

Oral Questions

Member's preamble to his question. It is not for him to investigate combines matters. Parliament has passed a law and has vested this authority in the Director of the Combines Investigation Branch. The Director is doing his job, he is performing under the responsibility given to him by an Act of Parliament and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that he does not at all need the help of the Hon. Member to do his job.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's arrogance does not really cut an awful lot of ice with me. The fact of the matter is that in the last four or five months at least four or five major Crown corporations have landed in hot water.

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CROWN CORPORATIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTROL

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Dartmouth-Halifax East): May I direct a brief question to the Prime Minister and ask him if, in the continuing absence of the Government's Bill on Crown investment, the CDIC measure, he has considered taking any interim action? We have Air Canada in some trouble, Canadair facing some difficulties, and the Canada Dairy Commission in some trouble. Now we have Canadian National Railways under investigation. Has the Prime Minister considered any interim or any specific action he might take or might suggest to this House so the Government would regain some control or seem to have control over these massive giants in our system?

• (1120)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is before the House a Bill dealing with government control of Crown corporations. We would appreciate it from the Hon. Member if he could put a little pressure on his House Leader to ensure that we can in fact deal with these Crown corporations in a way which, as the Hon. Member says, is controlled, that is, as far as the law is concerned.

Insofar as the allegations made by the Hon. Member are concerned, I am not aware of any investigation into CNR. I am not quite sure what the Hon. Member is alluding to when he speaks of the Canadian Dairy Commission. However, as I said, there is a remedy before the House, and we would urge the Hon. Member to co-operate in getting it implemented.

Mr. Beatty: If there is no problem, why do you need the remedy?

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AIR CANADAQUERY RESPECTING PRIME MINISTER'S ASSOCIATION WITH
CHAIRMAN

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, my question is also directed to the Prime Minister. In view of

the muzzling of the Transport Committee which occurred yesterday and which makes it extremely unlikely that witnesses for Air Canada will be appearing before the Committee this session, and in view of the answer of the Prime Minister yesterday to my supplementary question when he said that I was "completely wrong", I would like to ask him which of the following facts are wrong: that the Chairman of Air Canada is his friend; that the Prime Minister invited Mr. Amyot to be Chairman of Air Canada; that the Prime Minister travelled by helicopter to make that invitation.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe you would wonder whether I could comment on what is called a muzzling of a Committee yesterday. I understand that a majority of the Committee reached a decision. As the Hon. Member calls that muzzling, perhaps it is another indication that he disagrees with the democratic process.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: I can repeat that the statement that the Hon. Member made yesterday or the day before was dead wrong and came from a prejudiced mind.

REQUEST THAT CHAIRMAN BE GIVEN LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Mr. Speaker, my grade six teacher told me years ago that "sticks and stones will break your bones, but names will never hurt you". I will not really be detracted by the petulance of the Prime Minister in terms of prejudice. However, I will return to my supplementary question yesterday, not in terms of facts, but, rather, to talk about prejudice.

Does the Prime Minister not think that there is potentially some prejudice to continue to allow the Chairman of one of our largest Crown corporations to carry on duties for that Crown corporation when, in effect, the policeman on the beat takes a leave of absence when there is a criminal investigation of his conduct? Surely this must be causing some stress and strain to the board of directors, let alone adversely affecting the operation of the airline, especially when this matter could go on for months and we have had no evidence whatsoever of when it could be concluded. Surely the same standards should apply with no admission—I appreciate the difficulties—but with no suggestion of implication, but the fact of the ethics—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member should ask his question.

Mr. Nowlan: I am simply asking whether the Prime Minister does not think the same standards should apply to the Chairman of a Crown corporation under criminal investigation as to a policeman on the beat.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I always understood that under the rule of law in Canada there is a presumption of innocence on the part of a person. I have always acted in that way. As far as the Hon. Member is