

*Oral Questions*

he allows appropriations to go through the way this Government directs, will the Minister advise us, if the business of Canadair is only 40 per cent involved in the Challenger and we have already spent \$2.146 billion on the Challenger program, why, in the name of employment, would the Government continue to finance the aircraft? After all, most of the parts for the aircraft are made in the United States, the technology is American, the repair and marketing facilities are in the United States, and even the Shielding Report states that the aircraft has little significance to the repertoire of Canadian manufacturing or technology capabilities. Why the money? Why the estimate?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member does not understand what the Challenger program is all about. He is talking about jobs, which is a priority for this Government, although we know it is not one for the Official Opposition. Technological advance and the development of an aircraft such as the Challenger are important as well, not only for the Canadian industry but also for the future technology of our country. Again I would urge the Hon. Member, as I did a moment ago, to attend the Standing Committee which is now considering the Canadair file and looking into prospective markets for Canadair's Challenger aircraft. He will get answers to his questions and, in addition, have an opportunity to learn more about the positive aspects of the Challenger program.

● (1420)

[English]

REQUEST THAT CORPORATION BE DIVESTED OF PROGRAM

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South):** The Minister knows that Canadair has a good staff. It is excellent at building airframes, working on surveillance drones, and with its waterbomber program. However, the Challenger program is a loser, and has been a loser from its inception.

Why does the Government not insist that its friends, Bell and Austin, organize a proper sale of the Challenger program to some other company so that this company can continue to do its worth-while aircraft work and keep the jobs here in Canada?

**Mr. Blais:** Shame on you!

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Why does it want to destroy Canadair to build a fancy toy for those who can afford it?

[Translation]

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Obviously, Mr. Speaker, the immediate reaction of the Opposition is to reject any initiative aimed at promoting job creation and furthering technological progress in Canada. The Hon. Member for Joliette denies this, so he is at odds with his colleagues from Mississauga South who has just spoken. Get

your act together and come up with a policy. We know that your Leader is unable to spell out his policies, but if some Members of the Opposition do have policies and ideas, they ought to combine their efforts and suggest a few policies which their Leader might follow.

[English]

COST OF CHALLENGER PROGRAM

**Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario):** Mr. Speaker, I want to impress upon this House that we are not criticizing Canadair.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Fennell:** My question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board, and I want an answer from him because he is responsible for Estimates. In the recent Estimates there is \$310 million for the Challenger program. The truth of the matter, and the Minister knows it perfectly well, is that Canadian taxpayers have already invested \$2 billion in the Challenger program. There is another \$1.5 billion committed to that program. Will the President of the Treasury Board come clean and bring forth Estimates showing that the total cost of the Challenger program is \$3.5 billion?

**Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, the Estimates tabled in the House which are now being studied by the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs, involve a decision not only of myself but of Cabinet as a whole regarding financing for the coming period for Canadair and de Havilland. The Minister responsible for the Canada Development Investment Corporation has been before the Finance Committee providing all the information he can in response to the questions of my hon. friend and his colleagues.

I think my hon. friend should be telling us how he can say that he and his Party support Canadair and not the Challenger when, in the words of his colleague, the Challenger program is 40 per cent of Canadair's business and when, on other occasions his colleagues, like the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre and the Hon. Member for Joliette, have said that the Challenger is an excellent program technologically and that they are just upset about Canadair management. As my hon. friend, the Minister of National Revenue, said: "Get your music together because you are certainly not playing in tune today".

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fennell:** I am fully aware that the Minister is in front of the committee. We spent four hours with him yesterday. He did not deny the fact that the cost of this program exceeds \$3 billion.

**Mr. Roy:** But how many jobs?