

Point of Order

I should also point out to the hon. member that there are many other appropriate avenues for the affected people to pursue. For example, it is already set in train that the Canadian Radio and Television Telecommunications Commission will be involved in this issue.

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WESTRAY MINING

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Prime Minister.

It involves the awarding of an \$85 million loan guarantee and a \$9 million gift to Westray Mining in the riding of Central Nova, a project which was opposed by federal bureaucrats.

We know that the Prime Minister was lobbied personally regarding this project by the Conservative MLA for the area on behalf of the three companies involved, which just happened to have contributed \$33,000 to the PCs in 1988, the year in question.

I would like to ask the Prime Minister why he ignored the advice of his bureaucrats and became involved in the making of this gift to supporters of his own party?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, every member of this House knows that the government contracts for products and provides assistance to all kinds of industrial producers from one side of the country to the other.

As far as Westray is concerned, our department, Industry, Science, Technology Canada offered assistance to the project, otherwise it would not have gone ahead to open an underground coal mine in Pictou County, Nova Scotia.

We have that arrangement. The Nova Scotia Power Corporation will use the coal from that underground mine. I do not know what the NDP have against sound regional economic development.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of the United States House of Representatives Subcommittee on Aviation of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POINT OF ORDER**PRESENCE OF ASBESTOS IN PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek some assurance from the Chair with regard to a matter of great importance to members of Parliament, and also to their staffs and to the individuals who work on Parliament Hill.

For quite some time the issue of asbestos has been given great media attention. There are legitimate concerns being expressed by employees, by members of Parliament and their respective staff persons.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, that you, in your capacity as the presiding officer of this Chamber, have information that perhaps if shared with this House and with the employees and the members of Parliament would shed some light as to what is taking place. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that you would give careful consideration to full disclosure of any and all information which comes into your purview in terms of any tests which have been done on any of the premises here in the House of Commons.

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, I would like to echo the concerns raised by my hon. friend, who is aware that earlier today a press statement by Greenpeace on behalf of the environmental working committee of all those employed on Parliament Hill indicated a concern about alleged concentrations of asbestos and the use of asbestos on Parliament Hill.

I wonder if you, Mr. Speaker, as the presiding officer of this House and as the presiding officer of the Board of Internal Economy would make a statement in terms of the release of all pertinent information at some appropriate moment.

Mr. Speaker: I should say to the House that there may be members of Parliament wishing to rise on this issue under questions of privilege.

Strictly speaking, questions of privilege should be heard at the first opportunity. It may be that if there are members wishing to rise on this matter, they would agree to me referring their application until I have had a