

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, January 17, 1984

The House met at 2 p.m.

● (1405)

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S JOB-CREATION PROGRAMS

Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, the most serious problem in our country, unemployment, is at catastrophic levels. Sadly, the Government's mismanagement of the economy seems to be equalled only by its mishandling of its job-creation programs. The Government's job-creation programs feature no accountability and no forethought. They are sloppily thrown together in a haphazard manner to give the appearance that something is being done. For example, Environment 2000, a program to hire students to plant tree seedlings, not only lacks application forms, but there are not enough seedlings to operate the program properly and there will not be enough available for three years.

Another example of mismanagement is the Canada Works Program. New funding allocations arise sporadically, yet no notification is given to potential applicants. Consequently, a small exclusive club are the beneficiaries. The Canada Works Program seems to exist without a plan or any co-ordination.

Our obligations to the unemployed are not met by throwing money into poorly thought out, poorly administered programs, and boasting of how much money has been spent on job creation, while unemployed Canadians are forced to limp back to UIC. It is our duty and obligation to the unemployed to provide well thought out, workable, and equitable approaches to solving unemployment, rather than buying temporary jobs and sloppily trying to redistribute our declining wealth.

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[Translation]

TRANSPORT

VIA RAIL—THE SITUATION IN THE SAGUENAY-LAC-SAINT-JEAN REGION

Mr. Marcel Dionne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in extending my congratulations to you.

I want to mention in the House a VIA Rail incident which occurred in my riding during the festive season. Hundreds of people were stranded at the station because someone had failed to provide enough passenger cars to accommodate all travelers. In addition, some people were forced to share a baggage car with animals for hours on end and cover close to 300 miles to get to the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region.

We are in 1984, Mr. Speaker, and it is unacceptable that people be treated that way. A few months ago, I advocated much more modern solutions to make it more pleasant for the residents of my region to travel from Chicoutimi and Lac-Saint-Jean to Montreal in much less time. I would urge VIA Rail officials to look into this problem with a view to providing the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region with transportation facilities worthy of the 80s, and showing concern for people who live far from urban centres. I have asked VIA Rail officials to take immediate action and, as spokesman for that region, I am prepared—

Mr. Speaker: I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member, but his time has expired.

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[English]

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

TRIBUTE TO PERSONNEL

Mr. Robert Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, recently I received a letter from a constituent who served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 30 years. He eloquently speaks of one of the most vital components of the nation's defence. He says:

We can talk all we want about the new ships or aircraft and the latest in tanks, but they are only as effective as the men who man them. Without good, dedicated troops they are but machines. I therefore suggest to you that though matters of equipment, politics and budgets are of the utmost importance, the greatest asset that Canada has in national defence are the men who serve. The men of the Armed Forces have suffered badly under various pressures for the last decade, and we must bring them once again to the forefront of society, to give them back that "elan" that is needed to be truly effective. The guys in the forces are good, they know they are good, they know their job, so let's see that they get the pat on the back that they richly deserve.

I heartily agree with the sentiments expressed by this constituent. Too often as an Opposition we criticize, and today I want to bring this matter forward to the attention of the House so that we give the deserved credit to the quality of men and women we have in our Armed Forces.