

Adjournment Debate

cars from privately owned railways? That would be a separate issue. Perhaps, if CNR were privatized, it could operate in the real world rather than relying on the taxpayer, that poor union stiff who is being sucked dry by the three levels of government simply because of the ideology that CNR must be a Crown corporation.

CNR is continually reviewing all its railway operations to improve productivity, and it has to do that in the sense of long-term technological and industrial trends. A reclamation yard salvages parts of the retired equipment for repair and dismantles the rest for sale to scrap dealers.

As my friend opposite has said, the size of the fleet has declined substantially. Earlier this year, the entire Moncton yard was closed down. That left London, Ontario, and Winnipeg. The reason, I am told, that it is being concentrated in London is that the reclamation yard is next to the scrap recycling industry in Ontario. It gets back to that tradition of western complaints—

Mr. Blaikie: The one in Winnipeg is close to the recycling in Manitoba.

Mr. Thacker: Part of the reason it is in Ontario is that it is next to that huge recycling industry. This gets back to the typical complaint we have in the West which is that, because Ontario has a large population and is close to the Great Lakes and that huge population in the United States, industry wants to go there. The solution for us in the West, of course, is to have an increase in population. That is the real solution to our problems. All the other things, such as more representatives in Parliament and more Senate reform weighted to the regions, are side issues. We really need population. If there were 15 million people in the West, we would have power. I am sure the Hon. Member agrees with that.

There are 43 positions in Winnipeg affected by this initiative. Twelve are eligible for early retirement and twenty-two can qualify for CN's employment security program, which means they cannot be laid off if they are willing to accept work available at any location in their region by exercising seniority or filling vacant positions. The remaining workers have been in the employ of the railway for between one year and seven years. They are eligible for a combined CN and UIC job security payment. It provides up to 80 per cent of their job rate for a period determined by their length of service.

The closure of the dismantling yard does not however impact on the repair facility or the operation of the railway's Transcona main shops which employ some 2,200 workers, 100 more than last year. In the greater Winnipeg area CN's total employment is in excess of 6,000 people. I wish we had that in Lethbridge.

HEALTH—AIDS DISEASE—PUBLIC EDUCATION/FUNDING OF
FEDERAL CENTRE FOR AIDS

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have this opportunity to comment further on my

questions to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) of May 18 regarding the need for government leadership and funding in the urgent fight against the AIDS epidemic. I want to begin by acknowledging the Minister's speech in Winnipeg yesterday, giving the broad outlines of the Government's plans to combat AIDS over the next five years.

At least the Government now seems to be taking AIDS seriously. We deeply regret, however, the lengthy delays in government action in the last two years while people died. Canada has fallen far behind international expectations.

Nearly 1,000 Canadians have died of AIDS. Nearly 800 others are diagnosed as having AIDS and an estimated further 50,000 people are carrying the HIV virus. Only now is the federal Government starting to fund a comprehensive attack on this dreadful epidemic.

For months, the Cabinet even held up operational funding that had been budgeted previously for the Canadian information centre for AIDS. While I am glad that a start is being made as a result of the Minister's announcement, I want to make several points and cautions tonight.

First, the new federal government funding, \$129 million spread over the next five years, must be measured against the immense problem which is facing us. While it is a welcome beginning, the Government must realize that it is only a first step toward a full-scale fight against AIDS. By comparison, the 1989 U.S. Budget proposed by President Reagan sets aside \$1.3 billion for AIDS research and treatment.

Second, we are worried that the funds may not be directed appropriately and efficiently in the all out campaign against AIDS that is required. All the money in the world will not turn the tide against AIDS if it is squandered, if government policies are misdirected, or if the Government lacks the political will to address sensitive issues such as contraception in very direct, explicit ways.

• (1815)

Third, I am convinced by my consultations with the medical health officer in Vancouver that the most appropriate and effective way of co-ordinating both public education and support programs for AIDS patients is through the metropolitan and regional health centres, which should co-ordinate their efforts nationally and share successful techniques. They are doing the job now, they have lots of ideas, but they have not had the funds to get going in a comprehensive way.

Therefore, I urge the Minister to decentralize funding through local health authorities in major centres where there is a concentration of AIDS. The federal role is to co-ordinate such efforts, share information, and help conduct research. However, we need to get the money out there to the front line as quickly as possible. People have been waiting a long time.

I have written to the Minister and spoken in this House about the policies of the Department of National Health and Welfare regarding the provision of treatment drugs for people