

Oral Questions

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton Southeast): The minister should realize, Mr. Speaker, as he has also said to *The Vancouver Sun*, that he holds the only share in Petro-Canada as a trustee for the Canadian people.

Mr. Hopper has blatantly refused to talk to anybody since the report came down from Mr. Hughes. Will he, as the trustee for the Canadian people, ask the chief executive officer of Petro-Canada to come clean on this statement so that we can all know what, if anything, is the explanation?

While he is answering that question, will he tell us if he thinks this sale was closed for political reasons and not for commercial reasons?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I take what the hon. member says seriously. In fact on February 27, the NDP member for Port Moody—Coquitlam rose on a point of order and attempted to ask about this issue. He was not able to proceed with it further.

However, immediately upon that point being made in the House, I contacted Mr. Hopper and I asked for the full details. They are also in the Hughes report, as the hon. member will know. I can only refer to the Hughes report on page 49 where Mr. Hughes writes: "Nor would I presume to conclude that if Petro-Canada did provide this first right of refusal to the premier that it was necessarily improper".

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DE HAVILLAND

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology who, in responding to questions about what the government intends to do about the sale of de Havilland to the European consortium, says: "Just wait and we will see Investment Canada does".

In view of the state of deindustrialization of Ontario already with massive job losses and the prospect that 1,700 jobs will almost certainly be lost as a result of this acquisition, and in view of the loss of technology in research and development that will occur as a result of this sale, does the government not think it should now state its clear position that it will not allow any further deindustrialization, any further loss of jobs, any further loss of research and development?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I hope the member from Windsor is not going to ask me not to apply the rule. We are all worried about the industrial problems in Ontario and in all parts of the country. However, when there is a proposal, particularly by a foreign company or companies like Alenia and Aerospatiale, it is the rule to make the proposal to Investment Canada. It is what we do. When the proposal is made we have 45 days to analyse the proposal, give an answer and maybe an extension of time if it is necessary.

I believe the member will agree with me that in that kind of proposal which involves one of the most important aerospace industries in Canada we have to apply the law. We have to consider the way in which we can deal the best with that company. I would be surprised if the member does not agree with that.

• (1450)

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the minister if the minister would at all indicate what is his intention as a minister of the government to do.

My question to him is rather simple. Does he not agree that it is a responsibility of this government? By the way this is not a sale to companies; it is a sale to governments. Does he not agree that there should be applied conditions that will ensure the preservation of research and development, of engineering and design, of jobs and of the construction of whole airplanes rather than parts for a competing airplane already produced by those two companies?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, the first responsibility of any government is to respect the law it makes. It is the first responsibility.

We put forward Investment Canada to replace the very sick FIRA that we had before, put forward by the Liberal government. Investment Canada, unlike what is said by the member for Hamilton East, works very well and gives the services we expect from that kind of organization.

I say to the member that there is no way that the government will interfere in a process which consists of providing a proposal to Investment Canada. It is the process, and it is the process I will follow as minister responsible for Investment Canada.