

Oral Questions

ment will confirm that CDC does not require government approval in the conduct of its affairs and that the government will not interfere with the directors in the exercise of their business judgment.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to make that specific commitment today to this House and the shareholders of the CDC?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, if there was a paper loss in the value of the shares I think it could be directly ascribed to the opposition who have tried—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Well, hear me out. The opposition have tried to make a big fuss over the fact that the major shareholder was attempting to ensure that the chairman of the company would be a very successful businessman. Now there does not seem to be anything in that, or in Mr. Strong's career as a successful businessman, which would frighten people, so obviously if there has been a fall in the value of the shares it is because there has been the kind of agitation we have heard in the past couple of weeks from the hon. member and his party who have tried to—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau:—scare people into believing that the company would do badly under Mr. Strong whereas they were doing marvellously under some other chairman whose name, I bet, is probably unknown to three quarters of the shareholders themselves.

I have said in this House that this government holds 49 per cent of the shares for the Canadian people, we have somewhere between 75 and 80 per cent of the equity of the company, I do not know of any shareholder in similar circumstances, in private or public, semi-private or semi-public affairs, who would not be interested in the designation of the chairman of that company of which he or she is a major equity holder. That is what the government has tried to ensure, and there is nothing for which we should apologize. The annual meeting was held yesterday. I understand that it was amicable and that the results are satisfactory to all people concerned. The hon. member seems to have a supplementary, and I will be happy to hear it.

NECESSITY FOR COMMITMENT

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, I have to ask a supplementary because I did not get an answer to my question.

Let me make one point quite clear. The drop in the value of the shares took place before we raised the question in this House and occurred because the shareholders were aware of the interference by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the government. That is why the shares went down, and for no other reason.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson: My question to the Prime Minister is to ask why is he completely unwilling to make that specific commitment, one that was made in the offering memorandum on behalf of the government to the shareholders, which they took at face value when they made their share purchases? Why is the Prime Minister unwilling to make that commitment today because I can tell him, based on my experience in that business, if he does not make the commitment, the future expansion and financing of that company will be put into serious doubt? His alternatives are to make the commitment or buy back today the shares that were sold to the small investors of this country.

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I am not sure what future financing plans the hon. member is referring to. If he has some information on that I would be happy to have him make it public. I do not know of such future financing plans of the CDC, but I do know that during the first ten years of its existence, a company set up by this government some ten years ago, I was informed and consulted about the appointment of its chairman. The shares, according to the hon. member, continued to increase in value.

I think it was normal when we were not informed, or when the Minister of Finance did not receive the information in time, that the government should have shown some concern. We hold, on behalf of the people of Canada, more than 75 per cent of the equity of that company, and I think it would be a mere courtesy to ensure that the major shareholder and equity holder would be informed of the choice of chairman.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

REVIEW OF TASCHEREAU-KELLOCK ROYAL COMMISSION PAPERS

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, you will appreciate that the retired civil servant retained by the Privy Council Office to review the transcripts and documents of the Taschereau-Kellock Royal Commission on the Gouzenko revelations was to report to the Privy Council Office by May 1, when I understand his mandate expired. I ask the President of the Privy Council if that report has been made, and if the recommendation is to permit public access to all of the papers, as it should, why are inquiries from the public still being denied?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, with regard to the question of the hon. member and the report to which he referred, I shall certainly check into the matter. I should be able to give him a more detailed answer early next week.