

ant task but the responsibility and duty to table in this House a petition signed by 5,786 citizens of the city of St. Thomas, in the county of Elgin, namely my constituency of Elgin. This petition reflects the resentment and the anger of Elgin constituents. I am certain, in turn, it reflects the attitude of Canadians everywhere regarding business failures, loss of family homes, farm bankruptcies and foreclosures which are a direct result of the government's high interest rate policy.

● (1620)

MR. STEVENS—IMPORT QUOTAS ON SHOES AND LEATHER PRODUCTS

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Madam Speaker, I wish to present a petition on behalf of 205 York region residents. These people are gravely concerned about the threat posed by import competition to the leather and shoe industry which is an important source of jobs in the area. They feel action must be taken right away if this industry is to be saved, and that global import quotas, limiting total shoe and leather imports, will keep their jobs in these communities. They urge the Government of Canada to establish and maintain an effective quota system to protect the industry from unfair import competition.

MR. NIELSEN—TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR NORTHERN RESIDENTS

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Madam Speaker, I have the duty to present a petition on behalf of my constituents. The purpose of this petition, signed by 250 Yukon workers, is to indicate to the government that the removal of the moratorium on taxation of northern benefits would be devastating.

The nature of the demand is the continuation of the current moratorium on the taxation of northern benefits to block the tax grab of the government; for the government to adopt a permanent policy to exempt from taxation all special allowances paid to workers in northern and remote areas of Canada, including but not limited to, transportation allowances, housing allowances, meal allowances, northern allowances, special vacation benefits and cash allowances; and for the government to meet with the Canadian National Directors of the United Steelworkers of America for the purpose of hearing the said Canadian National Directors of the United Steelworkers of America on behalf of the over 10,000 Canadian steelworkers who work and live in isolated communities.

The petitioners hope, Madam Speaker, that in your examination of their petition you will find the petition to be in order, sense the urgency and desperation of their plea, and that you might use the discretionary powers vested in your office to allow discussion and referral to committee at the earliest possible moment.

* * *

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Order Paper Questions

Mr. Antonio Yanakis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1,515, 2,633 and 3,257.

I ask, Madam Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[Text]

CNR STAFF REDUCTIONS

Question No. 1,515—**Mr. Mazankowski:**

1. Is the Canadian National Railway cutting staff in its car and equipment departments and, if so, how many persons will be cut in each province?
2. Are such persons involved in inspection, repair or maintenance of equipment and, if so (a) how many (b) how will current rail safety levels be maintained, let alone upgraded, with less personnel?
3. Was the Minister of Transport in contact with the CNR with respect to the cuts and, if so, what were the results of the discussions?

Mr. Robert Bockstael (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): The management of Canadian National Railways advises as follows:

1. In May and June 1980, through a combination of attrition and lay-offs, a reduction of 511 positions occurred in the number of staff associated with the freight car repair activity.

Province	Reduction of positions
Nova Scotia	1
Prince Edward Island	5
New Brunswick	93
Quebec	158
Ontario	90
Manitoba	131
Saskatchewan	33
	511

At that time the railway was experiencing a significant decrease in rail traffic which resulted in a reduced demand for freight cars. Cars needing repairs and not required to handle the traffic offered were placed into the stored surplus category.

2. The affected positions concerned repairs to freight cars. (a) 511 positions in the freight car repair activity, no positions regarding car inspectors. (b) As car inspector positions were not involved, car inspection activities continued to receive high priority.

3. The Minister of Transport was in contact with the railway, was informed of the underlying causes, and was assured that in taking such action Canadian National would continue to ensure a safe and efficient operation.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Question No. 2,633—**Mr. Cossitt:**

1. With reference to the reply to question No. 2,217 which stated in part "it has not been customary to require the CBC to provide such details of its internal management and administration" (a) on how many occasions was a similar reason given in answers to questions on the Order Paper concerning the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (b) what were the exact words of the first question which gave such an answer, including the full answer to the question and the date of the answer?

2. On what date did the corporation come into existence and how long after that date was this "custom" instituted with regard to the answering of questions?