

Minister was explaining another very important initiative taken by the Government. I refer to the Canadian Rural Transition Program.

FARM DEBT REVIEW PROGRAM

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. Could the Minister tell us if the need to identify the approximately 20 per cent of farmers that the Government has decided will have to leave farming is the reason that there is a lack of effective deterrence in the Farm Debt Review Program which he put before the House?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am amazed that we continue to hear questions of this kind. In the past the previous Government, aided by the New Democratic Party—

Mr. de Jong: But you guys were going to be better.

Mr. Wise: —did absolutely nothing for Canadian agriculture. As a result of mismanagement by that Government interest rates increased from about 10 per cent to 24 per cent. They added an input cost of well over \$2 billion. They sat idly on their hands, with the support of the NDP, and did absolutely nothing.

Mr. Althouse: What support of the NDP? You guys supported the Bank Act. We were the only ones who opposed it.

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CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

END TO WORKERS' OCCUPATION OF BUILDING

Mr. Lawrence I. O'Neil (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. Yesterday the Minister indicated that he was taking a course of action which he hoped would resolve the occupation of the mine building owned by the Cape Breton Development Corporation. Can the Minister tell the House whether those efforts have been successful?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Acting Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform all Members of the House that the sit-in has been discontinued. Arrangements are now being made for representatives of the miners, management, and the board to meet with senior officials of my Department. I would like to thank the Hon. Member, Premier Buchanan of the Province of Nova Scotia, and other Members for the interest they have shown in this very important matter.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

POSSIBLE LOSS OF JOBS AT MONCTON SHOPS

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport.

[English]

Yesterday the Minister accused me of distorting figures when I used the figure of 600 to represent the jobs lost at the Moncton shops. Does the Minister deny that 225 jobs were lost last fall and that a further 437 jobs will be lost on account of the sale? To what total do these figures amount? He may use a pencil.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Acting Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what that has to do with the recent announcement made by CN. I stand by the statement in the CN press release. Mr. Lawless, the President of CNR, said that when the agreement is reached between CN and Canadian General Electric, all 1,022 shop employees should either retain jobs or be accommodated through existing benefit plans. I stand by that.

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): That means the jobs are going.

[Translation]

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Speaker, the answer to my first question is 662.

[English]

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, when is the Minister going to stand up and act like a responsible Minister and protect the jobs of Atlantic Canadians? Is he saying that as the Minister responsible for regional development and transport he is going to wash his hands of the whole matter and let CN do whatever it wants?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Acting Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Hon. Member opposite who obviously does not want to have a locomotive manufacturing plant in Moncton—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: —we are taking positive steps to ensure that there is a long, stable future for the workers of Moncton—

Mr. Dingwall: Oh, sit down.

Mr. Mazankowski: —and indeed for the Moncton area.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEES' RIGHTS

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. We hope