

Oral Questions

I was in Quebec this weekend, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out. I want to tell my hon. friend it is tough going and we need all the help that we can get. All of those who believe in Canada, who believe in federalism, including my hon. friend, would be welcome in Quebec fighting the fight on behalf of Canada. She is held in high regard and I know that she would be welcome as a voice of reason in federalism.

What is important is that my hon. friend begin accentuating some of the positives of Canada instead of always wallowing in the negatives.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, surely we have a responsibility and this government has a responsibility to the unemployed of this country. Surely the Prime Minister will acknowledge that our nation's economy is built on our natural resources, on our transportation links, on our communication, not just north and south but east and west. Surely the Prime Minister will agree that people, to feel good about a country, have to feel that we have the spirit and the faith in each other to make sure that we can build the economy.

It is the Prime Minister's government that has opened up our oil and gas resources to foreign ownership. It is the Prime Minister's government that is selling off parts of Canada. What is the Prime Minister prepared to say to Canadians that this government has faith in them and will work for business?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is pretty hard to deal with my hon. friend's question which is traditional NDP griping. My hon. friend would perhaps be interested in pointing out that there was today the announcement of a modest growth in the economy, in the real GDP, small, but for the first time in some months.

Manufacturing output rose almost 1 per cent in January following three months of decline. Export oriented industries grew nine-tenths of a per cent in January. Forestry output and automotive and resource-based manufacturing showed the greatest strength. Retail trade advanced four-tenths of one percent.

There are difficulties in this economy as there are difficulties in France, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan and around the world. We are all living in a

recession. If I could wipe away everybody's troubles and problems tomorrow, I would be happy to do it. I cannot do it. All I can do is continue to work as hard as I can to try to create an environment wherein jobs and new prosperity can be created.

I would not want her to make a habit of it but my hon. friend could contribute to that and to the cause of national unity by from time to time underlining some of the positive things about Canada and the growth that is now taking place in the economy.

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CANADIAN AIRLINES

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, all that Canadians are asking is that this government not continue to create problems.

I want to ask a specific question because the Prime Minister has spoken generally. There are a number of Canadians who are concerned, particularly many of us who live in less populated areas served by airlines. People in areas such as Whitehorse, Saint John, Brandon, or Trois Rivières are concerned as they see the possibility of Canadian Airlines being taken over to a large degree by American Airlines, that this will lead to the high profit areas going to those American airlines and the low profit ones left which is not in the Canadian interest.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to assure Canadians that the Canadian interest, transportation within Canada and those communities I have mentioned, will be well served?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to say to the leader of the NDP that what we are faced with at the present time is an announcement by Canadian Airlines that it is entering into negotiations with American Airlines to try and forge an economic strategic alliance. No deal is there.

The NTA act is there to make sure that the Canadian legislation that was adopted years ago to the effect that 25 per cent foreign ownership must be respected and effective control by Canadians be respected.

If there is a deal at the end of the day it will go through that process.