

finance department official plus a senior direct political representative of the minister himself have told Steelworkers' Union officials to make up the miners' tax losses by getting the additional money at the bargaining table. To paraphrase their advice, they said: "The mining companies get lots of help—"

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member please get to his question?

Mr. Kristiansen: There are just three words to go, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I did ask the hon. member to go straight to his question. That means he must not finish his paragraph.

Mr. Kristiansen: Considering that some of these miners will now have to pay up to \$7,000 more in taxes and will have to demand and obtain an extra \$14,000 per year in wages, which is a \$7 per hour increase, will the minister inform the House whether or not he stands by his staff and the advice given by them to the USWA? If the minister does not, what advice does he have for the isolated workers from whom he is grabbing up to \$7,000 a year each in additional taxes?

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Kristiansen: If the minister does, how can he square suggestions of immediate wage increases of \$7 per hour with his appeals for restraint and the threat of wage controls?

Mr. Lawrence: Yes or no.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You will have to reread the question.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, in the budget I extended the remission for another year and said that it was my intention to develop within that period an expenditure program that would deal with the problem we have up to the present time dealt with through the tax system. All the dire comments made by the hon. member are quite unjustified in view of the forthcoming attitude which I took on this subject in the budget.

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CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

QUERY RESPECTING DISMANTLING OF COMPANY

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. The decision made last week by Canadian National Railways to lay off 1,800 employees comes after the minister himself approved drastic reductions in VIA Rail passenger service and also drastic reductions in CN Express offices across the country. Will the minister inform the House whether he has received a mandate from the Prime Minister to preside over the dissolution of

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Canadian National, especially in eastern Canada, or is the minister dismantling Canadian National on his own initiative?

Mr. McKnight: It's a make-work program.

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I think that most people in Canada realize that the needs of transportation in this country are so great that there is not enough of what we call new money around to take care of it all. Most people agree that the recycling of old money, as I call it, is a necessary exercise. I think most Canadians will want the government to make the best use of their taxes. That is what we are doing in the case of CN Express and in the case of VIA Rail.

While I am on my feet, Madam Speaker, I now have my note about the airport in Charlottetown. Agreement has been reached with the carriers, a Treasury Board submission is being prepared, design work is being done, tenders will be called in 1982, and construction will begin in 1983.

TIMING OF LAY-OFFS

Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister. He talks about the need for more money to make possible railway expansion. Can the minister explain why the 1,800 lay-offs which have come at the same time as Canadian National has reported a net profit of \$400 million over the last two years? These lay-offs also come at a time when the private carrier, Canadian Pacific, has made no such plans for lay-offs. Will the minister explain that anomaly? How does the minister justify that anomaly in light of the fact that Canadian National's own advertising claims that CN is more than a business, that it is also a public responsibility? Where is the public responsibility in that equation?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, this debate has been going on for a great number of years as to the responsibilities of Crown corporations. I think, generally speaking, that members of the House and the public accept the idea that Crown companies are not created for the purposes of losing money or for the purposes of keeping employees whom they do not need. I think this is accepted as a general proposition. If it were not so, CN would not have the profits to which my hon. friend refers.

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VIA RAIL

LATE TRAIN ARRIVALS IN WINNIPEG

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, can the minister explain why, on the day CN was laying off 1,800 workers across the country, the vice-president of VIA Rail West was saying that VIA Rail in Winnipeg was short of workers? Trains were running as much as eight hours behind arriving in Winnipeg. Why is it that 1,800 people are being