

*Supply*

decide for ourselves whether the Government is committed to the western region of Canada.

There have been rumours lately. In fact, a document was leaked from Cabinet just a few hours ago which indicated that the Cabinet is considering giving special help to another industry, namely, General Motors. I wonder to what extent General Motors needs financial help from the Government of Canada? The leaked document indicates that the Government is planning to give perhaps \$200 million to General Motors. I would like to remind Hon. Members that all of western Canada combined, including the territory of Yukon, received \$114 million over the last two years. The Government is now considering giving General Motors \$200 million. That puts the whole issue of western Canada into perspective in terms of how the Government is treating western Canada.

Let us look at some of the actions the Government has taken in western Canada. It has come up with \$1 billion to bail out the two western banks which failed. I suggest that had proper and appropriate consideration been given to that region, those two banks would not have collapsed and that bail-out would not have been necessary. Rather than giving \$1 billion to the uninsured depositors of the Canadian Commercial Bank and the Northland Bank, if the same financial commitment had been given to the farmers, the small oil and gas companies, the forest sector, the mining sector and the small business sector in western Canada, those banks would not have collapsed and that bail-out would not have been necessary.

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When we consider the CF-18 maintenance contract we see that 75 out of 75 experts who advised the Government on the company and, by implication, the area to which it should be awarded, agreed that it should go to Bristol Aerospace in western Canada. Did that \$1.5 billion contract go to western Canada? No, it went to Montreal. It went to Canadair. The other day we learned that one of the reasons it did go to Canadair was to sweeten the pot so that when the Government sold off Canadair to Bombardier, Bombardier would be more interested in making the deal.

**Mr. Bissonnette:** Montrealers will remember that.

**Mr. Riis:** There we go again. That indicates relatively clearly the bias in terms of where the Government's focus really is.

Let us consider the forest industry. We are now up against the wall in the industry. The Americans want to impose a countervailing tariff on our lumber industry. What did the Government do in cahoots with the Premier of British Columbia? It said: "Listen. We have subsidized our industry. We do not have adequate stumpage rates". Therefore, by implication, we are involved in unfair trading practices as interpreted by the American administration and by the American lumber interests. So the Americans slapped on a countervail, and what did we do? Did we fight that before the ITC? Did we fight it before the Department of Commerce?

Did we fight it before GATT? No. We fell to our knees and said: "Listen. We are guilty as accused. Can we buy off, can we negotiate some compromise?" Consequently, tens of thousands of jobs in the forest sector right across Canada, but primarily in British Columbia, were put at risk. That is the reality. That is what the Government actually did.

Let us consider for example the Polar 8 ice-breaker contract. As all my friends from British Columbia are well aware, we have been trying to grab the Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie), the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Côté) and the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) to shake them and tell them that we have the lowest bid. We have said: "Western Canada needs the business. Our western shipyards need the business. We need the help in terms of our high levels of unemployment. This is what the federal Government can do". Yet we have now waited month after month after month, and received no answer. We are still waiting to hear whether that contract will be let. If the Government cared about the plight of the far-western Canadians it would say: "Let's get on and award right now that ice-breaker contract so that we can put hundreds and hundreds of people in our shipyards in western Canada to work". But no, we do not hear anything.

To be somewhat more upbeat for the moment I would like to say that I am encouraged by what the Deputy Prime Minister said about the willingness to entertain the Government's support of the notion of using western low-sulphur coal in both the industries of central Canada that use coal as well as the largest coal-user, that is, Ontario Hydro. I am very encouraged by the support that the Deputy Prime Minister gives to that idea. I only hope that we will see some action. After years and years of Liberal Government, we did not see even any interest in the topic. At least we now have a commitment that the Government is interested. We will be looking to see that it take steps because, here again, it would be an ideal opportunity to demonstrate conclusively to Canadians, particularly western Canadians, that indeed the Government is prepared to act. Again, we wait with bated breath for such an initiative.

Now let us consider the situation in the oil and gas industry. It is perfectly clear that things have deteriorated recently. One can say that it has done so as a result of a complex set of factors, not the least of which is the collapse of the oil-producing cartel and the disastrous situation that we now see in Alberta. As of today, 127,000 people are unemployed in Alberta. This number will grow by 50,000 by the end of the year. That is a statistic released by the Alberta Government on December 5. Alberta has 147,000 people on welfare, which number is increasing by 600 families per month. The Edmonton food bank was used 180,000 times this year, up by 15 per cent over the same period last year. When we look at the disastrous situation in that province, particularly as it impacts on the oil and gas sector, we wonder why the Government is not playing a more pro-active role. We have called time and time again for a return to a made-in-Canada oil pricing situation. Yet the decision was to deregulate the industry,