

Oral Questions

Did the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion receive the O'Farrell Report referred to by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs in December? Doesn't this report prove that the Government has set the interests of a multinational corporation above those of Quebec workers and Canadian consumers?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, my answer to this question is simply that the Director responsible for compliance with the Combines Investigation Act submitted his report and his comments, and that I examined this information. I said what his public conclusions were, and there was the matter of under-capacity and surplus capacity. In this connection, I mentioned that it was a very complex question, with regional variations, and that the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission that was examining the petroleum industry would be submitting its report very shortly and would cover this problem in its comments.

[English]

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs could advise his colleague on what is in that report because his colleague, the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, does not seem to be up to date on that report.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a third question relating to Montreal. The dossier of the Minister on the Gulf matter has not been brilliant nor, for that matter, has it been on de Havilland.

[Translation]

PROPOSED SALE OF CANADAIR—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to get back to the dossier of Canadair, another Crown corporation.

Does the Minister intend to give Canadians and Quebecers the assurance that, in the event of Canadair's being sold, all documentation will be made public and that he will protect the interests of Quebec workers and Canadian technology and, above all, will try to have a joint arrangement so that this company will remain under Canadian control?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, in responding to the last question of the Leader of the Opposition I am most anxious to make clear that our consideration with respect to the selling of any Crown corporation is always very much with respect to the on-going employment of the employees of the Crown corporation and the retention of technology in Canada. We followed that pattern with de Havilland and, naturally, intend to follow it with Canadair. The Leader of the Opposition has my assurance that those two aspects of any sale will be very much borne in mind by the Government of Canada.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT REPORT BE PUBLISHED

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, it is quite surprising to hear the Minister claim that he is putting the emphasis on job creation. This is certainly something he overlooked when he caused a great many workers to lose their jobs at the Gulf refinery in east-end Montreal.

My question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs who was quite confusing in his reply to the Leader of the Official Opposition. Is he going to make public the O'Farrell report, as he has promised? The Minister of State for Small Businesses also said publicly that the O'Farrell report would be made public. We are waiting for this report. Where is it?

● (1120)

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that members of the Opposition themselves are the source of this confusion to which my colleague has just referred, considering the great many jobs which have been created in Canada since September 1984, over 450,000, including 136,000 in the province of Quebec.

I should also like to remind a number of our honourable colleagues opposite that in September or February 1983, they kept quiet when the possible closing of refineries was being discussed.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Let us start the new year right.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT CONSUMER INTERESTS BE DEFENDED

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, the Minister did not answer my question. I will put it to him once more. Will he have the guts to defend the interests of Canadian consumers? Will he make sure that the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission will look into the very shady business of the Gulf-Ultramar deal which will result in the bankruptcy of many small independent oil dealers in Montreal and the closing of a refinery in east-end Montreal?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): To reply more specifically to this question, Mr. Speaker, I can assure my honourable colleague that, as I mentioned earlier, the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission is currently looking into the oil industry as a whole. I have no control over the studies or recommendations of this quasi-judicial commission, and I shall read them as soon as the report is tabled, some time, I am told, in the early part of 1986.