

Oral Questions

improved as possible to protect human life and the cost of our research.

I should also add that in my dealings with cabinet, the committees and the Department of Transport, he can rely on my entire co-operation to support the Minister of Transport in that direction.

As for the report, I will discuss it with my colleague, the Minister of Transport, to see whether it can be made public.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS**PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER-SECRETARY GENERAL OF GOVERNMENT OF GABON**

Madam Speaker: I wish to point out a distinguished guest in our gallery, namely the hon. Louis-Gaston Mayila, Minister-Secretary General of the Gabon government.

● (1430)

[English]

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEXICO

Madam Speaker: I would also draw attention to the presence in our gallery of the Minister of Natural Resources and Industrial Development of Mexico, Mr. Andrez De Oteyza.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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INDUSTRY**INQUIRY RESPECTING ASSISTANCE FOR CANADIAN COMPANIES IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY**

Hon. George Hees (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. In view of the assistance which the government has announced it is prepared to give Massey-Ferguson with regard to the financial difficulty it now faces, is it the policy of the government that it will in future make available the same kind of financial assistance to all Canadian companies which run into the same or similar type of financial difficulty as Massey-Ferguson, and does it intend to make that assistance to all other Canadian companies in proportion to the size of their operation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Madam Speaker, the announcement which I made yesterday is with respect to assistance that we had decided, jointly with the province of Ontario, to offer as part of the refinancing of Massey-Ferguson.

The question as to whether similar occasions will arise in the future will have to be decided in the light of the circumstances of each case and, in particular, in light of the economic costs

and benefits associated with the particular company for Canada as a whole.

Mr. Hees: Madam Speaker, as a job lost in any area is just as important as a job lost in any other area, and as those people who are employed by one company, irrespective of size, are just as important as those employed by a big company, is it the intention of the government to give exactly the same kind of treatment and support and show the same kind of interest as it has now indicated it is willing to give to Massey-Ferguson, or does it simply believe in the policy that "big is beautiful", and the government is not really interested in small companies that run into the same kind of financial problems as large companies?

Mr. Gray: Madam Speaker, we already offer very substantial help to small and medium-sized companies in Canada through programs such as the Federal Business Development Bank and the enterprise development program.

An hon. Member: Come off it!

Mr. Wilson: Answer the question.

Mr. Gray: We are certainly prepared to examine possible new initiatives which would add to these very successful programs. I have especially noticed the abandonment by my hon. friend on the part of the Conservative party of its traditional reluctance to have the government intervene in the marketplace.

Mr. Hees: In other words, the government's policy is "big is beautiful and to hell with everybody else".

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order.

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NATURAL RESOURCES**CROWN LAND DISPOSAL POLICY OF B.C. GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment who is responsible for forestry, I direct my question to the minister responsible for intergovernmental relations. On July 1, 1980, the government of British Columbia announced a new Crown land disposal policy which potentially will alienate and destroy tens of thousands of acres of forest at fire-sale prices. This is at a time when all governments through CCREM have demanded the importance of expanding our forest base.

Is the government aware of this policy and its potentially destructive impact on our forest resource and, if so, what action has the government taken to dissuade the government of B.C. from its mindless attack on this vital and fast dwindling natural resource?

Mr. Roger Simmons (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the