

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Ms. Copps: To answer the question, Mr. Speaker, of course the government of Canada, through the Prime, has expressed disagreement with the policy adopted by the Hibernia consortium. We are aware of the possibility and support tendering. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a private sector consortium that is entitled to make its own decisions and, in spite of the views expressed by the government of Canada, it has decided not to proceed to a call for tenders, as we felt would have been proper and fair.

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we asked the Minister of Industry several questions in this House on saving the MIL Davie shipyard.

Are we to understand from the answers of the industry minister, who has always hidden behind the lack of an MIL Davie business plan to avoid facing his responsibilities, that what he really wanted was to follow up on the secret report he has been hiding in his department for over a year, which proposes closing MIL Davie, and that the minister lacks the courage to say so frankly?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member is big enough to admit, first of all, that MIL Davie's shareholder is responsible for announcing its position on the MIL Davie corporate plan submitted by the former Quebec government. That is first and foremost the shareholder's responsibility. That is what I said several times.

Yes, there was a report. That is no secret. The *Financial Post* obtained it on request. That is normal. That is the position of someone who was a consultant. That is not necessarily my position or the government's. Moreover, if MIL Davie wants to succeed, it must do so on global markets. That is what I said several times here.

[English]

For any company to succeed in the modern marketplace it must produce goods at a price the world is willing to pay to acquire them. That is first and foremost for any company the responsibility of its management and its shareholders to determine.

When we hear the point of view of the Quebec government on the MIL Davie business plan, when we know whether its unions are willing to support it, perhaps then we can respond accordingly to any further request we have on their behalf.

● (1420)

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that some contracts were necessary to allow MIL Davie to reorganize. Instead of acting as his responsi-

bilities called for, the minister has always hidden behind the lack of so-called business plans.

Are we to understand that after demanding that Quebec make 90 per cent of the efforts to rationalize shipyards in Canada, the federal government's only goal, after closing the Sorel-Tracy shipyard and the Vickers shipyard in Montreal, is to close Quebec's third major and last remaining shipyard, MIL Davie, so that the shipyards in the Maritime provinces can survive?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, maybe using statistics for demagogic purposes is a good strategy. In fact, Quebec's share of shipyard rationalization is 30 per cent. Please, Mr. Speaker, let us stick to the facts.

Second, I wish to say to the hon. member that it is not a matter of hiding. I think it is essential for a company seeking help from the taxpayers in Canada and Quebec to have a good corporate plan that has been approved by shareholders and workers alike. At that point, we can make a move with MIL Davie.

[English]

I cannot understand why the member is not willing to say that we have to find a long term solution. If he would look at the business plan that has been presented, he would understand the business plan does not claim that the long term solution to MIL Davie is one contract turned over from anybody. The long term solution involves fundamental readjustment of that company to a new marketplace.

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[Translation]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Yesterday, the Minister of Human Resources Development greatly disappointed the young unemployed people who had come to discuss his reform of social programs with him. A participant asked him: "Where are these jobs? Tell me; I am ready to work".

Why does the minister have nothing else to offer young people who want to work, who want real jobs, than a so-called reform whose main purpose is to make cuts at their expense? They will be the second-class unemployed. They will have to go into debt to pay their tuition fees, which will double. Why?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member should know, last Friday Statistics Canada released its latest job report. It pointed out that for the first time in six years the jobless rate had dropped to below 10 per cent; in fact it is 9.6 per cent.

Much more important, in the last 11 months 414,000 full time jobs have been created. That is the fastest growing job rate of