

Adjournment Debate

We need to realize as parliamentarians that one of our main jobs is not only to scrutinize the expenditures that are undertaken by government, but also to try to ensure that those who are working can remain at work. If they cannot remain at work, at what they were trained for, they should be able to go elsewhere and practice the trade or occupy the role or have the programs that are needed so that they can fit into Canadian society.

To me on that particular day, the minister's response showed a lack of understanding of my question. I asked what is going to happen to those Air Canada workers, to the Gemini workers, to Canadian workers? What kind of plan has the government got to make sure that they resolve this to the mutual benefit of everybody?

It also raises other equally important questions. What is it that a government might do in order to protect—and I do not say that in a pejorative or negative kind of way—workers, men and women with families who want to ensure that they keep their job? If they cannot, can they go elsewhere and do it? If they have the skills and training to undertake something else will it give them the remuneration they require in order to support their families and themselves?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, that essentially is the most important principle for me: what will happen to those workers? Is the government doing something? If the government has not yet managed to find a solution, does it intend to find one soon?

[*English*]

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite dreams of saving the airline industry in one fell swoop. I wish it was that easy. All we have to do is tell the air carriers how to run their businesses or have further government interference in business.

The hon. member opposite is saying that any business should it get into trouble should not have to worry. It can

count on the government stepping in and fixing everything.

Members opposite do not like to hear it but statistics are there to prove it. Deregulation in the transportation industry is working well in Canada. Deregulation brought about new and better service for consumers and Canadian communities alike.

The airline industry has been hit hard by the gulf war resulting in higher prices and an international recession. People stopped flying to the extent they had prior to the recession.

The airline industry throughout the world, not just in Canada, is facing a crisis now. We on this side of the House are working with individual carriers, companies on their individual cases.

The hon. member is fully aware of the number of programs that governments have established over the years in dealing with assistance to companies and also in dealing with individuals should they run into difficulties with their employment.

It is clear that the Department of Transport and the Government of Canada have a policy on transportation that is working well in this country. We are having some difficulty with the recession. These problems too will pass.

I would like to say in closing this means what the minister has been saying all along. We have to look at the issues facing the industry together and we have to work with the industry to help solve the problems.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Pursuant to Standing Order 38(5), the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 6.28 p.m.