

which is quite revealing and demonstrates to what extent this Conservative Government is either naive or incompetent. I quote:

● (1140)

[English]

"With your involvement in the investment business, I have to ask if your pending purchase of the Canadair CL-601 is really best for you? CDIC's plan to sell Canadair is public knowledge. When that happens, to whom will you look for support? Spares? And what will be the effect on your long term investment in that product?"

We can offer new Gulfstream III's now and Gulfstream IV's downstream, and we know who will be there to fully support your investment."

[Translation]

That is the kind of letter which was sent to the prospective clients and purchasers of Canadair. Although the newspapers of this country obviously denounced this situation, the Conservative Government found nothing wrong with it. Quite the contrary. CDIC again forced Canadair a second and even a third time to open its doors to Gulfstream's experts. Well, having obtained all the strategic information it wanted about Canadair, Gulfstream, thus confirming the fears expressed by the Board of Directors in May 1985, announced in October in a very despicable fashion that it had changed its mind and would not buy the Challenger program from Canadair.

For this reason, I do not hesitate to say that the Government's slowness in proceeding with the sale of Canadair has probably resulted in several prospective buyers turning to products made by its United States competitors. There is no doubt in my mind that the Conservative Government must be held responsible for this serious situation. And I do not hesitate to say that the Government's indecision and administrative irresponsibility have certainly resulted in the loss of major contracts for the Ville-Saint-Laurent company. Its lack of concern has fed the employees quite legitimate worries. Indeed, Canadair's employees have mentioned three major concerns during the Government's discussions to sell Canadair.

First of all, in the area of job security, the employees feel that the guarantees are not strong enough. In fact, it can be said that there is practically no guarantee in that respect. Here is the commitment made by Bombardier in its memorandum of understanding and accepted by the Government.

The Bombardier company has committed itself to maintain existing levels of employment at Canadair, subject to cyclical shifts and sound business practices. What does that mean? In practical terms, that does not mean anything at all as far as the job security for thousands of Montreal workers is concerned. The Government has decided not to ease their fears, not to satisfy their request which I deem quite legitimate, and I accuse the Conservative Government of having abandoned Canadair employees to their fate.

Hon. Members will recall that during the seventies and in the early eighties, the Conservatives were against maintaining the large subsidies granted by the Liberal Government to

*Canadair Limited Divestiture Act*

ensure the survival of this company. Now, the first thing the Conservative Government does is to sell this profitable company to the private sector and to tell the employees: We are no longer responsible for your welfare; you have to rely on the new owners; good luck and goodbye. The Canadair employees are worried not only about their jobs, but also about their pension plans. The Government is refusing to provide the explanations which are absolutely essential in my opinion because these people, who have worked for this company for dozens of years and have invested their time, their talent, and also part of their income to prepare an adequate pension for themselves, are now faced with uncertainty about their pension plans. They have not been told whether their pension plans will be transferred to the new management of Canadair. The Bombardier commitments deal with the amount accumulated in the pension fund but the future use of these amounts is left completely vague, and nothing is said about the plan itself. I refer, Madam Speaker, to the commitment made by the Government and Bombardier: "CDIC and the Government guarantee that the Canadair pension plans will be fully funded at the date of closing." But what will happen after the transaction? In addition, Bombardier and the Crown acknowledge that amounts in the Canadair pension plans will be for the sole benefit of the Canadair employees. Once more, we would have expected more forthrightness and clarity from the Government on such a major issue. Finally, the employees are also worried about the fact that nothing would prevent Bombardier from moving part of its Canadair operations to other plants in Quebec, elsewhere in Canada or even abroad. Obviously, these workers, who have been the key of the success of this company over the years, could have obtained better guarantees of a job and security for themselves and their families in the Montreal region. However, I am not surprised at the vagueness of the approach taken by this Government since it did nothing a while ago to save thousands of jobs in Eastern Montreal. One company after another had to close or to lay off employees who had worked for many years in transport related industries in Eastern Montreal. For weeks and months, the Conservative Government did absolutely nothing to counter this disaster in the Montreal region. And in the case of this transaction which turns over to the private sector a Crown corporation that could, through the Government, provide those people with thousands of jobs, the Government has done nothing to ensure that the purchaser, a private corporation, would remain as good an employer as the Government has been for its many employees over the years.

In conclusion, I would simply like to ask, as I did earlier in my remarks when I raised four questions: Why did the F-18 maintenance contract lead to such controversy? It is clear to me that at the time Bombardier was negotiating with the Government the takeover of that corporation, everyone knew the F-18 maintenance contract was to be awarded to a Canadian corporation as provided by the very deal that was struck when the F-18 contract was signed. The previous Government had included in that contract a commitment that phase two of the F-18 maintenance work would be done in