

Oral Questions

The General Investment Corporation, the main shareholder of MIL Davie, yesterday approved the firm's business plan, which was also forwarded to the federal government. The General Investment Corporation said it would be willing to add \$135 million to help revive MIL Davie.

Will the minister admit that by postponing his decision, the way he has done for the last six months, on the construction of a ferry for the Magdalen Islands and on the development of the smart ship, he is also postponing this shipyard's recovery and putting in jeopardy thousands of jobs in the Quebec City area?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather strange that in the same question the hon. member can say that the business plan of MIL Davie was given to us yesterday and then accuse me of having delayed my decision six months. Please, let us be serious.

The reason why the decision on the ferry has not been announced yet, and why the Minister of Transport is waiting, is that we want to act in the best interest of the Magdalen Islanders. We want to provide them with a ferry service between the islands and Prince Edward Island which would be adequate, effective and safe. To that end, we are trying to negotiate a solution with MIL Davie.

You should learn to be fair and to react positively to government initiatives taken precisely with a view to help you.

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis): Mr. Speaker, the minister should remember that the Prime Minister and his chief of staff saw the business plan before and during the election campaign. Now that he has everything in front of him, now that all the interested groups—the unions and the Conseil du patronat—in the Quebec City area are in agreement, what he is waiting for before deciding?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, since this matter is of great interest to the people who use the ferry, I will try to be as objective as possible.

To suggest that the Prime Minister and his chief of staff had the business plan during the election campaign, after saying it was handed to us yesterday, this is assuming that we are damn stupid.

The Speaker: I would ask the minister to talk to the Chair.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, the service between Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen Islands is absolutely essential and part of my responsibilities as Minister of Transport. We would have liked to have been able to answer months ago the legitimate request, made years ago, to replace the *Lucy Maud Montgomery*.

Now that a business plan has been made public, I am sure that with Minister Tremblay from Quebec, whom I met this week

with my colleague the Minister of Industry, we will take all the necessary means to find a solution, not only for the people who need a ferry, but also for the workers of MIL Davie. It would help if hon. members knew the case a little better.

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[English]

BILL C-18

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the government House leader. In spite of twice trying, the government House leader has been unable to persuade the Senate to pass Bill C-18 and stop electoral redistribution.

Yesterday a Senate committee passed substantial amendments to the bill. Will the government give serious consideration to these amendments, or better yet, withdraw its support for Bill C-18 and stop the waste of Parliament's time and money on this legislation?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is the government's intention with Bill C-18 not to stop redistribution but to give the House an opportunity to review and update the process which has not been reviewed fully since it came into effect in 1964.

Second, I do not think it is appropriate for me to comment on a report of the other place. The other place as a whole has not yet dealt in a final way with Bill C-18. When it does we here will have to take into consideration the final decision of the Senate and I am sure we will do that very actively.

• (1135)

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that Bill C-18 in its present form will stop redistribution until after the next election.

[Translation]

My supplementary is for the same minister. The readjustment process has reached a point where, even if public hearings were cancelled, not a penny will be saved.

Is the government ready to accept the Senate Committee recommendations and allow the public hearings to go on in order that the commissions may submit their reports without undemocratic and unconstitutional intervention called for in Bill C-18?

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): First, Mr. Speaker, the government's position is that the bill is totally constitutional. It bears the certificate of the law officers of the