

Oral Questions

However, I assure the Hon. Member that I am concerned about the number of jobs available to women and I am working very closely with the Minister of Employment and Immigration to make sure that affirmative actions are in place in those job-creation projects.

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● (1430)

CROWN CORPORATIONS

CANADAIR AND DE HAVILLAND—LONG TERM VIABILITY

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Canadians are shocked at the continuing drain on the public purse to bail out de Havilland and Canadair. The most recent figures bring the losses to some \$2 billion between the two companies. The bailouts total \$1.25 billion. Many employees of de Havilland and suppliers to de Havilland are very concerned about the continuing viability of the company. They are worried by the continued evidence of mismanagement and continuing weakness of those companies. They are concerned that the brave words of last year just are not being translated into action.

Can the Prime Minister give these people any assurance that there are some plans to assure the long term viability of these companies so they can look at these sources of employment from a long term point of view?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is asking me to say there are long term plans for the viability of those plants. I am happy to see that he and his Party are now supporting those enterprises. I remember a few months ago his colleagues, and I believe he himself, were suggesting it was scandalous that we were keeping those plants open. Now he is saying we must have long term plans in order to keep them open. That is what the management is presently engaged in doing. The Hon. Member will realize that the payments in the Supplementary Estimates are payments of debts. They are not enough to keep the plants open forever. We will have to come before Parliament with long term plans if indeed those plants are to be kept open.

What does the Hon. Member want—long term plans without any money at all from the federal Government? I do not know what he is suggesting, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that these plants, which were in the private sector, were very heavily in debt. That is why the private sector wanted to dump them. They wanted to dump them, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member should realize the truth. The Government was not in the market for aeronautic industries. These plants were going to be closed by the private sector. In order to keep this technology alive in Canada we rescued them. We would like nothing more than to be able to give them back to the private sector. Those are the facts that the Hon. Member should realize.

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, when I raised this matter before, I said it was scandalous the Government kept pumping money

in without providing the attention and management to solve the problem. That is what I was criticizing. The Prime Minister must realize there are suppliers and employees of these companies in Toronto and Montreal who are very worried that these companies will be closed down by the Government because it simply cannot afford to keep them open.

BUSINESS PLAN FOR CORPORATIONS

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Is there a business plan in place whereby the Government can assure these workers and suppliers there is a long term future for de Havilland and Canadair? Can he also tell the House that when he approved this latest amount of \$550 million he reviewed those plans personally to assure himself that there was a long term proposal for the companies?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, this additional expenditure being proposed to Parliament was reviewed, not only by myself but by Cabinet as a whole. The Minister responsible for the Canada Development Investment Corporation, the Senator in the other place, will be appearing before the appropriate committee to defend this Supplementary Estimate. At that time he will be in a position to go into detail about the plans in question.

I welcome what my hon. friend now seems to be saying about his and his Party's willingness to make sure those companies continue to operate assuring the existence of the jobs. What a conversion, Mr. Speaker. St. Paul on the road to Damascus has nothing on my hon. friend.

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[*Translation*]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL AID FOR AIRCRAFT COMPANIES

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the President of the Treasury Board and concerns a request by the two aircraft companies for a total of \$500 million. Senator Austin has said he would be able to submit a full report on the financial restructuring of this company by the end of March. In that case, it would seem reasonable to ask Parliament to appropriate \$500 million at some other time. Can the Minister give the House the assurance that he will wait until the report is submitted, which Senator Austin said he would do, before requesting \$500 million for these two companies, since Canadians are not concerned about how important it is to keep this industry alive in Canada, but about the manner in which it has been managed during the past two years. In the circumstances, can the Minister give the House the assurance that the Government's request for \$500 million to give the two companies a financial boost will not be made until the report on future plans is known to the general public?