

Mr. Mazankowski: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the public accounts committee, which has just spent some three months investigating the operations of AECL, has discovered a great deal of financial maladministration and ineptitude on the part of AECL, and having regard to the Auditor General's report which concludes that financial management in this particular corporation is completely inadequate, would the minister tell the House how he justifies the doubling of the expenditures of AECL from \$200 million to \$400 million?

Mr. Andras: I would be glad to deal with that report of the committee, Mr. Speaker, but it would also be a question to be addressed to the minister responsible.

Mr. Mazankowski: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the continuing testimony that has been received by the public accounts committee to the effect that these Crown corporations are not accountable to parliament, would the minister outline to the House whether he intends to take immediate steps to increase accountability of these Crown corporations to the committees or to the House of Commons, and thereby to the people of Canada?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member will review *Hansard* and my replies to the very same questions which were addressed to me by the hon. member for—

Mr. Mazankowski: You were dealing with control, not accountability.

Mr. Andras: I was talking about control in my response to the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

Mr. Mazankowski: I am asking about accountability.

Mr. Andras: If the hon. member would read the answers in *Hansard* he would see what I said, but I will repeat it. The answer is yes, we are going to seek very quickly more financial control for government and for—

Mr. Mazankowski: I am asking about the accountability factor.

Mr. Andras: The accountability factor I touched on yesterday, and the hon. member knows very well that this is a very much more complex issue in that—

Mr. Mazankowski: You did not. You talked about controls.

● (1430)

Mr. Andras: If the hon. member will read *Hansard* of yesterday, he will see that I raised the very question that in the interest of getting financial control we had to face the issue of whether we were going to go further and take over policy control of those corporations also.

Mr. Mazankowski: Not only did I read *Hansard*, I listened to what the minister had to say.

Oral Questions

ALLEGED REDUCTION IN EXPENDITURES ON COST-SHARING PROGRAMS—TRANSFER OF COST TO PROVINCES

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister. Would he explain how he can legitimately use the word "restraint" when referring to a cutback in federal expenditures of approximately \$970 million in cost sharing programs, when in reality the minister knows there is no over-all reduction in the cost of these programs but simply a bookkeeping entry to transfer costs to the provinces. I should like to ask the minister whether it would not have been more straightforward if he had made his comparison of this year's estimates on the same basis as last year's to reflect the true increase in government expenditures rather than ignoring the transfer of costs to the provinces, thereby giving a misleading picture of restraint which, I suggest, has been done for political purposes.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): May I say, with the greatest respect to the hon. member, that it is rather curious to hear her referring to the use of certain expressions and statements for political purposes after her question.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

POSSIBILITY OF APPOINTING COMPTROLLER GENERAL—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. James Gillies (Don Valley): My question is again to the President of the Treasury Board. Given the fact that this will be a record level of expenditures by the government, and the Auditor General has said that the control of expenditures is effectively out of control, is the Auditor General contemplating appointing a comptroller general to administer the expenditure of these programs in a more effective and efficient fashion?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): It would not be the Auditor General who would appoint a comptroller general if that decision were taken, and no such decision has been taken.

Mr. Gillies: Perhaps the minister misunderstood my question. I asked him whether he would appoint a comptroller general on the recommendation of the Auditor General to look after a more effective control of the expenditure of these funds.

Mr. Andras: No such decision has been taken.