

Inquiries of the Ministry

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, no more money is expended in Quebec than anywhere else. I think that we have spent some in Regina, through grants; we spent some in Sept-Îles, in Newfoundland, in New Brunswick—for the construction of a complex—in short we spend money everywhere. I do not think that more money is spent in Quebec than elsewhere.

[English]

POLICY RESPECTING GRANTS—DISCUSSION WITH PROVINCES

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): A supplementary question. In view of some quarrel with the minister's statement, and in view of the widespread dissatisfaction with the department's programs as well as the fact the department is now reviewing designated regions and special areas, is the minister considering holding a conference with representatives of all the provinces in order to develop a more acceptable approach to the national problem of eliminating regional disparities.

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, we are in constant contact with the provinces and, as far as I know, no particular province has complained about our regional economic expansion programs. A few hon. members have complained but, apart from that, nobody has ever complained about the way in which we are proceeding.

[English]

Mr. Burton: A supplementary question. Will the minister consider making a statement on motions to explain why his department has made no progress in its job of eliminating regional disparities?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member will appreciate that this question is in the form of a statement or allegation and in those terms it is not acceptable.

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

I admit that there is much worry about the subsidies received by Quebec, but I deplore the fact that some hon. members are not happy to see that Quebec is getting some subsidies even when this is justified, and I would like to congratulate the Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest to the hon. member that there is no question of privilege there, but rather a question that could be debated.

[English]

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS ON GRANTS—ROLE OF MINISTER

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A supplementary question. The hon. member has twisted the questions of members in the same way the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion does, and he knows there is not an element of truth in his allegation. I should like to ask the

minister, since he made a statement outside the House yesterday to the effect that he has no role in the decision-making process regarding grants made under RDIA, who makes these decisions and who has the ultimate responsibility for them?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, as usual the premises are false. Yesterday, on television, I did not say that I had no part to play, but that I seldom intervened. This is something entirely different.

[English]

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS—REQUEST FOR NAMES OF MEMBERS OF OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): A further supplementary. During that television interview the minister just referred to, he mentioned—

Some hon. Members: Order, order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the hon. member ask the question?

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, it was the minister who referred to the television interview, and I can ask a supplementary question in the same vein. I should like to ask the minister if he could tell us who comprises the "outside committee", I think was the term he used, that he mentioned in the television interview yesterday? Who makes decisions under DREE? Could the minister name the members of that outside committee and could he tell us who has responsibility for the final decision?

Mr. Horner: And what role they play in the Liberal organization?

[Translation]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, no committee outside the department makes any decisions on subsidies. I simply stated that a committee made up of persons chosen outside the government supervised the application of the program and the allocation of subsidies. That is entirely different.

[English]

Mr. McGrath: A further supplementary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hope we do not spend the whole question period on this very important matter. I appreciate that it is important, but we have been spending a bit of time on it and it has perhaps developed into debate. However, if hon. members feel that we should pursue the matter, I will recognize a few supplementaries.

Mr. McGrath: On a supplementary question, I think the minister has an obligation to name the members of this committee.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I suggest to the hon. member that this is debate. As I mentioned a moment ago when the matter was raised by way of a question of privilege, the hon. member may be dissatisfied or unhappy but he cannot insist on an answer from the minister.