

REQUEST THAT ADVERTISEMENT BE STOPPED

Mr. Bill McKnight (Kindersley-Lloydminster): Mr. Speaker, in light of the statements by his own Department that \$12.5 billion is all that the railroads will invest between now and 1991, and the railroads' statement that there will only be 155,000 jobs created, will he stop this misleading advertisement? In view of his decision not to seek the leadership of his Party and to support the candidate from the Canadian Pacific, will you stop spending taxpayers' money to advertise erroneous information?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will address his remarks to the Chair.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it would help if the Hon. Member stopped making silly, gratuitous statements in the House of Commons. Then we could get down to some serious exchanges in Question Period.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: I see we have rattled their cages again. The fact of the matter is that the change in those estimates does not affect the job factor substantially because part of the reduction in capital investment is due to the reduction in the inflation rate between the time the original forecasts were made and what we have been able to succeed in bringing it down to since that period of time. It only makes good sense that, if you reduce the inflation rate, less capital goes in but you still get the same job impact as a result.

CONTENT OF ADVERTISEMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Transport tell us if the advertisement in *The Financial Post* of March 8 is true?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already explained. Again I would register my—

Mr. Blenkarn: Yes or no.

Mr. Axworthy: We will try to answer the question when we are ready. The fact of the matter is that—

Mr. Blenkarn: It is false.

Mr. Axworthy: —the advertisement that was put into *The Financial Post*, as I said to the previous questioner, is designed to provide information to the Canadian business public because of the opportunities that that capital investment offers for the business community to begin supplying a wide range of new facilities and equipment.

We are presently reforecasting the total expenditure over that period of time in light of a new improved economic condition that this country is facing. We have to revise the numbers because of that new forecast. We will revise them. What is true is that that Western Grain Transportation Bill is

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one of the most important economic investments ever made in the history of this country.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ISSUE NEW ADVERTISEMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): We have a most remarkable situation here. The Minister of Transport has admitted that his advertisement is false, at least in part. He now tells us in the House of Commons which parts, which subparagraphs of his advertisement are true, and consequently which are false.

When will the Government start telling the truth? Is the Government going to issue a new advertisement, paid for by the Liberal Party, because it was their Minister who told the falsehood, that sets forth the true facts? Will he give us an undertaking now that he will stop this lying by advertising at public expense?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Member has a wonderful facility for being able to twist and turn a very simple, basic fact into something that is totally distorted in relation to the opportunity. I would ask the Conservative Party if they are now prepared to say that they do not favour that investment of billions of dollars that will be going into the Canadian economy? Are they opposed to the expansion and modernization of that transportation line? Are they prepared to have an advertisement, paid for by the Conservative Party, which would state for the first time where they stand on western transportation, because we have never heard them say in the House what their stand on the issue was?

REQUEST THAT MINISTER ISSUE ANOTHER ADVERTISEMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister start to tell the truth? Will he issue another advertisement that corrects this false advertisement, paid for by the people of Canada, to advance the interests of the Liberal Party?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, as I explained in the committee, which the Right Hon. Member did not attend—because we went through this examination—the advertisements were originally commissioned some six weeks ago. The new forecasts, which are not even yet completed and will not be completed for another week, revise those forecasts down. I can hardly be expected to be so prescient as to be able to tell six weeks ago what a forecast that will not be available for the next week would have in it.

● (1440)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: If the forecasts are different, we would then change the advertisement.