

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CONTINGENCY PLANS TO MAINTAIN AURORA AIRCRAFT IN SERVICE

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. In the telex sent by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce the minister noted that cancellation of the program will cause an increase in the cost of spare parts for Canada's Aurora aircraft and, more significantly, will create delay in their availability, resulting in reduced capability of the Canadian fleet. The defence department has already experienced difficulties in spare parts supply. Will the minister tell the House what contingency plans he has to ensure that our 18 aircraft will be able to continue flying?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I think I can reassure the hon. member for Victoria that our 18 Aurora aircraft will be able to fly and to meet their commitment to NATO and to the defence of Canada. We discussed the matter with the American Secretary of Defense, Mr. Weinberger, when we were in Brussels. Despite the fact that this is a Lockheed decision, the United States Secretary of Defense does, of course, have something to say about it. We asked him to look into it and to inform us so that we could discuss these matters. It is important that the supply of spare parts that we need to keep these aircraft available for operations will be fulfilled according to plan.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY

COMMITMENT TO EXPAND ROLE

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. It pertains to the speech he made in Chicago in which he announced that the election promises of the Prime Minister in 1980 concerning the expansion of the mandate of FIRA were no longer government policy.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Since the Prime Minister promised in that speech in the election campaign to expand the role of FIRA in order to have it carry out periodic reviews of the activities of large foreign companies in Canada, to publicize foreign takeovers of businesses, and to offer government assistance to Canadian companies seeking to buy foreign firms, has this commitment now been utterly abandoned by the Government of Canada?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, I did not say what the hon. member suggests I said in my speech in Chicago. He is talking about an unfortunate misinterpretation of my remarks by the Canadian press.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

Mr. Gray: I will be happy to send my hon. friend a copy of my remarks. He will see that I was talking about a review of the administrative procedures under the present act. Our position with respect to the promises made during the election and in the throne speech was set out in the economic development document. In that document we said that two of the pledges in question, the less important ones dealing with public notice of takeovers, and guarantees of loans for Canadian alternatives, would not be proceeded with for the time being.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gray: We did not say that they were being abandoned. With respect to performance review, the document made clear that we are expanding it to cover larger firms, whether Canadian controlled or foreign controlled. I look forward to the government being able to announce details of the way we are carrying out this commitment before too long.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Produce the tapes.

● (1425)

PRESS REPORT OF MINISTER'S SPEECH

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, the minister knows that the Prime Minister promised to expand the mandate of FIRA, that is to say, to change the legislation. The minister now says that he was misunderstood. I should like to ask him if he was quoted accurately in today's press when he is reported as saying, in his speech "But note that this is a review of the administration of the act, not the act itself". He is quoted as saying that the government does not plan to change the act. In his election campaign the Prime Minister promised to change the act. Will the minister now tell us what is the truth?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, in my speech yesterday I was simply talking about something that was stated in the economic development document, that we intended to review the existing administrative procedures of the Foreign Investment Review Act to see if they could be made more timely and efficient. We were talking about administrative procedures. In my speech I intended to say nothing beyond what we actually said in the economic development document. Nothing I said in my speech was intended to say, or in fact did say, that the government was ever ruling out any future amendments to the act by way of strengthening it.

QUERY RESPECTING AGENCY POLICY

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, the minister is certainly a worthy successor to Paul Martin.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: All his colleagues have the audacity to applaud.