

In over four years the saving would be \$10 billion. In so doing the government would have enough money to fund VIA Rail as it now exists and even invest in new rolling stock.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I would like to tell the hon. member that questions and comments following an intervention by an hon. member should relate directly to the intervention just made.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I just want to say that we are on the subject of VIA Rail and everything that the member referred to, environmental, financial or whatever, is directly related to the remarks of the hon. member.

With all due respect, Madam Speaker, I believe that any comments we have directed toward that hon. member all have to do with that collective pot we know as VIA Rail.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member can of course debate anything that may relate to VIA Rail, which is the subject of today's motion. Following an hon. member's speech, questions or comments should be related directly to the speech that has just been given in the House. It should not be debate by itself.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With all due respect to the Chair, I think it is essential that we have guidance when you make a ruling such as this. Could you point out, Madam Speaker, if it is permissible, exactly what my hon. colleague said that was not relevant? I thought he was being very relevant.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sure the hon. member from Winnipeg does not at this time want to enter into debate with the Chair. I think that later we could look at Beauchesne's and those rules together.

The time for questions and comments is now over. I recognize on debate the hon. Minister of State for Transport.

Hon. Shirley Martin (Minister of State (Transport)): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to enter into this debate in the House. In listening to the remarks of members opposite in this last hour or so, one would think that we were cutting rail service completely in Canada, that

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there will be no trains left in Canada, that there will be no coast-to-coast service in this country. Nothing is further from the truth.

Yes, we have reduced the services on VIA Rail, and we have reduced them for reasons. They are reasons about which members across the way know. I think it is unfair to the public watching this debate to put forward comments that would make people think that there will be no future rail service in Canada. In fact, that is not true.

This government is committed to building a strong economy, encouraged by incentive and opportunity, an economy which is competitive with the world's trading nations. In order to fully achieve this goal we must create a solid base which will allow our economy to flourish in the coming years.

Measures which seek to control the deficit and reduce the national debt are an essential element of this foundation for the future, an element about which members opposite do not seem to have any concern whatsoever. Equally, measures which seek to establish a sound fiscal framework to sustain continued economic development are also essential to this purpose.

These objectives are reflected in this government's commitment to a sound transportation policy. Transportation is and always will be at the heart of our nation's economy. That is why we have undertaken to provide Canadians with a safe, effective and efficient transportation system. This commitment is the core around which our policy of economic regulatory reform was built.

With the advent of free trade the role played by the transportation system in our economic development has become increasingly vital. As we enter into the next decade and the next century, a cost effective transportation system is essential if Canada is to preserve and enhance its position in world trade. In order to meet this challenge we must make the best use of each mode of transportation: air, rail, marine, car, truck and bus.

Continued subsidization of a mode of transportation which costs more and more and is used less and less is not a sound investment in our future, particularly when that investment is being made with the Canadian taxpayer.