

on parade when the Queen Mother visits Montreal on Saturday. I am expecting a list from my officials this afternoon of the functions they will be fulfilling.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

DISTRIBUTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that very satisfactory answer. I would also like to ask him this.

Will the Minister ensure that every man in the militia also shares equally in its tasks, including what Captain Conway of the Watch calls "invaluable administrative work", which he apparently relegated to women only?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the administration work is not relegated to women only. Indeed, the distinction that exists within the Black Watch is that administrative personnel who are not members of the infantry were not to be involved in the trooping of the colour. Both women and men are involved in that administrative work. The distinction was not made on the basis of whether a person was male or female. But I assure the House that women will be on parade when the Black Watch is parading on the weekend.

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RAILWAYS

RAIL CAR INDUSTRY—STEELWORKERS' ACTION PLAN

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Minister has made that more precise since Captain Conway said, according to his comments in the newspaper: "There's a lot of paperwork involved with this ceremony and every girl is necessary to get it done . . ."

However, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Next question!

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transport will know that this is Railway Industry Week in Canada. In Hamilton on Monday we had a chance to meet with the United Steelworkers of America who were asking the Government what specific response it has to the seven-point plan of action which has been proposed by steelworkers to save the railway car industry in Canada.

Given that the Minister was asked a similar question in the last two weeks by our transportation critic, what specific

answers has he for the steelworkers with respect to the Government's response to the railway action plan?

• (1500)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should reply in the area of national defence. However, I think it is quite obvious that the nature of the rail transportation system in Canada has changed. The demand for rail cars has changed because of the faster turn around time. The Government has taken various actions in connection with trying to improve the demand for cars. For example, as of June 1 the Department of National Revenue is tightening up the regulations that apply to the leasing of U.S. rail cars on a temporary basis.

Incidentally, CN is purchasing 200 new centre beam flat cars this year from National Steel Company which was the low bidder on a competitive tender.

The demand for cars is not present for a number of reasons and we must balance that against the fact that we want our railways to be as low cost as possible and as competitive as possible, so we are not in a position to force them to buy cars that they do not feel they need.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the next Liberal Member of Parliament for Hamilton Mountain, Elizabeth Phinney, is here in Ottawa today. She specifically asked me to ask the Minister—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh! Order.

Ms. Copps: Is it not true that the reason he is backing off on the steelworkers' action plan is because he is sacrificing the railway car industry on the altar of free trade with respect to the Americans? Is that not the real reason?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be able to advise the Hon. Member that the next Progressive Conservative Member for the district of St. John's East, Mr. Tom Hickey, was in the gallery earlier this afternoon.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: I am sorry that our soon-to-be colleague has left the gallery, but I will pass on to him the warm plaudits of the House of Commons.

With respect to the Hon. Member's friend who is running in the Hamilton Mountain district—futilely I hope—hopefully she does not have the same kind of phobias about free trade as are exhibited by the paranoid Member who asked me that question.