

*Oral Questions*

to save these 21 jobs in Montreal East and do justice to these former employees?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, Petro-Canada management make their decisions on a commercial basis in what they believe to be the interests of society and all Canadians.

GOVERNMENT'S INTENDED MEASURES TO SAVE JOBS IN  
MONTREAL

**Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne):** Mr. Speaker, Petro-Canada answers to the Conservative Government. Is the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources a Minister without resources, without energy so it would seem? Can the Minister give a specific answer to the question and tell us what he intends to do to save these jobs in Montreal East?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will have to learn that the best way the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources can serve the House is to read the Petro-Canada Act first. The Hon. Member ought to do the same thing, for he would realize that under the provisions of the Petro-Canada legislation the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources is expressly forbidden to intervene in the day-to-day trade activities of the corporation. The House so decided and that is the way the legislation reads.

\* \* \*

• (1430)

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES

FUTURE OF BRANCHES—DISCUSSIONS WITH LAVALIN  
CORPORATION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. On Friday the Minister of State for Forestry and Mines told me:

We have never at any time discussed the privatization of a department or function of the Government to this date.

I repeat: "We have never discussed the privatization . . ." We know that Lavalin met with Treasury Board three times at Treasury Board's request. We know they discussed the privatization of certain departments working in the field of cartography. Will the Government come clean and tell us what it intends to do with these essential services? Will the Government tell us the truth and tell us what is going to happen to the 1,300 employees who are involved in this very essential service?

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I will try to answer, once again, the same question from my hon. colleague. It was very clear in my answers yesterday, I believe yesterday, that there were

exploratory discussions on a make or buy policy, which is not privatization. Those discussions were preliminary in nature. They had to deal with a number of corporations to follow up on a recommendation by the Task Force on Program Review, a task force that was composed of public sector, private sector, and labour representatives. And in order to give up a thorough follow-up to those recommendations, we did discuss the potential for a make or buy policy. Obviously this topic was raised. These were exploratory in nature. There were no negotiations, no offers sought, no offers made, and no bids received.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, in that case, I contend that the Minister of State for Forestry and Mines misled the House. On Friday he said, and I quote:

We have never at any time discussed the privatization of a Department or function of the Government to this date.

We are talking about three of the Government's essential services, and the Minister just admitted that he started talks with Lavalin and Bell about privatizing these services.

Would someone please tell us who in this Government is telling the truth?

**Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about privatization. We are talking about a make or buy policy.

Mr. Speaker, speaking of getting our act together, I wish the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier would consult with his colleague from Shefford, who said on CHLT in Sherbrooke last Saturday, if I am not mistaken—

**An Hon. Member:** Last Friday.

**Mr. de Cotret:** Excuse me, last Friday. He said: "Frankly, I have no problem at all with the concept of privatization." Actually, that is not the right word. "I have no problem at all with the concept of privatizing Government services. I know that in a similar case, this was done for the provincial institute of cartography. It did not create any problems, so far as I know, although we would have to look at all the details and conditions. In any case, the concept is certainly not one that I would reject out of hand."

So, I wish the Opposition would get its act together.

[English]

FUTURE OF EMPLOYEES

**Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, you may agree with me that the Liberals are confused about privatization but so is the Government on what it wants to do.

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

**Mr. Cassidy:** My question is for the President of the Treasury Board and deals with the same issue. I would like the