

Oral Questions

to special interest groups could much more properly be expressed as a real interest and willingness to find out what Canadians believe and what they say.

The proof of the value of having that kind of broad based discussion with Canadians is demonstrated in the kind of recommendations that the majority members tabled when the committee reported this week, unlike the Reform Party's recommendations.

The member for Calgary North, a member of the committee, is quoted today as saying that she hopes people do not misinterpret aspects of the Reform Party's report on social policy, admitting "they were not thought through very well before they were rushed into print".

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

An hon. member: That is priceless.

An hon. member: Are we surprised?

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that the member for Calgary North is certainly much more correct than the hon. member for Calgary south.

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• (1430)

[Translation]

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

During the last election campaign, the Liberal Party promised to put an end to patronage. But when it comes to appointing legal advisors, the government just keeps breaking its promises.

Can the Minister of Justice confirm that his department recently stopped dealing with a Cowansville law firm and gave its business to the law firm of Eugène Bachand, who is the president of the Brome—Missisquoi Liberal Association, while the law firm of Liberal candidate Denis Paradis was allowed to continue to do business with the Department of Justice to the tune of \$100,000 a year on average?

[English]

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when the government goes to the private bar to obtain lawyers for assistance the chief criteria for that selection are competence and merit.

In Brome—Missisquoi and in places across the country the Department of Justice, since the election of the government, has reformed the process of selecting legal agents to ensure that they are properly trained and supervised, that they act without conflict of interest, and that services are provided in accordance with the highest standards of competence. Those are the criteria upon which we select agents.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, could the Deputy Prime Minister tell us whether the Minister of Justice gave this work to Eugène Bachand to get him to withdraw as the Liberal candidate for Brome—Missisquoi in favour of Denis Paradis?

The Speaker: My colleague, it seems to me that your question does not exactly fall within the mandate of the minister in question, but has to do with the party rather than the administration of this particular department.

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[English]

WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Mr. Cliff Breitzkreuz (Yellowhead, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Winnipeg, or is it western economic diversification?

I recently released a critical study of his department which showed conclusively that his home town of Winnipeg was receiving a disproportionate amount of WED dollars. This report, which was based on information obtained directly from his department officials, showed that Winnipeg received five times more than Vancouver, seven times more than Calgary, and seventy times more than Regina between November 1, 1993 and November 15, 1994.

Why is the minister funnelling far more taxpayer dollars into Winnipeg than any other western city?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems to be my day with the Reform Party.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): As we heard in the last round of questioning—

The Speaker: It is getting more and more difficult to hear the questions and the answers. May I appeal to members to listen to both the questions and the answers.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, as we discovered in the last round of questioning, the accuracy and reliability of Reform Party reports are somewhat questionable. We can see it even more so in the report cited by the hon. member wherein the statistics were based upon only 20 per cent of the actual approved projects for western Canada.

If the hon. member and the Reform Party are trying to demonstrate to Canadians that they are the soul of rectitude when it comes to finances, it seems to me they should learn to count.