

*Points of Order*

contracted AIDS through the blood system, I indicated that the government was prepared to sit down and discuss with Thalidomide victims and others their particular circumstances. We have been continuing to have those discussions. I think it is appropriate that any answer that we have to convey to them be conveyed to them directly as opposed to being conveyed on the floor of the House of Commons.

This is a matter to which we assign considerable importance and we will do everything we can to reach an agreement which is fair and compassionate and which recognizes the needs of the people involved.

**Mr. Speaker:** This will be the last question. The hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre.

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## ATLANTIC CANADA

**Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Contrary to all the evidence, the Prime Minister says that there is no crisis in Atlantic Canada, yet it is his government that has added to Atlantic Canada's problems by the proposed cancellation of the At & East program.

Despite the fact that this bill has not even been debated in the House, I have learned that the railways have been instructed by the government that all new contracts after July 16, 1989, would not receive the At & East rate and that all extended permits at the At & East rate were to end yesterday.

Because of this program the elevator at Saint John has announced that it will be closing at the end of February, and that is only the beginning. The loss of this program means the abandonment of railways and the possible closure of Atlantic Canada's only flour mill.

My question is very simple. Given the fact that this program has injected some \$26 million and 250 jobs annually into Atlantic Canada, and given the fact that his bill has not even been debated in the House, will the Minister admit that his department has improperly instructed the railways to boost their rates on shipments of grain and flour to Atlantic Canada?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to consider the information provided by my colleague about the company and I will get back to the hon. member. Once again, I do not believe

that is the fact, but I would like to check that out and I will come back to the hon. member.

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## POINTS OF ORDER

## COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD

**Mr. Speaker:** I have a point of order from the Hon. Minister of Transport.

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm what the Prime Minister said during Question Period in response to the question from the hon. member for Windsor West. Mr. Brian Gallery has resigned from CN from both positions.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Winnipeg—Transcona on a point of order.

## COMMENTS DURING DEBATE

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, my point of order arises from a claim made by the Minister of the Environment in the House earlier today with respect to the motion before the House which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should move to complete the national park system (land and marine) by the year 2000 and should implement the recommendation of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Report) that that Canada protect at least 12 percent of land and marine zones.

The Minister of the Environment made a procedural claim with respect to this motion to the effect that it is a non-confidence motion. This motion is not a non-confidence motion. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that as a result of the changes to the Standing Orders brought in by the recommendations of the McGrath report, as it is popularly known, the language of confidence was taken out of the Standing Orders having to do with opposition days. So for the Minister of the Environment to get up and suggest that he could not support this motion because this is a motion of confidence is completely false. This is not a motion of confidence. It is only a motion of confidence in the political sense if the Prime Minister chooses to make this motion a matter of confidence, and one can only ask why the Prime Minister would decide to do that.

Did the government fall when we passed the resolution on an opposition day having to do with South Moresby? Was that a matter of confidence? The fact of the matter is this is not a motion of non-confidence. It is a motion on which members of the cabinet, government back-benchers, opposition back-benchers, everyone has