

Adjournment Debate

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I shall conclude briefly, if I may, by asking what the Prime minister has done and what he is doing about this? He wanders about the country saying that remote areas such as ours do not get their fair share of economic development. And then what does he do about it? Strictly nothing. Meanwhile, in Atlantic Canada, we are faced with a constant erosion of our regional transport system.

[English]

The Council of Maritime Premiers have expressed their concern that the new transportation act emphasizes profitability rather than transportation as a regional development tool. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has turned a deaf ear to those comments.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I shall conclude with the following question: How far will the Minister allow the situation in Moncton to deteriorate? How many jobs will we lose before the Minister takes any action?

[English]

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the Hon. Member for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud). As all Hon. Members know, the transportation system across Canada is under a great deal of pressure. Whether in New Brunswick or in other parts of Canada, we all have to face head-on some of the changes that are occurring at this time. Some of these changes, such as the ones occurring in Moncton, are not easy changes.

The Government is actively encouraging co-operation and the negotiation of a settlement between CGE and the unions involved. This is something the Minister is certainly encouraging as much as possible. It is not simply a question of blaming someone, it is a question of encouraging all parties to participate in constructive discussions and to reach a successful conclusion to the CGE deal.

The Hon. Member has suggested that the Government is not doing anything in Atlantic Canada or the Moncton region. I will not deal with the whole myriad of programs under Employment and Immigration or the regional economic development agreements. In this particular case, a \$4 million special development initiative is in place to help fund the search for new industries and to minimize the impact on affected CN employees. That is a special \$4 million initiative that has been taken in recognition of the serious problem faced by the people of Moncton and the CN employees.

In direct response and follow-up to the question the Minister answered in the House, our most recent figures indicate that accommodation has been found for 551 employees so far. Of these, 54 are eligible for early retirement and 487 positions have been offered to the unions for acceptance in Moncton, Toronto, Montreal and Windsor. Ten positions come under the

general category of "various other", and 317 of these jobs are in Moncton.

● (1825)

Obviously the Government wants to see as many of the CN workers as possible accommodated. It is trying with whatever devices it has to ensure a successful conclusion to the CGE deal and to take any special initiatives possible to satisfy the needs of CN workers.

REFUGEES—DEPORTATION OF IRANIAN STUDENT FROM UNITED STATES. (B) REQUEST FOR CANADIAN ACTION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to review an earlier question which I asked of the Minister of State for Immigration (Mr. Weiner) on November 26. It concerns a 25 year old Iranian student, Akbar Moatamedi, who has sought refugee status in Canada. Mr. Moatamedi speaks English and several other languages. He is facing deportation by the Americans at any moment.

Earlier in the year he was deported by the Americans. He stopped in France and tried to commit suicide rather than face certain persecution and probable death as soon as he touched the tarmac in Iran. Because of that act, France sent him back to the United States where he is currently in a Washington hospital pending a second attempt to deport him back to Iran.

The fact of the matter is that Mr. Moatamedi is facing probable and certain death. He has submitted a list of 10 individuals, including family members and friends who have faced execution in Iran, to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees.

The only reason he was not deported last week was because interest was shown by Canadians and some publicity was generated in Canada. The Americans have allowed additional time to lapse in order to see whether Canada would be willing to take this individual.

There are Canadians in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia who have tried to communicate a message to the Canadian Government indicating that they are perfectly willing and able to sponsor Mr. Moatamedi, to house, to feed and clothe him, and even to employ him. They have rallied, as they rallied in the past for four Iranian refugees in the last year, not only to provide Mr. Moatamedi with a brand new life in Canada, but to save his life. They have committed themselves to the task, and to date the Government has turned its back on their pleas.

They, together with the gentleman's lawyers in Washington and in Toronto, are frantically trying to convince the Government otherwise. It is an eleventh hour plea. To date the Government has only said that it is an American issue and that it cannot do anything according to the regulations.

We know better. It is a complete fabrication of the authority vested in the Minister of State for Immigration. The facts are very clear. The Minister can issue the individual refugee status which would allow him to go through the Canadian process and prove that he would be persecuted and would be faced