

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

has needed fiscal monitoring. The Minister in the last Budget has directed Canada Post to come up with operating plans that would show a break-even within two years or so. I could go on and on about other programs.

I want to stress again that after we inherited something like we did from the previous Government I am really quite impressed with the remarkable progress we have made in some 20 months or so, if one starts to enumerate all the achievements.

If you want to have a selective memory, if you want to turn a blind eye to what I think are tremendous achievements, you can do that, but you are not going to fool Canadians. They are going to be looking at our record in a total way. They will look at the promises on fiscal responsibility on which we had to deliver, and I can tell you they will be behind us 100 per cent because of the courage that we have had to tackle these issues, and not just in a cold, calculating way but in a balanced way that cares about the lives of average Canadians. We have done that, whether it is the sales tax credit in the last Budget, or looking at the child tax credit where some \$300 per child will be paid in advance to help families so they will not have to go to loan discounters.

There is a host of things that are on the social and caring side as well. I think the Hon. Member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) is being a little too selective in the points he is tackling. He has some things in his own backyard. It does not happen in politics, but he might even just compliment the Government on ensuring the long and healthy life of de Havilland. I think it has some 5800 employees. I think I said several months ago that not only will those jobs be retained, I think you are going to see hundreds, if not thousands of new jobs created as the months and years unfold thanks to a privatization process where it is no longer bleeding this Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, order.

Hon. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I had intended to use almost all of my 20 minutes, but I have just had a discussion with my very good friend opposite, the Member from Mississauga, and I am quite content and have agreed to limit myself to a very few remarks to give him the opportunity to speak in this debate as well.

I cannot resist, in beginning my remarks, commenting for a moment on the situation at de Havilland. I want to assure Members of the House, as the Member for the area that houses the de Havilland plant, that I am very happy to see the increase in employment at de Havilland. I am very happy to see the increased sales of planes that are occurring. I have never doubted that Boeing was a good company and that it could provide to the company a discipline in management that was lacking or that could have been improved on, if I can put it that way. That is not my grievance about the deal that was made to give that company to the Boeing Corporation.

My grievance is twofold. First, an opportunity was lost to develop a truly Canadian company which, even if we had followed the promises that the Conservatives made during the election campaign, could have been offered as the model that the Government used in its election campaign. Its model was the British National Aerospace Corporation. A certain proportion of the shares would go to the Canadian people, a certain proportion to suppliers and employees, and a certain proportion to some Canadian corporations that are knowledgeable in that industry.

That was what the Government said it would do during the election campaign. I would have been content to have seen that done rather than to put it into the hands of an American company and to tie its fate to decision-making at the highest level in another country. That is one of my regrets about it.

The other regret I have about it comes precisely to the point made by the Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell), and that is the terms of the agreement. Of course I am glad to see the jobs there, and I am glad to see the planes being made, but wait until the Government gets the bills that it agreed with Boeing it will pay. Wait until the insurance commitment cheques start being demanded. Wait until the financing arrangements are made that the Government agreed Boeing could have for foreign sales, financing arrangements which were more generous than the ones that were available to de Havilland when it was operating as a Crown Corporation trying to make sales abroad.

An Hon. Member: They were losing hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

Mr. Kaplan: No, for the last two years it had not been losing hundreds of millions of dollars. It did lose hundreds of millions. I cannot rewrite history, it did. But at the moment when it was moving into a period when the books were showing small losses and coming profits, that was when it was given to an American company and that was when agreements were made to subsidize and support the activities of the company to a very high degree. As I say, I am happy with what I see and am not complaining about that aspect of the Government's Budget.

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We do not operate the way they do in the United States. We have a system of responsible Government in which the Government is entitled to get its Budget intact. With its majority, it is entitled to everything it puts in the Budget.

It is not like the United States where the President must propose his ideas to Congress, negotiate with them and convince them to support his idea. In our system, the Government—especially with its large majority—has the confidence of the House and gets its Budget. If the Government had stuck to its guns on deindexing the old age pensions for senior citizens, it would have been able to inflict that on the Canadian people. That is its right under our system of Government.