

fact that a Canadian company, Hawker Siddeley (Canada), was the lowest bidder and yet it has not been awarded the contract, is indeed very discouraging. We have been in contact with Hawker Siddeley officials and were advised that they are still working on that contract as well as others in the U.S. We will do our very best to ensure that they are given fair treatment by the City of Houston.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER VISIT HOUSTON

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, the circumstances surrounding this decision would be described as bizarre at best. This morning I checked with the transit authority in Boston which had previously purchased equipment made by Cancar in Thunder Bay. It described the Canadian product as "exceptionally reliable".

Considering that the Canadian company made a bid that was \$29 million less than the Japanese, and that its product is described by another American City as exceptionally reliable, and since the Minister has already established personal contact in Houston, instead of waiting until his colleague returns from Japan would he not go to Houston to see what he could do to save Canadian jobs?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker I am sympathetic with the request of the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party with respect to going down to Houston. In view of discussions that we have had with Hawker Siddeley officials, that might not necessarily be the best action to take at this time because there are other contracts that they are pursuing.

I agree with the Hon. Member that Canada does not take second place to any other country in the world in terms of producing quality equipment for the urban transit industry. That is why our industry occupied over one-third of the floor space at the national convention of the U.S. Urban Transit Association a year ago. Also I was asked to open that convention, along with the Secretary of Transport of the United States.

Hawker Siddeley has been very well received in the United States, and we will do our very best to try to ensure that we have not lost this particular contract.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the sentiments are noble, the concern is fine, but the Minister has not told us specifically what he will do.

MINISTERIAL ACTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, there are several hundred Canadian jobs at stake here for a period of five to seven years, with this contract alone. The Minister knows that if we get the contract in Houston back, and we ought to because of the competitiveness of our bid, it will open up other contracts in the United States. If we lose this contract, however, it means that we will not get others. The decision on this contract was made last weekend. Will the

Oral Questions

Minister tell the House what he intends to do to get the people in Houston to reverse their decision?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I do not quite understand the indignation of the Hon. Leader of the NDP. I quite agree about the importance of this contract. Two years ago, however, the two federal Members from Thunder Bay—not from the NDP—came to me asking me to solicit this particular contract. The Hon. Leader of the NDP is a little late in making his representation, but I agree with him about the seriousness of this situation in terms of the effects it will have on other contracts in the United States. That is why we have treated this as a priority.

* * *

• (1425)

RAILWAYS

QUEBEC ADVERTISEMENT ON EFFECT OF CROWSNEST PASS RATE CHANGES

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. In last Saturday's edition of *Le Devoir* a full-page ad entitled "Farewell to the Crow", sponsored by Agriculture Canada, indicated that the new freight rate policy would not provide an advantage to western pork and beef producers. That is contrary, I might say, to the expectations of the West. How does the Minister square that statement with the statement contained in his own policy announcement contending that his transportation initiative will expand the western livestock industry by \$1 billion, and the processing, packing and feed mill industries by some \$350 million? Why the doubletalk?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I can square that quite easily. My hon. friend, who is very alert and knowledgeable on these matters, knows very well what I will say. There is a diversity of views in the West as to the effect of this announcement, the policy itself, on the future of the livestock industry there. There are three schools, essentially. One says that it will have the effect of only strengthening what exists there and is often in difficulties now. Another school of people say that it will do more than that, that over a period of time it will contribute a certain increase to the livestock industry in the West. A third school says that it will do more than that, that it will contribute significantly to an increase in the livestock industry. The Hon. Member can pick any one he wants, because these views are defended by very honourable people.

Mr. Mazankowski: I am not interested in the schools of thought the Minister believes are out in the West. I am interested in the Minister's own school of thought. I am interested in when the Minister will come out with a clear-cut statement, in both official languages, so that we can understand it from one region to the other, and that it is not a policy