

Oral Questions

REQUEST THAT AGREEMENTS BE TABLED

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Minister of National Defence would undertake to consider the request I have made with respect to the tabling of those four agreements. In that way we could all be fully familiar with the stance of the New Democratic Party and its obvious support of the testing of missiles under the NDP Government of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I am ready to examine the proposition made by the Leader of the Opposition and will certainly look into it very carefully. If there is nothing confidential about them, they could be tabled. I am sure they would provide some light to the NDP.

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SUPPLY AND SERVICES

CONTRACT TO PURCHASE DE HAVILLAND AIRCRAFT FOR
ICEBERG RECONNAISSANCE

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board who is supposed to be looking after the financial affairs of the country and the spending of money.

The Minister will know that yesterday the Minister of the Environment announced a sweetheart contract for de Havilland Canada for \$37 million to fix up a Dash-7 which is really only worth \$12 million. The program was announced on the basis of special recovery. This is a cost to Canada of \$100,000 for every job created.

Is this part of the Government's Special Economic Recovery Program, or is it really a program to recover de Havilland the same as the Government is trying to recover Canadair with sweetheart contracts for aircraft that may or may not be required?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I will be pleased to take that question. The purchase of the Dash-7 is part of the Special Economic Recovery Program. I might indicate to the hon. gentleman, who comes from Toronto where de Havilland is located, that I would have expected him to be more favourably inclined toward an announcement like that.

The aircraft is being purchased for ice reconnaissance purposes. It is an application to which the plane has not been put before, but to which it can be very readily adapted.

I should like to draw to the attention of the Hon. Member for Scarborough East, who asked a question about this in committee last week, that we are going to be incorporating Canadian technology into the Dash-7, involving side-looking radar which, of course, is being developed in Canada, with 85 per cent Canadian content, as a result of the initiative of Canadians in this regard.

COMPARISON OF AIRCRAFT TYPES

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South): Madam Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister where he gets the idea that people will buy this aircraft as a surveillance aircraft when he knows that it is a short-range aircraft. Its ability to stay over an air target area is less than 60 per cent of the 1950 vintage Loughheed Electra that is presently being used. How does he expect people to spend money to buy an aircraft that cannot perform as well as one with 1950 technology?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, I can assure the hon. gentleman that the purchase is being made after due and very serious consideration. I would hope that he would have sufficient pride in Canadian technology to give every consideration to initiatives being taken by the Government and by a Crown corporation of Canada to develop Canadian technology not only for domestic purposes but for international purposes.

I might indicate to the hon. gentleman that it happens that in Canada we have ice conditions in the Great Lakes region for close to three months of the year.

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● (1440)

[Translation]

FISHERIES

GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS ON FINANCING OF INDUSTRY IN
QUEBEC

Mr. Alexandre Cyr (Gaspé): My question is directed to the Hon. Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The fisheries industry in Quebec is in very bad shape, if we consider the fact that today, processing plants owned by the Pêcheurs Unis du Québec have not yet started their operations. I know the Hon. Minister has submitted a recovery program, that is, a financing program to the fishermen and plant employees, and also to the financial institutions, so that 2,500 fishermen and factory workers can go to work.

Can the Minister inform the House today whether he feels that the proposed plan will be accepted by all parties, so that factory workers and fishermen can be given the assurance that they will be able to go back to work within the next few weeks?

Hon. Pierre De Bané (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Madam Speaker, the problem the Government has decided to examine is far more extensive than the case to which the Hon. Member for Gaspé (Mr. Cyr) is referring. In fact, we now have five companies in the Maritimes, including the Pêcheurs Unis du Québec, with a total of sixty factories, which are on the brink of bankruptcy.

In the event of a bankruptcy, there will be the usual sales of several million dollars worth of fish at fire sale prices, which