

Oral Questions

It is these value-added jobs which my friends opposite in the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party are appealing to this government to help to create. Then when we introduce some legislation that clearly is leading to the creation of this investment in these high value-added jobs, my hon. friend says that is the wrong way to go. You cannot have it both ways.

* * *

AIRLINE INDUSTRY

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the exchanges in Question Period I am reminded of what the Prime Minister said when he was first elected, that after eight years we would never recognize Canada. He is right. It is in total collapse.

I want to ask the Minister of Transport about another calamity that he is responsible for. Yesterday in this House the minister said that he supported and endorsed the efforts of the employees of Canadian Airlines to rescue their jobs. Today he is now reported as saying he has changed his mind, that he is now looking at a merger proposal.

I ask the Minister of Transport: What is the government plan? It is too late to be playing mental ping-pong with the lives and jobs of thousands of Canadians in the airline industry. Within the next 24 hours, will the government put forward its blueprint so that we can save this industry and save the jobs and have something to defend in this country when we take over this government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I protest vigorously against the allegation made by the other side to the effect that we had a change of heart or that I would have said that we had undertaken some other process. It is absolutely untrue. We are still looking at ways for the government to reconcile fiscal constraints with its desire to support the efforts of the Canadian Airlines employees in the best interest of the people of Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, the minister's inaction makes a mockery of the dedicated employees of Canadian Airlines, the management and the unions who have put together a workable positive approach to saving their company, saving their jobs.

It is five minutes to midnight on this issue. Will the minister quit stalling and announce that he will back the employee-led package? Yes or no?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we have repeated many times that we are interested in this package provided that it meets the financial constraints of this country.

I again invite the Liberal Party to tell us at what price, to what amount it is prepared to expose the Canadian taxpayers to effect a settlement of this situation.

* * *

• (1450)

PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

Mr. Doug Fee (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and for International Trade.

At the end of October the minister received the conclusions of a year-long, nation-wide study on prosperity. My question to the minister is where do we go from here? So far there does not appear to be a lot of action coming out of the report and several of my constituents have expressed concern about the amount of money that was spent on the study.

Can the minister give us assurances that Canadians are going to get value for the money spent on the prosperity initiative?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, very clearly Canadians will see that they will really get value for money on this consultation. It involved meetings with 186 communities right across the country. Out of that has come an action plan from the private sector steering group which recommended a number of things that the Prime Minister referred to in his remarks last night, proposals relating to training, a partnership among business, labour and government to