

Oral Questions

OWNERSHIP OF COMPETING SHIPYARDS

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Madam Speaker, when the Liberals came to power in 1980 they stalled this program for six months while they claimed they were Canadianizing the various consortia. Scan Marine was created by and is 49 per cent owned by Pratt & Whitney which, in turn, is 100 per cent owned by United Technologies of Connecticut. Saint John Shipbuilding is 100 per cent owned by the Irving Group of New Brunswick. Has the Government, in making its decision, given due consideration to the ownership of these two finalists?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that the hon. gentleman has drawn the attention of the public to the fact that we wanted to Canadianize the bids and that we wanted to ensure that there were Canadian companies which were the lead companies in both bids, which is the case.

In terms of the criteria which will apply to the final selection, I refer the hon. gentleman to the previous reply which I gave, and I ask the hon. gentleman to await the final decision which I hope will be made at the end of the month of June or the beginning of the month of July this year.

ALLOCATION OF WORK

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): I would like to ask the Minister if the Government carried out the Conservative plan to have the consortia include, in their bids, cost comparisons for building the actual ships in more than one location, say, two ships in the Maritimes, two in the St. Lawrence area, and two on the West Coast. Has the Government considered dividing the actual shipbuilding work among up to three shipyards in order to speed the delivery of these much needed frigates, and to spread the employment benefits on a national basis throughout this very depressed industry?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I will take the hon. gentleman's question as a representation.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Take it seriously.

Mr. Blais: Unfortunately, the Tories were involved in this particular procurement for such a brief period of time that the records of what their representations may have been are rather scarce.

ORDER FOR WATER BOMBERS

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. The Minister has announced plans to spend up to \$147 million to buy 20 Canadair CL-215 water bombers under the Special Recovery Project. However, when we read the fine print we find that the Government is committed to purchasing only four water bombers. The other 16 will be ordered only on a matching basis with the Provinces.

How much is the Government actually spending on its four plane fleet, and why did the Minister purposely inflate the job

creation figures, since his claim of 650 jobs assumes that all 20 water bombers are being built?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, if the Hon. Member had been present at the announcement, and if she had been in the House and paid attention to what I said before the House, she would realize that what we stressed was that we were purchasing four planes for the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, and that we would be purchasing up to 16 more planes on a matching basis. We have already received indications from over half the Provinces that they will be participating. I am quite confident that that requisite number of planes will be bought.

There are very good possibilities that on this domestic base there will be a further 20 planes sold internationally. That, of course, I cannot guarantee, but there seem to be good indications that that kind of purchase is likely to take place. All of these points were made abundantly clear, both at the press conference and in the House. I am glad to discover that the Hon. Member is finally catching up to what the significance of the announcement is.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

COST OF CL-215 FLYING TIME

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is also addressed to the Minister of the Environment, who stressed the creation of 650 jobs which will not be in place until two and a half years from now, only if 20 water bombers are built.

● (1420)

The reason that only three Provinces have ordered the CL-215 in the last 25 years is because of its horrendous cost. A study by the Alberta Forest Service in 1976 stated that, at \$8,277 per total hourly cost, the CL-215 was 11 times more expensive than the Canso water bomber which only cost \$707 per total hourly cost. If those figures are adjusted for inflation, the cost per hour for the Canadair plane would be \$15,000.

Given this high price tag for the CL-215, what assurance can the Minister give us that the Provinces will come up with their \$100 million share, or is he offering the Provinces a cut rate deal?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I wish that the Hon. Member was aware of the fact that the CL-215 is undoubtedly the most adept airplane for this operation. It is not only a leader in Canada, it is a world leader.

She seems to be surprised or concerned about the cost of the purchase of the airplanes. I wish the Hon. Member was much more concerned about the potential of up to \$350 million a year in fire losses as a result of not having this kind of capacity from that airplane.