

minister has promised that she would intervene on behalf of the people of the Gaspé Peninsula to obtain coverage for that area. Could she tell the House whether the requests made by the population of the Gaspé Peninsula to Télécipital will soon be answered?

Hon. Jeanne Sauvé (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, I am well aware of the problem experienced when Télécipital began broadcasting its programs in the Gaspé Peninsula. I have communicated with the authorities of Télécipital. There are three or four options which would enable the residents of Cap Chat, Tourelle and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts who are situated in a kind of small enclave to provide that service in a rather short time. I think that changing the direction of the antenna would make it possible to provide both services so eagerly expected.

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[English]

FINANCE

INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. The Anti-Inflation Board third-year report released just this week indicates that, on a national accounts basis, federal government spending went up 13 per cent in 1977 as well as in 1978. That is approximately 3 per cent higher than the gross national product increase for each of those years.

Would the Minister of Finance tell us whether he agrees with the national accounts calculation of the AIB?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Anti-Inflation Board uses a different base than the one used by the government. For our purposes, the base is taken over a period of years. We have managed—and the same will be the case for the third year in a row—to keep growth below the growth of the gross national product.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Speaker, the minister says, “for our purposes”. Presumably, the government has used a certain base for political purposes. Would the minister go further and tell us what is wrong with the AIB figures? Do they not represent a fair presentation, namely, 13 per cent actual growth in each of those years, compared with growth of roughly 10 per cent in the gross national product?

Second, would the minister tell the House what he had in mind at various private meetings when he said that, if necessary, the government would extend the mandate of the AIB beyond December 31?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, we have said repeatedly that the Anti-Inflation Board would complete its work by the end of 1978, but that an evaluation of company reports would have to be made for part of the year, which work would probably be

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completed towards the middle of 1979. As for the figures we use in assessing government expenditures, we use those of the public accounts of Canada which really are the most acceptable basis in all fields.

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[English]

TRANSPORT

NORTH SYDNEY, N.S.—CUTBACKS IN EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY CNR AND CN MARINE

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. Is the minister in receipt of a telegram from several unions involved in the work force of Canadian National and CN Marine at North Sydney, requesting him to meet with them concerning the drastic and continual cutbacks in employment opportunities in the shipping of freight to Newfoundland through that port?

If the minister is in receipt of such a telegram, copies of which went to cabinet representatives in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, would he be good enough to advise whether he could arrange the requested meeting at a location convenient to him, as he was good enough to do some years ago?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport and Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I have not yet seen the telegram to which the hon. member refers, but I have had discussions with my colleagues, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Deputy Prime Minister, about their interest in our examining the employment situation and the implications of changes being made in the Port aux Basques and North Sydney areas. I will certainly look seriously at the question of the kind of meeting which may be helpful in resolving these difficulties.

MOVEMENT OF GRAIN—AVAILABILITY OF BOXCARS

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board. I am sure the minister is aware that nearly all elevators on the prairies are plugged, that there is space at the Thunder Bay terminal and that that route will be freezing up at about Christmastime. There will be an emergency soon if the grain in these elevators is not moved quickly.

Would the minister use his good offices to demand that CPR repair quickly some of its boxcars and that both CN and CP, on an emergency basis, put boxcars on their lines to haul grain to Thunder Bay before freeze-up?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport and Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I will certainly be glad to convey to Canadian Pacific that the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville agrees with me that it would be useful if Canadian Pacific undertook additional repairs of boxcars. I am sure that when CP learns that the hon. member is on the same side as I on the argument, it will give way.