

from Wawa to mines in northern Michigan? Why is the Government not prepared to make a commitment today to make sure that those jobs stay in northern Ontario rather than move to northern Michigan?

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Oh, now we're in trouble.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. gentlemen are interested in listening to the facts, they are these. In so far as the railway operation is concerned, there is no present policy that will permit for any general assistance to the Wawa railway. That has been recognized by the railway company and by Algoma Steel. They are seeking general assistance from the Province of Ontario which has a very heavy responsibility, and they are asking the Government of Canada to assist as well by seeing what kind of an assistance program we can come up with on a fifty-fifty basis. That has been discussed by the Minister of DRIE and his officials with the Province of Ontario. As soon as those discussions are concluded, I am sure steps will be taken in accordance with the work of the Solicitor General who has been working on this issue for weeks. He began long before it ever came to the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite.

RAILWAY'S TOURIST SERVICE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister aware that the closure of the Wawa Mines would also shut down the Algoma Central Railway tour train which brings 100,000 tourists, mostly from the United States, to northern Ontario every year? The Province of Ontario has already made a commitment to provide assistance. Why is the Government of Canada procrastinating in making a decision, leaving everyone in the lurch as to whether or not there will be assistance to maintain the mining operations and the jobs in tourism?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware of the value of the railway and the fact that it brings in very heavy tourist traffic to the area. This Government is also prepared to render assistance and will do so in conjunction with the Province of Ontario when discussions are concluded. The Hon. Member need lose no sleep on that matter. The Solicitor General began looking after this long before the Hon. Member ever brought the matter up. The necessary assistance to be provided in conjunction with Ontario, once it is agreed to, will be put in place. We are determined to see that northern Ontario is helped in its time of need.

Oral Questions

SUPPLY AND SERVICES

CF-18 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE CONTRACT—REQUEST FOR REFERRAL TO AUDITOR GENERAL

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Important questions have been raised about the Government's claimed costs and benefits associated with technological transfer in the CF-18 maintenance contract. Pertinent among these questions has been the relevance of a Defence Department document that was known to the Government in August, 1985. In order to clear up all of these questions and in order to clear the air completely, will the Government now agree to refer all pertinent documents to the Auditor General?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to answer my hon. colleague by saying that, since taking notice yesterday of the telex that was raised in the House, I have made extensive investigations with people responsible for the evaluation team. I can assure the House that the costs that were quoted of \$100.5 million in one case and \$104 million in the other case included all technology transfer costs and that not one penny in additional costs will be borne in any way, shape or form by the Canadian taxpayer.

● (1425)

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, considering that many people objected—not simply the company that did not get the contract, which is perhaps understandable; not simply the Government of the province that did not get the contract, which is perhaps understandable, but other disinterested citizens—including Conservative members in the Minister's own Party who have raised questions about the figures used to get final assessments upon which the decision was finally reached—given the uncertainty that rests over all this, I ask the Minister why, in order to make the Government's own case, does it not refer this data to the Auditor General?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): I would like to emphasize once again that the evaluation team was composed of some 75 officials—

Mr. Orlikow: Whom you didn't listen to.

Mr. de Cotret:—representing the Department of National Defence, the Department of Supply and Services, and the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion. The results were made public. The results were very close between two highly competent groups of companies. We had a choice. We made that choice. It was a policy decision on the part of this Government, and we stand by it.