

S. O. 31

Prairie grain farmers must have help in two ways. They require cash now in order to be able to seed a crop this spring. In the longer term they need a contributory long-term income assurance plan.

* * *

MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Hon. Bob Layton (Lachine—Lac-Saint-Louis): Mr. Speaker, last Saturday at McGill University in Montreal over 150 business, academic and political leaders attended a colloque to express support for the Meech Lake Accord.

From the opening remarks of Bob Rae to the closing speech of Bob Stanfield, those present heard strong pleas for active support. Roy McMurtry spoke of the need for understanding and collaboration. Ed Broadbent recalled the 1980 to 1982 constitutional debate with all the concessions which were made, except to Quebec.

Gilles Remillard, Quebec's intergovernmental affairs minister, expressed the need for a strong, federal government. My colleague, the member for Shefford, spoke passionately of the importance of the accord for Quebec and Canada.

I was very encouraged and impressed by the commitment and the constructive approach taken by all participants.

The all day event ended with an unanimous resolution urging the first ministers and all governments of Canada to take the necessary steps to ensure the passage of the accord and to commit themselves formally to a process for further constitutional renewal.

* * *

• (1410)

VIA RAIL

Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago as a young law student I was privileged to take VIA's train, The Canadian, westward to Vancouver to start a new life. Last week I was also privileged as a member of Parliament to be on the last Canadian to come east.

The Canadian has been running since 1955. It is the direct successor of the first transcontinental which pulled into Port Moody in July, 1886. It takes the

southern route through Banff, Calgary, Regina, and back east. It is gone now. I have 40,000 petitions collected by passengers and workers on VIA Rail. I propose to give them to the Minister of Transport later this week.

I want to thank Jerry Doyle, MLA; Ed Tchorzewski, MLA; Gary Doer, our leader in Manitoba; and my colleague, the member for Winnipeg—Transcona for piggy-backing these petitions across the country.

It was a magnificent run—to wake up in the Rockies, to see the quiet, calm Canada. Our young people are going to miss that. This government has taken us from the last spike to the last straw. We have to start this train up again for young Canadians, not just for rich tourists.

* * *

[Translation]

ALITALIA AIRLINES

Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to condemn Alitalia, which as a result of administrative restructuring and financial problems, may have to close shop in Montreal, transferring all its business to Toronto.

Thirty-two years after coming to Montreal, Alitalia may cancel its only weekly flight out of Mirabel and concentrate exclusively on its Toronto customers, which also means it might close its head office on Peel Street in Montreal, which has a staff of 100 employees.

This means Alitalia will abandon Quebec, Mirabel, Eastern Canada, the Quebec business community and an Italian community that is 325,000 strong, a community that is very active and has been loyal since the very beginning when there were up to seven flights weekly.

After a meeting in Rome with Alitalia executives and the survival committee, I realized that Alitalia sees Canada the way Jean Chrétien does: a Canada without Quebec! We won't stand for that!

I want to ask my colleagues, the Ministers responsible for External Affairs and Transport, to immediately review our bilateral agreements, which go back to 1972, and see whether Alitalia has always respected these agreements in the past, in Canada, and ensure that it undertakes to do so in the future.