

*Oral Questions*

many broken promises of the Government since the last federal election was a firm commitment to make the maritime Provinces energy self-sufficient through natural gas by this very year, 1983. Will the Minister tell us how the Government can justify blowing hundreds of millions of dollars, probably more than \$2 billion in all, on Canadair Ltd., when for a lesser amount it could have solved the whole energy problem of an entire region, with enormous job and economic spin-offs?

**Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, first of all I would like to remind the Hon. Member that Canadair eight years ago had 700 employees. During the period since it was taken over by the Government it employed directly up to 7,500 employees and the average employment maintained during that period was about 5,000 people, who would not have had jobs otherwise. That does not include the hundreds of suppliers all across Canada who have benefited from orders from Canadair. My hon. friend should bear that in mind. What has happened in the meantime has been the creation of jobs and benefits all over Canada. That money did not disappear into a hole. It went into the hands of Canadians who have been kept at work, and these people are taxpayers, which has benefited the whole country.

As far as the maritime program is concerned, I would remind my hon. friend that the decisions have been taken as a result of extensive consultation with the provincial Governments in the Maritimes. The Province of Nova Scotia, in particular, is on the verge of being a supplier of natural gas from off Sable Island and we have decided, rather than bring gas from Alberta, for instance, into the Maritimes, it would be to the benefit of the maritimers if they could use gas which is going to be produced in the maritimes area. We have invested hundreds of—

**Some Hon. Members:** Order.

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**CROWN CORPORATIONS**

## JUSTIFICATION FOR CREATION OF CANAGREX

**Mr. Len Gustafson (Assiniboia):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Given the record of Crown corporations such as Canadair and the fact that there are close to 400 Crown corporations, how can the Prime Minister justify allowing his Government to create another Crown corporation called "Canagrex", which will add to the bureaucracy, with powers to buy and to sell and to control the entire food industry of Canada?

**Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member knows what he says is exaggerated. I do not know how far his exaggeration goes, but it is widely exaggerated, that is for sure. His Party was the one which created the first Crown corporations in this country, the

Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian National Railways, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He has not said he wants to get rid of any of those. There are Crown corporations in his Province which his Province is not getting rid of such as the Saskatchewan Potash Corporation. The Deputy Premier of that Province said the other day, "We are not getting rid of it. It is making money for us". If you look at Alberta you find they have successful Crown corporations there which are working. They are not intending to get rid of any of those, either. We are putting Canagrex into operation because the farmers of Canada have asked for it—

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

**Mr. Whelan:**—the vast majority of farmers. There are a few farmers, a few exporters and so on, who are objecting to it, but, Madam Speaker, it is something the Liberal Party promised in two campaigns. It was endorsed by the vast majority of farm organizations. That is why it is being put forward.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

● (1500)

[Translation]

## CANADAIR—LEVEL OF DEBT—SALARIES OF MANAGEMENT

**Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Is he listening to me? Is he prepared to admit in the House that Canadair's total debt, that is \$2.3 billion, is equivalent to the debts of all small and medium size enterprises which went bankrupt last year and, second, is he prepared to admit as well in the House that Canadair now has 120 senior officials earning more than \$95,000 a year?

**Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue):** Madam Speaker, the facts mentioned by the Hon. Member confirm that there are indications which indeed made the Government aware that the situation at Canadair was not normal. That is why the Government reacted by advocating a realistic solution, namely to be present so as to make it possible to keep a closer watch on Canadair's files and strengthen its commercial position.

[English]

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**PETITIONS**

## TABLING OF REPORTS OF CLERK OF PETITIONS

**Madam Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the House that the petitions, with the exception of one, presented by Hon. Members on Tuesday, June 7, 1983, meet the requirements of the Standing Orders as to form.