

*S. O. 21*

## WESTERN DIVERSIFICATION FUND

### VOLUME OF APPLICATIONS

**Mr. William G. Lesick (Edmonton East):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) announced the Western Diversification Plan in Edmonton on August 4 of this year the effect was immediate and most welcome. A head office was established in Edmonton, with provincial offices in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Vancouver.

The main feature of the plan is that decisions regarding government programs will be made in the West, and Edmonton in particular.

Western Canadians were ecstatic and they responded immediately. In the first week the Edmonton office received 1,500 inquiries, and by today some 400 applications have been submitted. The doors to a federal ministry are open to westerners. My office in Edmonton East was also inundated with inquiries, as well as with applications.

The Minister in charge is the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. McKnight), himself a westerner committed to western diversification.

We in the West have a renewed spirit of optimism about the federal Government's commitment to growth and diversification, and about western Canadian participation in Confederation.

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## SUPPLY AND SERVICES

### CONTRACT TO VIDEOTAPE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS FUNCTION

**Mr. George Henderson (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the House yet another broken promise of the Government of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). We all recall the words of the former Minister of Supply and Services, the Hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. McInnes), on February 28, 1986, when he announced the Atlantic Opportunities Program designed to increase the amount of goods and services purchased by the federal Government from Atlantic Canadian firms.

Imagine our surprise to learn that recently three highly qualified Atlantic-based companies, namely, Points East Productions of Charlottetown, Skerrett Communications of Dartmouth, and Sight and Sound Productions of Halifax, were passed over in favour of a Toronto-based company in the awarding of a contract to videotape the Business Excellence Awards slated for Halifax on September 22, 1987.

To make matters even worse we also learned that the Atlantic companies had only three days to complete the proposals while the successful Toronto company apparently had prior knowledge of the contract's details. Not only does

this decision contradict the Government's own policy for Atlantic Canada, it also violates the basic rules of equality and fairness.

On behalf of these companies I demand that this competition be reopened now so that Atlantic companies are given an opportunity to meet Atlantic needs.

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[*Translation*]

## LITERACY

### MEASURES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Vincent Della Noce (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind Hon. Members that yesterday was World Literacy Day. On that occasion the Secretary of State (Mr. Crombie) made a statement in Toronto to highlight the measures taken by the federal Government to honour the Speech from the Throne commitment concerning literacy skills.

The Secretary of State has undertaken nation-wide consultations to secure the participation of all Canadians with a view to consolidating support in the fight against illiteracy in this country. The outcome of these consultations has been the establishment of an action plan which is now being implemented.

First, to ensure that illiteracy remains one of our national priorities, a national literacy secretariat has been set up within the Department of the Secretary of State, and a national literacy council will be appointed to advise the Government on major related issues. In addition, development funds will be earmarked for the main community groups and research grants will be available to these national organizations.

Second, federal, provincial and territorial participation is a prerequisite to achieving concrete results in the fight against illiteracy. In the coming weeks specific projects will be unveiled by the Secretary of State and his provincial colleagues.

Third, Canada must remain a world-wide leader in this field. This fall the General Assembly of the United Nations will consider a proposal aimed at designating 1990 as international literacy year. Canada will express full support for this endeavour.

Fourth, since we must rely on sustained support from governments, volunteer organizations, labour unions and private sector interests, the Secretary of State will sponsor a national literacy conference in 1988.

Mr. Speaker, all these initiatives stem from the commitment of the federal Government and the personal pledge of the Secretary of State concerning illiteracy in Canada—