

## HEALTH

DISCUSSION OF COST OF DRUGS TO SENIOR CITIZENS AT  
CONFERENCE ON OLD AGE PENSIONS

**Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the meeting scheduled for next Friday between the minister and his provincial counterparts to discuss the long overdue increase in old age security pensions, may I ask whether drug care will be discussed having in mind the difficult problem posed by the cost of medication for ailing senior citizens?

[Translation]

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** No, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

**Mr. Rynard:** A supplementary question. I wonder whether the minister would put this on the agenda for discussion?

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## CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

REPRESENTATIONS RESPECTING ABOLISHING OF  
CERTAIN TELECOMMUNICATION JOBS

**Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Transport on the very urgent matter of job abolishment by Canadian National Telecommunications. The CN Telecommunications union has been informed that their public telegraph service members are to suffer severe job abolishment in their respective trades. I wrote to the minister on this matter—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Would the hon. member resume his seat? The hon. member has the floor for the purpose of asking a question and should ask it as quickly as possible.

**Mr. McKenzie:** I am at the question now, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister assure the House and the union that these lay-offs will not take place? Also, is the CNR trying to get out of the telecommunication business?

**Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would receive a faster answer if he addressed the question to the proper minister, the Minister of Communications.

**An hon. Member:** Oh, come on!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

[Later:]

ABOLISHING OF CERTAIN TELECOMMUNICATION JOBS—  
PRIORITY FOR EMPLOYMENT IN POST OFFICE TELEPOST  
SERVICE

**Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris):** Mr. Speaker, my question is supplementary to the one asked by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre and is directed to the Postmaster General. Is it the minister's intention to estab-

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lish a telepost service within the Post Office department and, if so, will the employees who are laid off by CN-CP Telecommunications be given priority in filling these new positions?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, the telepost is only used to complement the present mail and telegram services. Hence, I cannot accept the hon. member's statement that employees of the Canadian National would be laid off because of this service since it is only offered to people who are already using Telex.

[English]

**Mr. Dinsdale:** A further supplementary, Mr. Speaker, this time to the Minister of Communications. In the event of the lay-offs referred to by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, can the minister give the House an assurance that job security, no matter how it is accomplished, whether through the new branch being contemplated by the Post Office, will be assured to the employees affected?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. It seems to me that this question is hypothetical.

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## SOCIAL SECURITY

OLD AGE PENSIONS—POSSIBLE LOWER AGE OF  
ELIGIBILITY—PROVISION OF PENSION FOR WIFE UNDER  
65 WHOSE HUSBAND RECEIVING PAYMENT

**Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare is related to the meeting next week between the federal and provincial ministers of health. Is the government considering lowering the eligibility age for the old age pension and, second, is the government considering providing a pension for the wife of a husband who receives the old age pension even though the wife has not reached the age of 65?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have serious doubts about this kind of question. The hon. member will appreciate that it anticipates a bill to come before the House.

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## ROBERT BURNS

## ANNIVERSARY OF BIRTH

**Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey-White Rock):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the attention of the right hon. the Prime Minister. Is he aware of the fact that today marks the anniversary of the birth of the world's greatest poet, Robert Burns?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I perhaps would like to qualify on the grounds of poetry, but I have on my left a man who can qualify by having the