

Oral Questions

When we formed the government there was this problem which was created before we came into government that was causing a lot of problems. We decided to get to the bottom of it.

There were some very difficult decisions to be made. For example, when we had to decide to dismantle the airborne regiment it was not easy to do. I think it was the right decision. Now all the files are available to everybody and an inquiry has been named that will look at every document.

It is public. The press is there. How can we be more open than that? All the documents are there.

The incident in Somalia occurred before we formed the government but there was a desire by the public to get to the bottom of it and the commission will get to the bottom of it. It will make recommendations. If there is some need for changes in the way decisions are made in defence, we will change them. But so far so good.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Yes, yes. There is an inquiry and the minister has made available everything required by the commissioners. It is a public inquiry and we will wait for the results. After that if there is a need for changes we will make them, but first we will let the inquiry do its job.

The Speaker: I would ask colleagues to keep the questions and the answers short.

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[Translation]

INDUSTRY CANADA

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the secret Industry Canada document it is stated that Oerlikon will likely adopt a federalist position in private, but that its public position will be determined by its head office instead. We also know that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has recently been in touch with that company.

Can the minister assure us that neither he nor any member of his staff has used the fallout benefits from the armoured vehicle construction contracts to pressure Oerlikon to position itself on the No side, as recommended in the secret Industry Canada document?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only communication between myself and Oerlikon has been one letter in which I forwarded to them, with General Motors' permission, a letter from GM stating that there would be discussions between the two companies to see whether it would be possible for Oerlikon to take part in the General Motors contracts.

That is all there was to it, and the allegations of the opposition are once again based on dreaming, obviously in technicolour, and without any basis in fact.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, no, the dreams were in black and white, a printed black and white document from the Department of Industry, a secret document. He might read it from time to time. It would be helpful to us if he took time off from his dreaming to read something once in a while. How can the minister explain that Ottawa continues to put off clarifying its intentions concerning the regional benefits of the contract to purchase armoured vehicles, while as long ago as March Oerlikon was being clearly identified in a secret Industry Canada document as a possible subcontractor for the tank turrets?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the opposition is mixing all kinds of issues together. Oerlikon and General Motors will be discussing their plans to perhaps enable Oerlikon to obtain subcontracts from General Motors.

But to give you an idea of what is really in the Department of Industry document referred to, I will read you some excerpts. For example, in the aeronautics sector, what the "secret" Department of Industry document says is as follows: The generally stable climate and the availability of funding programs are what have been responsible for the industry's continued growth. The threat of separation might offer the companies an opportunity for out of province consolidation and restructuring.

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That is what the document has to say about companies in the aeronautical sector. I might mention other sectors, but the conclusion is that this document states very clearly that separation will cost Quebecers dearly in all of the province's industrial sectors.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the destruction of the two videotapes by Colonel Kenward is clear evidence of a violation or an obstruction of justice.

Colonel Kenward's promotion is an exoneration of wrongdoing determined by the most senior members of our military and viewed by many as a cover-up. Clearly an external inquiry into the operation of the entire military apparatus beyond the mandate of the present hearings is justified to reassure Canadians that the integrity of our military is beyond question and functioning within the confines of law.