

Oral Questions

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, the funds that were forwarded by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation were funds that it raised through allocation of fees. These are not funds that come in the long run from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, therefore, it was not in the direct sense a taxpayer contribution whatsoever.

Mr. Hovdebo: But the taxes come to Canada.

* * *

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

ENVIRONMENT WEEK—BUDGET INCREASE

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board, and it concerns the Auditor General's Report.

Can the President of the Treasury Board explain to us the following situation where the Minister of the Environment increased his budget for Environment Week from \$35,000 to \$1 million, gave a \$650,000 untendered contract which resulted in a rake-off of \$143,000 to a middleman who was supposed to do, of all things, rent hot-air balloons that never flew?

Could the President of the Treasury Board explain that blatant abuse and waste of the taxpayers' money?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in this House the Hon. Member is the resident expert on hot air.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McMillan: In most cases I would defer to him on that subject, except that he is far off the mark in his question and in his comments.

An independent assessment was done for the Government of Canada after Environment Week in 1986 by a totally disinterested party, that in some respects was critical of the program. Those criticisms were taken into account in our planning for the 1987 program.

Mr. Boudria: Are you going to get the money back?

Mr. McMillan: That independent assessment stated, "In terms of financial planning, the \$1 million proposed budget for Environment Week in 1986 was likely realistic in delivering a high standard of quality". It went on to state, "The Department should be commended for having the courage to attempt what it did".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the rules of this House, I am sure that you will ask that that report now be tabled for the Members of Parliament.

Now I know, Mr. Speaker, what the meaning of a "balloon payment" is.

My supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION OF ALLEGED INTERFERENCE BY
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister, also concerning the report of the Auditor General, why he interfered in the matter to offer a \$5 million contribution to a company in his province that was not even eligible under any program while his fellow citizens elsewhere in the country and in his own province could not benefit from those programs even though they were eligible? What kind of double standard was used to reward his friends?

[*English*]

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Oh, oh! What a gutless one.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, again we see the contempt of the Hon. Members for western Canada.

Mr. Broadbent: Contempt for you.

Mr. Mazankowski: I have already responded—

Mr. Shields: Go phone Shirley Carr and get some direction.

Mr. Nystrom: Go phone Conrad Black.

Mr. Fulton: Take a deep breath, Jack, and increase your I.Q.

Mr. Speaker: It might occur to opposition Members that time is being used up.

The Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Hon. Member does not take seriously the importance of western Canadians, and the importance of the industries that are unique to western Canada.

● (1510)

I have tried to respond to previous questions, but I think what is important is to put this whole thing into context. Roughly 10 years ago the Auditor General of the day said: "I am deeply concerned that Parliament, indeed the Government, has lost or is close to losing control of the public purse".