

*Oral Questions*

We said in Alberta on Friday that we would continue with that type of approach in order to try and reach a national consensus and if we could not, we would be prepared to proceed on the basis of a solution that would identify and try to take into consideration as many of the provincial priorities as we possibly can.

We also put a date on it to be effective August 1, 1994. Obviously the discussions will continue with everybody involved to try to reach a consensus. That includes as many of the provincial and the individual concerns as we possibly can.

**Mr. John Harvard (Winnipeg—St. James):** Mr. Speaker, so there is no agreement.

My supplementary question is for the same minister. As the minister well knows, the Crow benefit, regardless of how it is paid out, is important to all prairie farmers. Farmers want to know whether any possible change to the method of payment would affect the level of support. That is crucial.

Will the minister indicate to the House now that he has given assurances to farmers that the level of freight assistance under any proposal under consideration will not be diminished, that the level of support will not be diminished?

**Hon. Charles Mayer (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the discussions are continuing on the basis of a certain amount of money being available identified as the Crow benefit.

If we were having this discussion prior to December 2 last year, the number would have been \$720 million. Since then we have had a financial statement that reduced grants and contributions by 10 per cent.

Obviously those considerations will have to be taken into account no matter what kind of a solution is arrived at. On the basis of the financial condition of the government at the time, that will determine the amount of money that is available.

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Since the minister admitted yesterday that he has no plan for the airline industry, will he acknowledge that his government's policies have substantially contributed to the serious problems facing this industry and that now he does not have the guts to announce a genuine stabilization plan for an industry that is so important to Canada's economy?

**Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, it would seem that, based on his behaviour, the hon. member for Ottawa South is not one of the nervous nellys, but I think he is being less than forthright when he tells Canadians that I admitted yesterday we did not have a plan. I told the hon. member yesterday that the directors of both airlines had officially stated that in their view the only way to remedy their financial situation was to eliminate overcapacity, that they were in a position to do that themselves and that we would intervene only if they refused to act responsibly.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South):** Mr. Speaker, after months of tough talk about how he was going to recalibrate the regulatory framework, in his words, of the airline industry, yesterday the minister said that the airlines can address the problems themselves. That was the day after a major carrier had to seek bankruptcy protection from its creditors.

Does the minister have some secret plan stashed away somewhere to deal with the problems in the airline industry or can he not see that the national duopoly that exists right now is inherently unstable and will continue to be so?

**Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I have said repeatedly and I will repeat again today that the airline industry knows what the problems are. It has all the means to do it. We are giving it the time to impose self-discipline. If it does not we will come up with a recalibration process.