

Oral Questions

Manpower and Immigration for the approval of LIP grants, which includes among other things provision that no grant will be approved without the approval of the so-called regional minister, received approval of Treasury Board?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, of course the administrative procedures are always approved by the Treasury Board.

[English]

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The implication of the words—I am sure it was inadvertently given—of the Leader of the Opposition, that this is a matter of procedure, is in fact incorrect. As I have indicated in this House and publicly, and will continue to indicate, we have sought a wide-ranging consultation about the appropriateness of particular projects as to whether they should or should not be approved. We included a reference to ministers in different parts of the country as well as to members in different parts of the country. While ministers are all members of the particular party which forms the government, hon. members are members of all parties on all sides of the House. That consultation, I think, was totally legitimate in the sense we wanted to be sure that the projects, to the best of our ability, were in fact meeting the needs of the community to which they were assigned, as well as providing employment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, I based the question relating to procedure on a memorandum prepared for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration by his deputy minister. I quote from page 2: "No project is approved without the concurrence of a regional minister." I ask the President of the Treasury Board when it was reported by the Auditor General that LIP grants to the extent of many thousands of dollars had resulted in benefiting private property and whether Treasury Board inaugurated inquiry into procedures being followed with regard to the authorization of LIP grants.

● (1430)

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I asked the officials of my department to prepare a statement on the Auditor General's comments. They should give an account of every case he raised, and if need be we will remedy the situation.

[English]

Mr. Stanfield: In view of the fact that the Auditor General made a complaint to the government over a year ago and received certain undertakings from the government with regard to this matter, can the President of the Treasury Board assure me that investigations were made by Treasury Board to ascertain how in fact these moneys have been used for the benefit of private properties and to ensure that no further such authorizations will take place?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I cannot report to the Leader of the Opposition on this particular point. I shall

[Mr. Stanfield.]

look into the matter and report to him later. The problem has not been drawn to my attention in these terms.

[English]

LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION INTO OPERATION

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): I have a question for the Prime Minister. In light of documents revealing that the process of consultation on LIP applications with members of the House generally was superseded by a special process of clearance by key ministers and Liberal members, would the Prime Minister tell us whether the government will set up a full investigation and public inquiry into the operations of the LIP program; and also would he tell the House whether, in view of serious misinformation given on this subject by the Minister of Manpower, he has requested that minister's resignation?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I do not admit the premise of the question, and therefore I reject the conclusions.

Mr. Cossitt: A supplementary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In the winter of 1972-73, as stated by Mr. Des Roches, Deputy Minister of Manpower and Immigration, in a memorandum of January 25, 1973, did certain regional ministers have the power of final approval over LIP applications? Was a special information group set up in the hon. gentleman's office to act as a clearing-house to hear representations from regional ministers and Liberal members? Finally, was the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources the minister designated to approve Ontario projects?

Mr. Andras: No minister was given authority to veto or to approve LIP projects in 1972-73, 1973-74 or, as far as I am concerned, in 1974-75 except the minister responsible, who happens to have been me in the last two years. The consultation process which I described a few minutes ago is the fact of the matter, and I see nothing wrong with that.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cossitt: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Every member of the House should have the right to stand on a point of order at this point and object to continued inaccurate and misleading information being given in this chamber by the minister of manpower when documents from his own department prove he is not telling us the facts. I think it is a disgrace that the minister should tell us that what these documents say and what his officials say is not the case.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member knows well that the ground covered by his point of order has been covered several times. Complaints about the quality of answers received do not constitute points of order. Complaints about inaccuracies, if those inaccuracies are alleged to have been deliberate, should be accompanied by a specific charge, the consequences of which we all know.