

Oral Questions

meeting yesterday as part of the two and a half hour meeting I had with the CFA, and the project is moving along quite well.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I say this to the Minister sincerely. In view of the urgency and demonstrated need for this funding, in view of the fact that all Members of Parliament on both sides support this project, will he not undertake to assure this House that funding will be provided to the tune of \$23.5 million for the first fiscal year, and order that farmers in the Maritime region receive their just due?

Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the Hon. Member's representations on behalf of that specific project. One has to recognize we made a number of commitments, 16 in all. Indeed we take a back seat to no one in the fulfilment of those commitments. We feel very strongly about this one as well.

The Hon. Member knows that a project of that kind must clear all necessary legislative challenges and requirements before any Minister can stand in this House and make an announcement one way or the other.

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CORPORATE AFFAIRS

TAKEOVER BID FOR HIRAM WALKER

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs explain why, with hundreds of jobs threatened by the potential takeover of Hiram Walker, he has failed even to respond to a letter from the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor and myself asking him to intervene to help save those jobs?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Under the Combines Investigation Act, Mr. Speaker, the director enjoys full discretion to review the deals as they occur. He acts as an impartial examiner in each case, as he will do in this one as well.

[English]

REQUEST THAT MINISTER MAINTAIN SURVEILLANCE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister promise to maintain a close watch to ensure that he is in a position to exercise the powers accorded to him under the Competition Act in any takeover attempt which would result specifically in job loss in the Windsor area?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr. Speaker, that is always the

preoccupation that the Director has in mind and that is what he does.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN ARSENALS

PRIVATIZATION—EMPLOYEES' PENSIONS—MEASURES
GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TAKE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): On behalf of the 800 Montreal employees of Canadian Arsenals, Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the President of the Treasury Board.

The Minister will know that the result of privatizing Canadian Arsenals will be a considerable reduction in employee pension benefits, to such a degree that some of them stand to lose \$17,000 a year.

What does the Minister intend to do to help these employees? Or does he plan to stick to the usual Conservative justice standards and do nothing at all?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): This morning, Mr. Speaker, I met with Public Service Alliance spokesmen before holding discussions with representatives of the Canadian Arsenals union concerning a problem we have been talking about for a number of months, namely pensions.

I can assure my colleague that in the case of the 600 Canadian Arsenals employees the provisions of Bill C-87 contain a prospective solution which they should all find fair and equitable.

[English]

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, is the Minister telling us that losing \$17,000 a year in pensions is, in his words, just and equitable? Is this Tory justice being administered to those public servants, our employees?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, what this Minister is saying is that the Hon. Member opposite does not know what he is talking about and does not have the right numbers.

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FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

TAKEOVERS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of State for Finance if there is any truth in the recent statements of the President of Canada