

Oral Questions

[English]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

CANADAIR—MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister who, the House will recall, stated yesterday that departmental officials, referring to Canadair, do not have the expertise to deal with all of the businesses in which the Government is involved. Will the Prime Minister indicate where the management expertise is to run Canadair, a diversified aerospace company? Is it in Gil Bennett, the lawyer from Toronto who has been brought in on a part-time basis to be the chief executive officer? Is it Senator Austin, in the company described as the management company of Canadair? Is it Maurice Strong? Is it Joel Bell? Where is the expertise management which the Prime Minister referred to yesterday, to run Canadair at the present time?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, obviously if I say that it is in that collective management, the Hon. Member will say that they are not good enough experts for him. I will ask him a question in turn, although it may be a bit irregular. We have had suggestions in this House that they would like to run it by a joint parliamentary committee. Maybe the Hon. Member can tell me the greater experts on his side than the ones he just named. Judging by what they did with Canadair in the nine months they were in Government, I do not think they have great experts on that side.

Mr. Stevens: As all can recognize, Madam Speaker, that is a terrible distortion of the suggestion made yesterday. We simply ask that a select all-Party committee review the Government's plans, and take a look at whom is the expertise management in whom we can all have confidence to run Canadair.

APPOINTMENT OF JEAN-PIERRE GOYER

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (York-Peel): The Prime Minister has indicated that we must leave Crown corporations out of politics which, according to him, is a one hundred year tradition, and that the running of Crown corporations must not have any political influence. In view of that statement, will the Prime Minister indicate why he and the present Minister of Finance pressed so hard to have Jean-Pierre Goyer made Chairman of Canadair, something that was resented and resisted to the end by the old management of Canadair?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I am not sure about the Hon. Member's facts, but he and his Party have been complaining about the old management as being incompetent. Now he seems to think that they were competent enough to judge that they were good and that they should not be replaced by, as he alleges, Jean-Pierre Goyer. The Hon. Member has to make up his mind. Maybe Mr. Goyer is better in our mind than the old management and in that—

Mr. Stevens: Is that right?

Mr. Trudeau: It is right if I follow the Hon. Member's thinking, because the Hon. Member wanted to get rid of the old management. What is his position? Does he want the old management or does he want new management?

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INDUSTRYMAISLIN TRANSPORT LTD.—STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT'S
LOAN GUARANTEES

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Now that it is evident that yet another questionable deal by the Government has helped out its friends at Maislin, and particularly the banks, can the Minister tell me why the loan guarantees to Maislin were structured so as to give suppliers, mainly small businesses, no money, give employees only half of their back salaries, vacation pay and severance pay, and yet allow the banks to recoup nearly all of their money?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Madam Speaker, I am very disappointed that the Conservative Party does not think that 2,000 jobs in Canada are very important or that it was important to try to save those 2,000 jobs. Second, the allegation by the Hon. Member of what is contained in that loan agreement with respect to salaries is not accurate. When the Hon. Member has some accurate information, I will be happy to respond to him.

REPORTED SALE OF COMPANY'S LICENCES TO UNITED STATES
FIRM

Mr. J. R. Ellis (Prince Edward-Hastings): Madam Speaker, there are only half that many employees, and they would have been working today had this been handled properly. The licences owned by Maislin were, I understand, sold to Consolidated Freightways of California for a pittance, on the agreement of the bank. Can the Minister tell me why no Canadian companies were allowed to bid on these licences, when a single Montreal-Toronto licence is worth \$1 million on the free market today? Also, will he take steps to stop that sale and open it up to Canadian bidders?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Again, Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member's information is not accurate. Perhaps he would like to ask the responsible trustee. The Government of Canada did not negotiate that sale. In fact we were just advised of the sale a couple of days ago, and now we have to look and see if it is reviewable under the FIR Act. Perhaps the Hon. Member would like to write a letter to the chairman of the board of the bank. Maybe he can advise him on what happened during that transaction.