

Oral Questions

The hon. member talks about whether we are in recovery or we are still in a recession. The Canadian economy grew by 3.3 per cent in quarter 2 and quarter 3. It slowed down in quarter 4, largely because of the serious deterioration in the economy of the United States and of other industrialized nations. All industrialized nations have revised their growth figures downward for 1992. That is not a Canadian phenomenon; it is a world phenomenon.

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[Translation]

AIR TRANSPORT

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Last week the chief negotiator at the open skies talks announced he was retiring. This came after the departmental task force released its report in which it rejected the concept of open borders for air services. This happens at a time when there is public concern about the future of Canada's airlines. Could the Minister of Transport clearly explain his government's position regarding the open skies negotiations and the financial problems expected by Canadian carriers?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I may point out to the hon. member that there is absolutely no connection between the decision of the federal negotiator, Mr. Harris, to resign his position and the report that was released last week. We embarked on these bilateral negotiations with the United States in order to increase the amount of transborder air traffic between Canada and the United States. We are pursuing this policy, and we are convinced that by improving the situation for Canadian carriers, we will in fact improve their financial situation.

[English]

Mr. John Manley (Ottawa South): Mr. Speaker, the minister is surely aware of the widespread apprehension among the public and airline employees in particular about the uncertain future facing the Canadian airline industry.

Surely the government should be willing to state clearly now, for the public, what it views as being in the

national interest with respect to this industry and how it intends to ensure that the national interest is served in the months to come.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the federal government's position on this matter has always been the same. At the present time, some rather unfortunate things are happening in the aviation industry throughout the world.

• (1450)

However, our position has not changed. It is in the best interests of consumers and the travelling public in this country to have two airline companies that are in the best possible shape, and that is what we want to achieve in the months to come.

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[English]

TRADE

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was able to raise in this House some questions about the draft bracketed agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico regarding a proposed free trade agreement.

The draft bracketed agreement is confirmed to be in existence by the press secretary of Carla Hills and also by the press secretary of the Mexican Ambassador to Canada.

Although this draft bracketed document has been kept secret from the Canadian people, it has come to my attention that there are proposals in that draft bracketed treaty that would seriously affect the viability of Canadian automobile manufacturing and indeed Canadian auto parts manufacturers.

I now ask the Minister for International Trade if he is prepared to table the document in this House that has been made available to Mexican politicians and to tell this House and all Canadians, particularly those in Ontario and Quebec, that their jobs will not be at risk because of these negotiations going on?