

THE SENATE

Wednesday, June 10, 1987

The Senate met at 2 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.
Prayers.

THE SENATE

Hon. Finlay MacDonald: Honourable senators, I should like to attempt to correct a comment in yesterday's *Hansard* following the statement of the Leader of the Government with respect to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the establishment of which was supported generously by a number of senators, even though some may have had misgivings. It was particularly supported by those senators from the Atlantic region—Senators MacEachen, Thériault, Bonnell and De Bané. I find it difficult to understand some of the comments, and that is why I rise at this time. My difficulty is with respect to remarks attributed to Senator Olson.

Senator Frith: Which page are you referring to?

Senator MacDonald: These comments appear at page 1171, where Senator Olson said:

... I am sure that all the words the minister just uttered were taken from the text of the speeches made when MSERD was set up in the first place. They are exactly the same.

Colleagues will know that MSERD is the acronym for Ministry of State for Economic and Regional Development. He went on to discuss the merits of what was known then as MSERD, at which time Senator Murray interjected:

It was DREE that was destroyed.

Senator Olson said:

It was not DREE that was destroyed but the Ministry of State for Economic and Regional Development, and the acronym for that is MSERD. All the great things that the minister has said about what they are going to do were there in that original announcement.

Then there follows a discourse between some honourable senators. Then Senator Murray said:

But you were a member of the government when the administration of John Turner did away with that.

Senator Olson replied:

I want the record to show accurately that this government completely abandoned regional economic development on September 4, 1984, when they were elected. Now they have finally come to recognize that there was a program in place . . .

and so on. I then asked him:

Who destroyed MSERD?

I put the question to Senator Olson, to which he replied:

You guys.

Then Senator Frith said, cheekily:

We are glad you asked that. Are there any other questions?

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): What did I say? Honourable senators, could I ask two questions? First, under what heading are we in terms of procedure? Second, could I ask Senator MacDonald which adverb it was that he just used?

Senator MacDonald: The adverb, Senator Frith, was "cheekily".

Senator Frith: Thank you.

Senator MacDonald: The key question, before I was distracted, was: "Who destroyed MSERD?" I asked a simple question. "You guys," said Senator Olson. "Are there any other questions?", cheekily asked Senator Frith.

I have to say that both MSERD and the other agency, which is not part of this, were abolished by Order in Council P.C. 1984-3036 of August 31, 1984, to be effective the following day, September 1, 1984. They were abolished under the prime ministership of the Right Honourable John Turner. I simply ask Senator Olson if he will be kind enough to acknowledge the correction.

Hon. H.A. Olson: Honourable senators, I will be happy, for the sake of accuracy, to say that I was aware that there was an order in council passed prior to the term of office of John Turner. But you guys destroyed the structure that was set up. That has not changed.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear!

Senator Olson: It was still in place. There was an election on September 4, but you did not get into office until September 17—you should remember a little more carefully—because it took a few days for the old government to resign and move out and for you people to move in. If you bothered to read the rest of what I said, you would find that I said that what was in place was an organization known as MSERD, with all of the trappings and details and the administrative requirements that are there to make it work, and so on—exactly the same thing that Senator Murray described in his speech yesterday. There is no question in my mind as to who destroyed that whole thing.

If you want to be accurate, I should point out that Senator Murray said:

But you were a member of the government when the administration of John Turner did away with that.