

Oral Questions

General made use of the material in that report in preparing his comments in his 1982 report to Parliament.

REQUEST THAT COMMITTEE BE PERMITTED TO EXAMINE
REPORT

Mr. Scott Fennell (Ontario): Madam Speaker, the Auditor General has expressed to us his frustration that this report was for his eyes only. I acknowledge that we want to get into new technology, but we are in a very serious situation where it is costing every citizen in this country \$95 to support Canadair. I insist, in view of the fact the Minister has given the Auditor General this report for his eyes only, that he broaden the terms and allow this report to come before committee so that we can report back to the citizens of this country about what actually went on in Canadair.

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, as far as I am aware, the Auditor General, rather than expressing frustration about the basis on which he received the report, expressed satisfaction that, in spite of its status as a Cabinet document, he was allowed to see it and review it, so I must say that I do not agree with the interpretation of my hon. friend.

Aside from that, the Minister responsible for the Canada Development Investment Corporation, as far as I am aware, has presented a very complete report to both the Public Accounts Committee and the Finance Committee, and has made himself and his officials available to provide just the kind of information my hon. friend is seeking, so that the ground he is interested in is in fact being covered.

CERTIFICATION OF 1981 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Madam Speaker, my question is also for the President of the Treasury Board. We all know that the underlying basis of confidence in our financial and corporate system lies in the auditors and their signing of the financial statements of corporations. On January 22, Thorne-Riddell signed the 1981 financial statements of Canadair. No mention was made of any financial problems. Yet a mere three weeks later Canadair asked for a letter of comfort in the sum of \$1.3 billion. My question is this: Did the Government, or the Board of Directors of Canadair instruct, ask, or imply that Thorne-Riddell should omit any reference to the disastrous financial position of Canadair?

● (1120)

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, in line with the principles involved in the role of Cabinet Ministers, I think that that question should be referred to the Minister currently responsible for the Canada Development Investment Corporation and Canadair. However, I must say that I am surprised at the inference, the innuendo in my hon. friend's question, when he is referring to a major, respected, national accounting firm.

Mr. Thacker: If the Government would put its Cabinet Ministers in this House where we could question them, I would be asking the responsible Minister that question, but it stows him away in the Senate, where you cannot get at him. That answer is not good enough. That answer smells of a cover up.

INQUIRY RESPECTING POSSIBLE REPRESENTATIONS MADE TO
AUDITING FIRM

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): I am repeating my question to the President of the Treasury Board. Did any Cabinet Minister or did any Board of Directors of Canadair instruct, ask, or imply that Thorne-Riddell should omit any comments about the disastrous financial position of Canadair in 1981?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Madam Speaker, there is a Minister in the House answering for the Canada Development Investment Corporation, the Minister of National Revenue, and the Minister—

Mr. Nielsen: He's not here.

Mr. Gray:—who sits in the Senate has appeared both before the Public Accounts Committee and the Finance Committee and, on behalf of the Government, has attempted to be very open and very helpful to Members of Parliament in this very important matter. Again, I want to say that I am surprised at the innuendo in the question, referring, as it does, to a major, national, and reputable accounting firm. I think that that innuendo should be rejected.

Mr. Lalonde: Say it outside the House.

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SPECIAL RECOVERY CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAM

HIRING OF CONSULTANTS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the minister of Finance which concerns the 1.5 million unemployed men and women who would still like to have jobs. It is now two months since the Minister announced in his budget—and I think he was using the language without intended irony—his special recovery, fast track, accelerated Capital Works Program intended, one thought, to create many jobs. Thus far, from the \$550 million which was intended to be spent this year, the only jobs about which we know are those which have gone to five consultants who have been paid \$1.5 million. Could the Minister tell us how many jobs have been created by this so-called fast track policy, and where are they?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the Leader of the NDP that since last November we have created 300,000 more jobs in this country. On a seasonally adjusted basis, the equivalent of 200,000 new jobs have been created in Canada since last November. These are the facts.