

Adjournment Debate

is meeting with the Coal Association of Canada, representing coal producers as well as Canadian National and Canadian Pacific. Also, on November 25, Transport Canada and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources will be meeting with Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and Thunder Bay Terminal and Great Lakes freight operators.

Furthermore, in September Environment Canada initiated a macro-economic study to build upon the socio-economic information generated by the task force. The study will deal with some aspects not addressed by the task force, such as the effect of increased electricity prices in Ontario on product prices and markets.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT—FUTURE OF WINNIPEG RAIL SHOPS.
(B) AEROSPACE INDUSTRY INQUIRY

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I want to follow up on a question which I directed to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) the week before we recessed. It concerned the future of the Winnipeg economy and, of course, the awarding of the contract for the maintenance of the CF-18 to Canadair in Montreal instead of to Bristol Aerospace in Winnipeg where a great many people thought it ought to have gone on the basis of financial and technical merit.

Having just spent a week in Winnipeg, and after shovelling snow, I had an opportunity to meet with many people who lived beyond my particular street.

Mr. Marchi: I was there too.

Mr. Blaikie: The Hon. Member was there for a conference on immigrant women. He had the opportunity of experiencing something which occurs once in every 20 years in Winnipeg—the blizzard.

In any event, I wanted to report to the House the incredible unanimity with which Manitobans regard this decision, the incredible unanimity of contempt for both the process and the outcome of the particular decision.

I rose in the House to ask the Prime Minister whether or not a Minister would make a statement about just what the Government had in mind for Winnipeg. There is a great deal of general rhetoric about western Canada. We hear a lot about the \$1 billion farm aid program for grain producers, which is all well and good. We hear about the things which have been done for the oil and gas sector in Alberta. However, I was asking the Prime Minister whether or not someone would stand and give Winnipeg an idea of what kind of future the federal Government had in mind for it.

We in Winnipeg are certainly in a position where we have grave doubts about whether the Government has any future at all in mind for Winnipeg. Our only experience since September, 1984 has been bad news. It is not like the joke about first the good news and then the bad news, or first the bad news and then the good news. There has been nothing but bad news. The awarding of the CF-18 contract to Montreal was really the icing on the cake.

In that context I said in the House, and I say it again: What does the Government have in mind for Winnipeg? All we have seen is the seemingly indefinite deferral of the VIA Rail shop which was supposed to have been built in Winnipeg. It was planned to have been built but it was cancelled by the Conservatives.

● (1820)

We saw the cancellation of the manufacturing technology centre. The building is there but the program is not. We had a provincial Government willing to contribute, but a federal Government that wanted to go ahead only with rehabilitating one-third of the 1,000 boxcars which could have been used in Churchill. CN said that was all it needed. Then, just a few months ago, sure as shooting, when there was trouble in the other ports, CN said it did not have enough cars to take all the grain to Churchill. We have seen the putting off from one year to the next of the needed building of a new diesel or motive power shop in Transcona.

The Government talks about giving money away here and there, the latest being I do not know how many millions of dollars which may be going to preserve an automotive plant in Ste. Thérèse, Quebec. Yet the one thing we know we are going to have for the foreseeable future is the railway. We know it needs new facilities. People are working in shops built in 1909 and 1910. How much foresight does it take to say that rebuilding these would be an investment well made? Yet the money that CN would like to spend on that keeps getting delayed from year to year by the Government. It is an investment that will never go somewhere else. It will not trail off down to the U.S. There is no risk at all involved in building the necessary infrastructure for our transportation system. Yet it is put off and put off and put off. There is just a total lack of foresight and it is becoming very, very irritating to anyone who knows anything about it. There is continued reluctance by the Government to go ahead with the things we know need to be done to develop and maintain the Port of Churchill, as well as the building of lightweight hopper cars.

I am also interested in the future of Versatile in Winnipeg. I met with representatives of the Canadian Auto Workers while I was in my constituency last week. They have been trying to get a meeting with the Hon. Member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) to discuss what the Government is doing to make sure the 1,000 unemployed there now find their way back to work through arrangements which we hope the Government is working on. They have been unable to get a meeting with him. I can understand why Tory Members from Manitoba are not in a big hurry to meet with anyone these days, but these people have been trying to get the meeting for weeks and I hope this does not turn out to be another example of how Manitoba is neglected by the federal Government.

I repeat what I said in the question I am following up today. We need a statement from this Government about how it sees the future of Winnipeg. There were certain understandings between the federal and provincial Governments that the