

Oral Questions

people on the basis of the credit of the Fingold Brothers and not the individual to whom my hon. friend refers. We received \$29 million for it and, as a result, the employees retained their jobs.

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I hope those 1,900 people who have just lost their jobs have listened to the minister and know that everything is okay and somehow they have kept their jobs. I know he can pull off a lot of magic tricks, but that is not one of them.

In its indecent haste to sell off Crown assets the government approved the giveaway of this trucking company to this man who had declared bankruptcy in 1981, a man who had defaulted on loans to four banks and one trust company and who could not even get a credit card. Now the company is defunct, creditors are owed millions and 1,900 more people are out of work despite the so-called assurances of the minister.

Will the minister explain how these 3,400 jobs and \$100 million in Crown assets, including some of the most valuable downtown real estate and property in Canada, were given away to a bad credit risk and why nobody paid any attention? It is not enough to issue credit checks, Mr. Speaker, somebody has to read them.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I think it is fairly clear that Canadian National wanted to stop the haemorrhaging of the taxpayers' money at the rate of \$30 million to \$40 million a year. There were two options as far as the employees were concerned; first, to shut down the operation and lay them all off or, second, to sell it as a going concern to the company that bought it for \$29 million, and that is what they did.

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IMMIGRATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I have here a letter from Mr. Gordon Fairweather, the Chairman of the Immigration Refugee Board, wherein he admits that the decision taken by that board that rejected the refugee application of Mr. Mahmood Hassan Randeree, a member of the African National Congress, is based upon a mistake in assessment of Mr. Randeree's nationality.

In view of Mr. Fairweather's own recognition of the board's mistake and the appeal of over 40 human rights, church and social organizations across this country asking that the case be reheard, will the minister recognize that there has been an error of justice made in this case and undertake to order a new hearing into the Randeree case?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am always quite prepared to take new information and look into any case that requires some additional consideration. If Mr. Fairweather, who is an independent chairman of an independent board, believes that the case deserves another hearing, I am sure that he is in a position to ask for that hearing himself.

When I responded to a question on this person in the House last week I said that there are two other ways in which this particular person can seek entry into Canada, and I encouraged him to do that at that time.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister understands that her unwillingness to intervene in this case, which the Immigration Act gives her full powers to do, will have the impact of tarnishing Canada's international reputation as a being a supporter of the fight for democratic rights in South Africa and that this has implications for the visit of Mr. Mandela in the future and our fight against apartheid. As a part of this government which has led that fight, I think the minister has a responsibility to intervene.

• (1440)

Would the minister undertake at least to have a personal meeting with Mr. Randeree, legal representatives and the coalition dealing with apartheid to listen to their evidence, as she said, to see if there are new facts that can be put on the table? She can then decide whether in fact a mistake has been made and undertake, with the rights and power she has under the act, to correct a serious transgression of justice against this individual.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am very well aware of what my rights and powers are under the act and I have always tried to deal with them with enormous sensitivity, as I think the hon. member knows.