

He went on further to say: "The present state of financial management and control systems are significantly below acceptable standards of quality and effectiveness".

In the Auditor General's Report which was just tabled, he had the following to say at paragraph 1.15:

With expenditures by our federal government exceeding \$100 billion a year, protecting the public purse demands that the correct amounts be paid out to the intended recipients at the right time. A decade ago the Auditor General could provide no assurance that this was happening. Today, I can do so. The essential framework is in place. With some exceptions, financial controls are working well.

Some Hon. Members: Answer the question.

Mr. Mazankowski: I think that is a tribute to the Prime Minister and to—

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill.

MINISTER'S POSITION ON FUNDING OF FANTASYLAND PROJECT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. I begin by saying that what is at issue is not the Deputy Prime Minister's commitment to western Canada, or anybody else's for that matter.

The fact of the matter is that the Auditor General says in respect of the Fantasyland project "this made the project ineligible for funding".

What is the Deputy Prime Minister saying? Is it that people who want to do things for western Canada are above the law, that people like the Deputy Prime Minister who want to do things for western Canada can do anything they like as long as they can stand up and justify it on the basis of their regional loyalties?

Surely western Canadians are interested in honesty and fairness in government as well as anybody else. I ask the Deputy Prime Minister to say why he thought he was above the law and funded a project which was ineligible for funding.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, there are national programs developed to assist and aid industry right across the country. The tourist industry is a very important industry to western Canada.

The initiative with which we are dealing here is a very important tourist attraction. It brings huge dollars into the western Canadian market. It is very supportive of jobs. It is one of the most significant job-creating activities in western Canada. It is an important industry. It is an important diversification element. It was on those bases that the project was approved.

Oral Questions

REASON FOR FUNDING PROJECT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, no one is disputing what the Deputy Prime Minister is saying about the project. What we are asking is why the project was funded when it would have been a project which would have gone ahead anyway.

Is the Deputy Prime Minister saying that the end justifies the means, that the Deputy Prime Minister can do anything he likes as long as he can stand up and say that it was a good project? Surely that is not the way the people want the Government of Canada to be run.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, there is a cabinet process which is followed. The cabinet process in this case was followed, and I am sure the Hon. Member would be interested in that.

There was an application that was originally turned down. I think it called for some \$20 million. That was considered. During the course of consideration we considered the importance of the project, the importance that it meant to economic development of western Canada, particularly the city of Edmonton which had a very, very high level of unemployment at that time, and the prospect of certain elements of this proposal being closed down. There were just valid reasons for support. I have no hesitation at all in defending that here, in committee, in the country—anywhere at all. I will go to Edmonton and debate it with him any day of the week.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—PLAN TO REDUCE EMISSIONS

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. The Minister has outlined a plan to reduce acid rain emissions in this country to some 50 per cent of their 1980 levels by the year 1994. Recently, however, the Americans have said that this plan is misleading and that in fact it will only reduce acid rain emissions by some 35 per cent as opposed to 50 per cent.

What is going on? Is the Minister trying to kid the troops?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): No, Mr. Speaker. It is true that the Canadian acid rain program is 90 per cent in place. It will slash acid-rain-causing emissions by 50 per cent by 1994 based on 1980 allowable figures.

The Hon. Member asks why we used allowable figures rather than actual figures as the basis of comparison between 1980 and 1994. The reason is that by definition a control program aimed at 1994 has to deal with allowable figures, those levels of emissions that will be allowed.