

Oral Questions

UNION REPRESENTATIVES' REQUEST FOR MEETING

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that. However, what better way to prevent that than by having that deal, that natural fit between de Havilland and Boeing go forth? They will then have the expertise in-house and they will be able to use the technology, expertise, and engineering capacity of de Havilland to help their own exports in their own markets. That is the proof.

RESEARCH CAPACITY OF DE HAVILLAND

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, the Minister tells us that he has put enough facts on the table. However, as a result of this deal is there now an assurance that Boeing will not move the research capacity and talented bank of expertise established here out of our country? Has that been guaranteed?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think I answered that question yesterday. Not only will the R and D done at the moment by de Havilland in Downsview, Ontario, Canada, be maintained, but it will be enhanced. That is in the understandings that we have with the Boeing Corporation. Can I be any clearer than that?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Let's see the understanding. Let's see the document.

JOB SECURITY FOR EMPLOYEES

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. He says that he welcomes questions on the de Havilland giveaway to Boeing. Well, he is going to get them.

Our third question is as follows. What assurances, if any, did Boeing offer the Government in relation to job guarantees and security for de Havilland's 4,500 workers?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, quite honestly, I think I have answered this about 10 times over the last few days in this House. The only guarantee for job security that one could reasonably expect is that which comes from a world product mandate; the ability to sell our planes throughout the world through a well-known and most successful aircraft manufacturer.

Let me emphasize for the Hon. Member's information that under Crown ownership there were no employment guarantees. The Member ought to talk to the more than 2,000 employees of de Havilland who were laid off when it was Crown owned. They will tell him that there was no guarantee at that point. Now, with the financial and marketing expertise behind Boeing, they will have more job security than they have ever had before.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question, our fourth question, is directed to the same Minister. Why did the Government refuse to meet with representatives of the United Auto Workers who requested a meeting weeks in advance of the sale?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, over a year ago we announced our intention to privatize a number of Crown corporations. We reiterated that intention in the Budget of last year. We welcome any representation by any group anywhere in the country that may have any interest whatsoever in what we are doing on privatization. Those concerns will be considered fully in any negotiations that take place.

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[Translation]

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

EFFECT OF BUDGET CUTBACKS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. We now know that in November, the President asked all Government departments to cut what was left of their budgets by another 1 to 3 per cent. Incidentally, a 3 per cent cutback amounts to one billion dollars, exactly what this Government will have to pay for the problems they had with the banks. I want to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether he thinks it is fair that workers in Montreal East, women, the elderly, farmers and farm workers should have to pay for the bank fiasco that was created by this Government owing to its lack of surveillance in this area?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I don't think it is exactly news that for more than a year, the Conservative Government has been trying to control federal spending and to reduce the enormous deficit we inherited from the previous Liberal Government. It is in the course of this exercise, an exercise that has been going on all year, that we asked the departments to reduce their daily operational spending by an additional amount, to ensure that funds not spent at the end of the year are saved to keep the deficit at I would not say an acceptable but at least a tolerable level, considering the legacy we received from the previous Government.

[English]

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has just confirmed that there will be at least a \$200 million cut in job programs under unemployment insurance. I ask him again whether he thinks it fair that the women, the senior citizens, the farmers, the workers, and the unemployed of the