with leukemia he certainly showed that courage, and in his political career he never hesitated to march to the tune of his own drummer.

Driven by idealism, Father Sean gave up the trappings and the so-called lure of politics to devote his final short years to God's work.

Sean's life was a life of vision and courage. As his friend the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition said, it was a life of triumph.

I knew Sean not as a political opponent but as a classmate and friend. In my first political battle I ran against Sean as President of the Bishop Ryan Social Action Club. I must say that he beat me, trounced me soundly, and taught me a few lessons about politics.

Sean was always devoted to social change, to the betterment of the common person, and to a driving commitment to make his country, his party, and ultimately his church a more responsive and reflective agent of social change.

To his family, his parents Paul and Helen, his brothers, sister, and to his aunt Sister Joan, our heartfelt condolences; and to Father Sean, Godspeed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE ECONOMY

INTEREST RATES—CALL FOR REDUCTION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I am sure you are aware that this country is now in the midst of an interest rate crisis, a crisis that will affect not only the farmers, workers, and small business community, but also people who want to buy homes.

You might recall, Mr. Speaker, that back in 1981 the Conservative Party was howling and complaining in the House about interest rates being much too high. At that time, the real interest rate in Canada was around 6 per cent. Now the real interest rate—the difference between the bank rate and the cost of living—is around 8 per cent, not 6 per cent. It is some 2 per cent higher.

In 1981 the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) were saying that interest rates were too high, they ought to be brought down, and that there ought to be a new Government to bring them down.

I now call upon the Government across the way to stop hiding behind John Crow and the Bank of Canada, and to bring down interest rates in order that the ordinary people in this country have a fair deal.

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LABOUR RELATIONS

CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION STRIKE

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, the federally owned and operated Cape Breton Development Corporation and the International Association of Machinists have been involved in a long and bitter labour dispute. This dispute has gone on for eight weeks. As a result, 3,200 employees of that Crown Corporation are without employment, affecting communities across all of Cape Breton. It is causing havoc and disorder within those communities.

I believe very strongly in the collective bargaining process. However, I would like to ask that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Corbeil) and the Minister responsible for