

local business is by advertising only the toll-free numbers in the local telephone directories.

For example, in the community of Ilford, CN is listed with one 1-800 number and VIA is listed with one 1-800 number. Pikwitonei, CN has one 1-800 number, and there is no VIA number listed. In Thicket Portage both CN and VIA have 1-800 numbers. In Wabowden both CN and VIA have 1-800 numbers. In Cranberry Portage there are eight CN numbers and two VIA numbers, all of which are 1-800 numbers.

The point is that CN, with the support of VIA, is trying to take away the jobs of the local station agents but at the same time, in order to justify taking away those jobs, it has deliberately not advertised the existence of local facilities and local staff for a number of years. Such lack of service and lack of aggressiveness by CN and VIA just prove that the railways are trying to destroy the service that they are supposed to be providing.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

COMPENSATION SOUGHT FOR CROP LOSSES IN LANAUDIÈRE REGION OF QUEBEC

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, for the third time, I wish to draw the attention of the House to the fact that, on September 13, 1983, the Lanaudière Federation of the UPA told the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) about the seriousness of the problems caused by the drought in area last summer.

In October 1983, the four areas concerned, that are represented by 12 to 15 federal Members of Parliament, including myself, again advised the minister of the seriousness of the situation. All the formal and informal discussions which followed that meeting clearly showed how desperate it was. However, the federal Minister is now refusing to provide financial assistance to these farmers who are in a desperate situation.

In his reply to Mr. Garon on May 11, the Minister of Agriculture stated that he did not believe such an intervention as requested by his Quebec counterpart was justified in view of the existence of an adequate crop insurance system. In fact, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues from Quebec, on the other side of the House, are perfectly aware that the crop insurance plan does not protect the farmers and does not provide replacement value or compensate for hay of lower quality.

In spite of all that, the Minister is refusing to provide direct assistance to the farmers even though this assistance would be justified and has already been provided in other areas in Canada; he is still saying that the crop insurance plan could correct the situation, which is absolutely—

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately, the time allotted to the Hon. Member has expired.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

FUNDING OF JOB-CREATION PROGRAMS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister and of the Minister of Finance—

Mr. Rossi: And the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The Leader of the Opposition is in my friend's riding, making sure that he will not be back after the next election.

I want to address my remarks to the Acting Prime Minister. It concerns the horrendous unemployment statistics that were announced last Friday and which are a cancer on our nation that will not go away. My question is addressed particularly with respect to the fact that we now have hard evidence to the effect that moneys for employment opportunities, to be invested in capital projects, are being withheld by regional Ministers for political purposes, not to be announced until the time of an election this summer or next fall. We did not get an assurance from the Acting Prime Minister that this practice would stop.

I can give the Minister some examples of moneys that have not yet been expended but which could be used right now when thousands of high school students across the nation will be coming into the workforce. There is a \$40 million fund with respect to the Special Employment Initiatives Program. There is money not now being released? Why is the Government persisting in carrying out its political activities on the backs of the unemployed of the nation?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I think that a few of my colleagues and myself gave all the necessary explanations on Friday. We listed all the programs which had been implemented for some time in all sectors such as the creation of jobs for the young and not so young, the training program, another one for young people in the fisheries sector and in the environment sector. We listed all those programs, and complete lists are available to the Hon. Member.

Obviously, I have never heard anything about regional Ministers allegedly delaying the implementation of those programs. I think they are more sensible than that. It is in our own interest to create jobs and promote job creation as rapidly as possible. I cannot imagine where the Hon. Member has heard such remarks. As to the western grain stabilization