

world through successful trade negotiations with the United States. We do not accept the idea that we should not be entering into negotiations to try to improve the lot of Canadian workers and the Canadian economy.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

WESTERN REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Transport I will direct my question to the Prime Minister. Over the weekend it was confirmed that at the last board meeting of the CNR a major plan of reorganization was considered which would result in substantially reducing senior management personnel responsibilities in the cities of Winnipeg and Edmonton.

As 70 per cent of CN's operations take place in western Canada, this would be another major blow to a part of the country which is already frustrated by the actions of the Government.

Can the Prime Minister give assurances that CN will not be allowed to switch any senior personnel under its reorganization plans, or downgrade or downsize the management responsibilities which are presently located in western Canada?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, CN has in fact denied such speculative reports. A press release was issued which states:

Ron Lawless, the company's president and chief executive officer, said that regional offices in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton will remain.

It continues:

Nor will there be any relocation of company personnel, including senior officers, from the regions to corporate headquarters in Montreal," he said.

"On the contrary, CN will maintain—and in some respects likely enhance—its regional presence, particularly in Western Canada where 70 per cent of our business is generated"—

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I remind the Deputy Prime Minister that the speculative report came from a member of his own caucus, the Member for Edmonton South.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That's not true.

CORPORATION'S REORGANIZATION PLAN

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that western Canadians have experienced two and a half years of broken promises by the CN.

Can we get an assurance that before any final decisions are made the proposed reorganization plan will be made public and that Members of Parliament from both the Alberta and

Manitoba regions, plus the mayors of the cities there and the Premiers of those provinces, will be given the opportunity to look at that plan, comment upon it, and determine whether the impact will be what Mr. Lawless says it will be or what we have seen in the last two and a half years, that is, CN withdrawing from western Canada?

• (1440)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what the Hon. Member wants. The speculation was escalated by a Liberal mayor who found it convenient to seize upon the opportunity. No decision of such a nature has been made and I simply quote the president, Ron Lawless, who was very clear and categorical. There is no need for me to reinforce that assurance. Clearly, the release speaks for itself.

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ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

CONSTITUTIONAL ENTRENCHMENT

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. After the First Ministers' Conference I asked the Prime Minister what the Government would do to ease the burden of failure upon Canada's first peoples. Since then the Prime Minister has taken credit for the Meech Lake Accord which, despite its qualities, ignores and therefore insults aboriginal people. Will the Prime Minister at least tell the House when he will propose a schedule for continuing constitutional discussions aimed at entrenching the aboriginal peoples' right to self-government in the Constitution of Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not take any credit for the Meech Lake Accord. The Leader of the New Democratic Party was kind enough to give a little to me, and I thank him for that. It was not a partisan gesture, nor is it being construed across the country in that regard.

Inasmuch as my hon. friend raises the question of aboriginal rights and concerns, I am sure he would be well acquainted with the vigorous effort of the Government of Canada and myself in trying to bring about a degree of justice in favour of the aboriginal peoples of Canada at the two aboriginal conferences which I had the honour of chairing. We were unsuccessful for reasons that are well known to my hon. friend.

I indicated at that time that once we got through the important negotiations which turned out to be successful in regard to the Province of Quebec, the Parliament of Canada and the Government of Canada ought vigorously to turn their attention again to securing a degree of justice for native peoples of Canada and that is what this Government proposes to do.