

Adjournment Debate

program to assist those farmers who wish to undertake alternative enterprises.

Due to concern that involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke conflicts with the objective of having a healthy work environment, six federal departments and agencies have recently restricted smoking in the workplace. It is hoped that this will provide an example for those private and public companies which have not yet put into place smoking policies.

Canadians are letting us know that they are also concerned with current tobacco advertising practices. They became more aware of this issue with the Macdonald sponsorship of amateur skiing and the "Tempo" cigarette advertising campaign. The new 15-cigarette "Export A" pack has also been a worrisome tobacco marketing practice since it makes the product more accessible to young people.

If you take a look at what is being done, Mr. Speaker, you will realize that there is less advertising. Above all, I would like to say that several options to take stronger action on tobacco advertising are currently being considered by the government, and legislative measures remain a possibility.

Of course, any action on tobacco advertising will be taken within the context of a comprehensive approach to the tobacco problem, which has as its goal a smokeless society by the year 2000.

• (1810)

[English]

RAILWAYS—FUTURE OF 551 CN EMPLOYEES AT MONCTON. (B)
NUMBER OF JOBS RETAINED IN MONCTON

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to reply to answers given to me in this House on November 6 by the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) regarding employment at the Moncton shops. The Minister said CN has found accommodation for 551 workers. However, the point I want to make is that 234 of these jobs will be lost to Moncton. If the CN-CGE deal is approved, another 303 positions might be saved. Unfortunately, that scenario is looking more and more unlikely.

• (1815)

The CN-CGE deal is in jeopardy because CN and its unions cannot agree on the waiving of a no-contracting-out clause. I must say that the Government has unwisely put all its eggs in the CGE basket and it is now left with a very serious problem.

The Minister is having real trouble answering questions in the House. He has responded by blaming others for what I say is his own incompetence and inaction. First, the Minister blamed the unions for not agreeing to the sale and for not agreeing to impossible conditions. Second, he has blamed the previous administration for past policies. However, I remind the Minister that he is now head of the Department of Transport and he has the power to intervene and make changes. The fact of the matter is that up until now the

Minister has done absolutely nothing to assist in trying to find a solution to this problem, and he has a clear responsibility in this matter.

The Minister will recall that his predecessor clearly indicated to the people of Moncton and to the workers that the Government would not tolerate any massive lay-offs at the Moncton shops. The Minister must now uphold that commitment. Unfortunately for the Moncton and the New Brunswick area he is not doing so.

Let us have a look at the figures. In September, 1985, 225 employees were informed that they would be laid off temporarily. Those workers have never been recalled. In September, 1986, a further 101 employees received their pink slips. Last month, another 62 were let go. I hear that there might be further lay-offs tomorrow. However, I do not know the numbers but some people have been called in.

The figure at the moment is close to 400, not including those in tomorrow's announcement. The Government and the Minister have completely forgotten their commitment to the people of Moncton. How many lay-offs will it take to constitute a massive lay-off in the eyes of the Government?

Coming back to the CN-CGE deal, Hon. Members will recall that last week I asked the Minister to intervene. I asked him to speak personally to the union leaders because at this stage I believe that only the Minister can break the impasse. If he wanted, he could reassure the unions that the Government will not allow CN to contract out railway work outside the Moncton Shops complex. I believe that would go a long way in terms of reassuring the unions. However, the Minister will not do that. I suppose he would feel quite uncomfortable because he has chosen to criticize publicly the unions for not accepting the deal.

I also say that CN has put its unions in an impossible position. On the one hand it has said it will not extend contracting out beyond Moncton, while on the other hand it has placed contracting out on the bargaining table in its present contract negotiations with its unions. There is also a credibility factor involved here. The unions and the workers in Moncton have been assured many times that there would be no massive lay-offs, that their shops would not close and that they would not be put up for sale. Then, the same workers are being hit with massive lay-offs. How can we blame them for not accepting the deal? They have no faith in what is happening. That is why the workers are refusing to agree and why we are at an impasse.

• (1820)

While this has been happening, it seems that the Minister of Transport has left the whole affair to Premier Hatfield of New Brunswick. Where was the Premier when it was first announced that the shops were to close? I would suggest that if the Premier wants to take the train, he should arrive at the station on time. In this case, he was not on time.