

Oral Questions

• (1145)

As to the order for locomotives for CN's operations in the years to come, those locomotives have not been built yet. They have not been paid for yet. They will not be delivered nor will they become a liability for CN until a number of years down the road.

As to how CN is to run its operations, obviously it needs new rolling stock. Locomotives built in London, Ontario are sold not only to CN but to CP and all around the world. Only last week we had representatives in from the Congo looking to purchase locomotives from the GM shops in London because they are the best in the world.

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[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Many Canadians are worried about the economy stagnating in recent months. We have even heard some members of the official opposition talking about no net job creation since January.

Would the minister once again set the record straight on Canada's employment situation?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that the job market is going through some very major changes. That is one reason it is so important we modernize our structures to enable Canadians to make the adjustments, to get new employment tools to respond and particularly to provide new choices.

Within those very positive figures we had this morning of the unemployment rate coming down, 70,000 of the jobs created were manufacturing jobs. They are well paying, full time jobs.

This shows that the fear of the jobless recovery is not quite accurate. The reality of the Canadian economy, through the kind of stimulus that has been provided by the Minister of Finance in his budgets and in other areas, is that manufacturing and exports are leading job recovery in this country. That is why we have to continue to provide that enormous support and confidence. That is the most important key to creating jobs.

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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, earlier in question period I think that most Canadians would

have been appalled to see the Prime Minister defending some of the things going on at DND by wrapping himself in the name of the peacekeepers and the job they are doing, putting their lives in danger, trying to defend the country.

Does the Prime Minister really think that when we read about the stonewalling of police investigations, about the cover-up of criminal activity, and about the falsifying of documents this in any way does any service to the men on the ground who are defending Canada and trying to keep peace in foreign countries?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have said to the House many times that we initiated the public inquiry into the matter. Now I see the Reform Party is taking credit for that.

I was in opposition when the parliamentary secretary was on his feet asking for an inquiry. We are having a public inquiry and all the documents are available.

Of course there are problems in the army. In any department there are problems. We are working to solve them. We will accept the recommendations if they are valid and we will change what has to be changed.

To try to create the impression that we have a terrible army in Canada when it is lauded by everybody around the world I think is going the wrong way.

The young member has a lot of personal ambition. He should tell his colleagues to slow down, because there will not be much of a Reform Party very soon.

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know it is not the army that is terrible, it is the Minister of National Defence's running of that portfolio.

We have been pursuing this inquiry. The opposition Liberals, as he knows, called for this two years ago. We had to call for it for nearly two years before we got it.

The Minister of National Defence has been sitting on this material, which has been under his nose for two years. Was there complicity in this? Did he know this was happening, or was he simply incompetent and did not provide this material in the first two years of this administration?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence got up many times in the House and explained that under the laws of this land when there were cases in front of the military courts we could not proceed with an inquiry because it could have invalidated trials that were going on. It is the way we operate. There were some charges against some military people and we could not have a public inquiry on the same element of proof because it would have been used by the different lawyers or the prosecution to destroy the case.