

*Oral Questions*

How much further does he have to drive land prices down before he is satisfied that he has fought inflation to the ground?

• (1415)

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

**AIR CANADA****ACQUISITION OF NEW AIRCRAFT—DATE OF ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns Air Canada. The Government is wheeling and dealing in a transparent and blatant attempt to manipulate the Manitoba election—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** —and to deceive once again the people of Manitoba as it did on the CF-18.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister confirm that Air Canada's negotiations to replace its 727 fleet have been completed? Will he also confirm that an announcement to that effect by Air Canada was scheduled for March 30, but the federal Government intervened to delay that announcement because of the effect it would have on the Manitoba election arising from the loss of jobs at the Air Canada maintenance facility in Winnipeg? Will he also confirm that the delay was a result of the pleading of the Manitoba Conservative Leader, Gary Filmon?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, what we are witnessing here on the floor of the House of Commons is the final act of desperation by the Liberal Party to help their Leader who is sinking as quickly as a stone. I am rather surprised at the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition because, at the time of the CF-18 decision, the Liberal Party, as I recall, took a position in favour of that decision.

**Mr. Axworthy:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Mazankowski:** Some Members excepted.

Unlike the Liberal Government when it was in office, this Government does not interfere with the decision—

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mazankowski:** —on fleet acquisition. That is a decision made by Air Canada based upon the criteria, the technical requirements, the mission and mandate for a particular aircraft which it has to fulfil. This is an issue resolved by the management and board.

I see the Right Hon. Leader grinning. He will recall that the last time there was any interference was in 1979 when the

Liberal Government of the day wanted to overturn a decision made by Air Canada which supported the Boeing purchase. The Liberals wanted an Airbus acquisition.

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, let it be noted that the Deputy Prime Minister did not reply to the question as to whether the Government intervened in the decision to postpone the March 30 announcement.

**WINNIPEG MAINTENANCE BASE—REQUEST FOR LEGISLATIVE COMMITMENT**

**Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who is presumably in Manitoba today, said over the weekend that Cabinet decided two weeks ago that a guarantee to keep the maintenance base in Winnipeg would be included in the legislation to privatize Air Canada.

I want to quote what the Deputy Prime Minister told the House of Commons on April 12 as reported at page 14363 of *Hansard*:

The provisions of the legislation and/or the articles of incorporation of the new company will ensure that the location of the corporate headquarters remains in Montreal—

A legislative guarantee for Montreal, but no mention of Winnipeg.

If, as the Minister of National Health and Welfare claims, a guarantee was given to Winnipeg that the maintenance facility would remain in Winnipeg by legislation, why was that not stated in the same announcement where the Deputy Prime Minister guaranteed Montreal the corporate headquarters? We are delighted with the legislative commitment to Montreal, but why not Winnipeg? Why did the Deputy Prime Minister not give Winnipeg the same legislative commitment he gave to Montreal two weeks ago in this House when he made the statement?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, first may I just reiterate, in response to the first question, the fact that the Government does not make the decision on what kind of aircraft to buy. The Government's responsibility is to approve the corporate plan. That is consistent with the Financial Administration Act. The mandate of Air Canada is to manage and choose the airplane it believes is best suited to meet a particular mission and mandate. Those are the facts.

With regard to the second part of the question, it is unfortunate that the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition does not quote the whole statement. Rather, he chooses to quote very selectively. If he will read page 14363, I said this:

While full details of this initiative will be contained in the legislation and will be developed by the Board of Air Canada over the coming months, I wish to inform the House further today of a few of the most important provisions under which this initiative will proceed.