

stock can be quite small. About 5 per cent or 6 per cent can give effective control”.

Given that the Government will make 25 per cent of the shares available to foreign owners in time and 11 per cent available to foreign investors immediately, I ask the Deputy Prime Minister how the Government can assure Canadians that Air Canada is not on its way to becoming Air America.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Maz Air.

Mr. Mazankowski: The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition and his colleague have to dramatize things because they know they have not got a case. I would rather listen to the workers, and this is what the workers say. Nicole Lancot from Montreal has said: “This is great, good news. If I were rich, I would buy shares. Maybe I will buy shares if they aren’t too expensive”.

Mr. Tobin: “If I were rich, I would buy shares”. Right on.

Mr. Mazankowski: Wait a moment—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mazankowski: “I will buy shares if they aren’t too expensive”.

Second, Joyce Carrette has said: “I would buy shares. I’m very excited.” Ruth Kershaw said: “The public will benefit in the long run”. Glen McLaren said: “I’m delighted, absolutely delighted”. The Chairman of Air Canada, who has spent 40 years with this company, said: “This is welcome news indeed”.

● (1430)

SALE OF SHARES—PRIME MINISTER’S POSITION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their Prime Minister to be straightforward with them. They expect the Prime Minister to be honest and to indicate clearly where he stands on important national issues.

Mr. Andre: They expect responsible opposition too.

Mr. Riis: On January 15, 1985, the Prime Minister said very clearly that Air Canada is not for sale.

Mr. Andre: Read the whole thing.

Mr. Riis: Yesterday he indicated that that is not quite what he meant. He went on to explain. He said that Air Canada is for sale but he did not rule out selling a minority interest. The Government then indicated clearly in this House yesterday that the legislation, when brought forward, will permit the transfer of all Air Canada shares.

My question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Why was he not honest with the people of Canada in 1985?

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Some Hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Riis: Why did he not say at that time that his intention was to sell off all of Air Canada?

Some Hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Speaker: There are different ways to stray very close to what is not accepted. I know that the Hon. Member would want to make it clear to the Chair and to the House that his question is, would the Prime Minister please explain what seems to be, in the mind of the Hon. Member, a difference in one statement compared to another.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend says that Parliament is entitled to a responsible position from the Prime Minister. He is quite right. It is also entitled to a responsible position from the NDP. As a beginning, if my hon. friend is going to quote the Prime Minister or any other Member of the House, I hope that he would have the decency and the integrity to make that quote complete, because the manner in which he quoted is false and misleading.

[Translation]

I will give him the quote as reported in *The Gazette* and *La Presse*. I wish he would either quote everything I said or stop misquoting me here in the House. The quote is as follows: There is a possibility that Air Canada shares will be sold to the general public, but the Government would certainly retain a controlling interest. There may be good reasons for selling Air Canada.

And the same day, in English, in *The Gazette* . . .

[English]

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said Monday in Montreal that Air Canada is not for sale but did not rule out selling a minority interest.

This is perfectly consistent with not only the interests of Air Canada but what I have said and the position which the Government has adopted. If the Member wants to quote me or any other member of the Government, let him have the decency and honesty to quote fully and completely. He should stop distorting what I said.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Prime Minister that he not only has an obligation to be straightforward with the Parliament of Canada but also has an obligation to be straightforward and honest with the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Riis: It is time that he started to do just that.

Mr. Shields: I would ignore that.