

Adjournment Debate

be sure that the contracts are given to the Davie shipyard in Lauzon—there will be some subcontracting done by the Vickers shipyard in Montreal—so they can give work to the 2,000 to 2,300 people they normally employ and to the 500 to 600 employed by Vickers in Montreal. We also want the tenders to go out as quickly as possible for the other two ships included in the TRUMP program.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the Conservative Members from Quebec are. I do not know for whom they speak, but if you look at all the Quebec tenders, very few succeed. We are always had, we get only crumbs, promises and more promises. Take for example—and I will end on that, Mr. Speaker—the shipyards, the Gulf refinery in Montreal East, the International Banking Centre, the space agency. It is always the same, Mr. Speaker, “nays” or promises.

Now, we want action and I can't wait for the Parliamentary Secretary's answer. When are we going to get jobs for the shipyards in Quebec?

• (1825)

[English]

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the present Government has done very well, given the abominable mess left by the previous administration as a result of several years of massive neglect of the shipbuilding industry throughout Canada.

The issue raised by the Hon. Member is of course a very important one to the Government. Let me summarize the action taken by the Government to ensure the long-term viability of the shipbuilding sector in the Province of Quebec.

As a result of problems experienced by the single largest shipyard owner in Quebec, the Government facilitated the acquisition by Marine Industrie Limitée of the eastern marine assets of Versatile Corporation, thereby ensuring that contracts already awarded to the companies in jeopardy could and would be proceeded with. This action also ensured employment for several thousands of shipyard workers in this very important sector of the Canadian economy.

The Hon. Member will recognize, if he so chooses, that the completion of a transaction of this magnitude by MIL of three large companies from Versatile Corporation, namely, Davie, Vickers, and Systems, is a very complex matter. It required input not only from the commercial sector but also from the Quebec Government and union members themselves. I am happy to say that with the co-operation of all concerned the transaction was completed and an agreement was signed in late January. The new owner can now operate its assets and develop them.

In order to be more specific, let me say that I am happy to report to the Hon. Member that work on *Caribou II* is now progressing in a normal way. Much of the preparatory work which needs to be undertaken to build a vessel had to be stopped because the former owner of Davie did not have

sufficient financial resources to proceed with the work at the time, and the Hon. Member knows that.

Contrary to the Hon. Member's belief, the second vessel being built for Marine Atlantic is not an exact duplicate. Modifications have been made and engineering work is required to effect those changes. Now that the ownership of the yard is on a more solid basis, detailed plans are in fact being prepared, materials for the building of the vessel are being ordered, and some fabrication has been already started in the shops.

Let me assure the Hon. Member that we are doing everything possible to ensure that work on the vessel is reflected on the shop floor. I think the Hon. Member's cause is right and just in that respect. The workers are being recalled and, when the company resumes full operation on the basis of the contracts already signed, it is interesting to note that it should be able to employ some 2,000 workers by late 1988 or early 1989.

• (1830)

[Translation]

BILINGUALISM—PUBLIC SERVICE—COMPLIANCE WITH LINGUISTIC REQUIREMENTS BY DEPUTY MINISTERS. (B) POLICY ENUNCIATION—EFFECT ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, on March 31, the Commissioner of Official Languages tabled his report in the House of Commons. And on April 1, I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret) a question about some comments made by the Commissioner who was critical of the apathy and lack of direction on the part of the Government on the subject of official languages. More specifically, I asked him whether or not the Commissioner's criticism of arrangements made by his Department in alleviating linguistic requirements for senior management did not suggest a definite set-back. Mr. Speaker, the question was self-evident since the Commissioner blamed the Government for its inaction and on the same morning, *The Globe and Mail* reported that the Government has recently allowed Deputy Ministers and senior civil servants to ignore more easily the linguistic requirements of their position.

Now, the President of the Treasury Board looked surprised I had the document at hand, the official document No. 800978-79-80 of the department dated February 20, 1986. Appendix B of that document states that “Treasury Board approval is no longer required concerning the exemption from level B linguistic proficiency in the other official language as far as appointments are concerned in two groups of management executives within a bilingual region”.

I will quote the guideline word for word from page 6 of that document:

i) applications from employees appointed to a bilingual position within the management group (EX) in a bilingual region who request that they be exempted from level B proficiency in the other official language as a condition of employment and,