

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think I answered that question recently in the House.

ALLEGED INCREASES IN JOB VACANCIES AND NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the minister? As the report of the Economic Council of Canada tabled yesterday notes a new and unusual phenomenon, rising unemployment and increasing numbers of job vacancies—something which has come about despite the many assurances the minister gave to the manpower committee when he spoke of the various programs now in place for acquainting the unemployed with job opportunities—will the minister step up liaison with the private sector in order to direct Canadians to long-term jobs?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the situation is far more complex than that. The number of vacancies unfilled is, unfortunately, by no means the same as the number of people looking for jobs. As for liaison with the private sector, that has been considerably stepped up during the last two or three years through the job information centres and many other measures we introduced in the last two or three years.

* * *

● (1450)

AIR TRANSPORT

THREATENED STRIKE OF SAFETY OPERATIONS GROUP—GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO ASSURE CONTINUED OPERATIONS

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. It is reported that mediation talks have broken down between the aircraft safety operations group and MOT and that a nationwide walk-out has been ordered by the union, leaving no safety supervision or procedure for reviewing pilots' licences. What measures will the minister be taking, since this will eventually ground all commercial air travel in Canada? I would point out to the minister that there are 11 Air Canada pilots whose licences have expired.

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, a certain number of steps were taken to extend licences when it was clear that that could be done without any hazard. That kind of action was a limited measure to delay the impact of any extended walkout. However, there is a limit to what can be done with regard to postponing the difficulties.

Oral Questions

PUBLIC SERVICE

THREATENED STRIKE OF AIR SAFETY OPERATIONS GROUP—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO SETTLE

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board if he will resume his seat. He has certainly been bouncing around today. The talks are over wages and the direct responsibility of Treasury Board. If the walkout is allowed to continue, within a few weeks there will be few licenced commercial pilots left in Canada, as their licences are expiring daily. Will the minister intervene, resume and speed up negotiations before commercial air travel is completely grounded in Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, in that field the workers have the right to strike and it is a right given to them by Parliament.

However, this Parliament passed a legislation last October establishing guidelines within which bargaining must be conducted. We intend to negotiate within those guidelines and if the association concerned would understand our position, we could reach an agreement within those guidelines. The legislation does not allow us to exceed the guidelines.

* * *

[English]

INDUSTRY

DOUGLAS AIRCRAFT—GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PREVENT LAY-OFFS AND DEVELOP AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

Hon. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce whether he is aware that the management of Douglas Aircraft in Malton, Ontario, announced yesterday its plan to lay off 150 workers, whether he will endeavour to take immediate steps to help save the jobs of these workers and also approach his cabinet colleagues to accelerate the federal government's study to develop a sound policy for the Canadian aerospace industry?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I was advised of the plans by McDonnell-Douglas of Canada Limited. They followed a month of very intensive negotiations between myself and representatives of McDonnell-Douglas to see if there was a solution. We responded positively and with two specific proposals which McDonnell-Douglas did not feel they were in a position to accept. I understand that their statement yesterday with regard to the layoffs indicated that the Canadian government had done everything it possibly could in the circumstances, but that the business situation of the company was such that they could not in fact retain the employees any longer.