

saw right away the kind of a trap the Members of the Opposition are preparing for us. In the case of Canadair, which is a highly competitive industry with competitors in the United States and France, what kind of questions did the Opposition Members ask? They were interested only in matters that were entirely confidential, such as production costs and the use of technology as compared to Grumman or other companies. The Canadair people appearing before the Committee—I had been wanting to see them for a long time, because \$1.3 billion is a lot of money—told us: Gentlemen, your questions are only helping our competitors. Do you not understand that your questions are not a help but a hindrance? That was the kind of question the Opposition Members asked Canadair.

• (1700)

Instead of seeking the assurance that the money was well spent, the Opposition Members only wanted to know about cost, in order to help Grumman, because the Member who was asking the questions had Grumman's annual report in front of him, and used it to embarrass these people who were appearing before the Committee for the first time.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Progressive Conservative Party is not prepared to, as it were, put its money where its mouth is. I listened to the Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Beatty). The Hon. Member is Joint Chairman of the Committee on Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments. He is one of the Members I prefer to listen to in the House, because he is consistent, because he believes basically in what he says and because he practises what he preaches, and having seen his performance as Joint Chairman, we realize that he knows where he is going. Unfortunately, he is alone, crying in the wilderness, in the middle of that crowd sitting next to him. The Member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe does not, for instance, want to do away with VIA Rail. Suppose we talk about VIA Rail for a minute, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition did not talk about VIA Rail, but he could have used it as a good example in discussing the legislation and the measures he would like to see introduced, because the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) has often been criticized for cutting 20 per cent of the traffic—

Mr. Clark: Without prior consultation! Without public hearings!

Mr. Deniger: Without prior consultation, this summer, and without any public hearings, and why not, Mr. Leader of the Opposition? What is so bad about not having a public hearing? Is that so bad? What is really bad, Mr. Speaker, is that the Progressive Conservative Party is going to criticize us for running a deficit and for giving VIA Rail even more money, namely \$164 million in addition to the \$500 million it was given already. I would like to know what VIA Rail's deficit would have been if we had not had the guts to scrap routes that were not being used?

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Mr. Clark: Probably less.

Mr. Deniger: Of course, if the Leader of the Opposition had the courage to say what is on his mind, Mr. Speaker, he would probably get fewer votes in Winnipeg in January, because as Hon. Members are aware, the Progressive Conservatives are ahead in the polls, and are also so scared and their popularity margin is so narrow that they will not take a stand on anything. When they had their policy orientation convention in Toronto—the Leader of the Opposition is smiling because he knows what I am going to say—they did not even have the guts to have a debate on an orientation issue. All they did was use a questionnaire, and now they are trying to camouflage the results. For shame! A questionnaire in which they say they are against family allowances, against multiculturalism, against any form of security and against hospital insurance! This is the party that was so concerned about the accountability of Crown corporations, this is the party that wanted to be able to analyze Crown corporation activities. This is the party that wanted to know whether profits made by Air Canada this year should not be returned to the Consolidated Fund instead of being re-invested to ensure that the Canadian taxpayer is getting his money's worth. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see them in the Opposition. I am especially glad, as my colleague from Longueuil (Mr. Olivier), said, that the Leader of the Official Opposition is going to stay there. I am glad, because although he may show some common sense on other issues, though lacking the support of his caucus, he does not do so on this issue. It was obvious, Mr. Speaker. It was embarrassing to hear him speak just now, when he so obviously had been told to say nothing.

Take Air Canada or Canadian National or Petro-Canada. The Leader of the Opposition should know that according to the same polls that show his party is ahead, Canadians like their Crown corporations, they support them and are the corporations' main customers.

Mr. Speaker, he should remember the lesson he got in 1980, in January or February, when the Canadian people rejected him outright because he wanted to privatize Crown corporations. Has he forgotten? That is really amazing, Mr. Speaker. However, I would rather not waste any more time on what the Leader of the Opposition did not say, because what is important here is the Auditor General's Report. I would like to quote what he said in paragraph 2.114, since we have talked a lot about Bill C-123. The Auditor General said, and I quote:

—Bill C-123 considerably strengthens the role of ministers in controlling the financing and directing of wholly-owned Crown corporations.

I think it is quite true and that it is a straightforward analysis of Bill C-123. In fact, this is what the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) told the Members of the Opposition, who were obviously not paying much attention. However, the Auditor General goes on to say, and I quote:

However, it does not address the needs of Parliament.