

was in charge of western Canada, we managed to put in \$1.6 billion of economic development moneys in the early 1980s.

When this government took over we heard said: "We do not like these programs, but don't worry". Right before the last election they said: "We are going to spend \$400 million".

Well check your stats today, guys. You spent \$75 million. The next year the government said: "We are going to spend \$253 million in the west". Well, check the stats. You got only \$130 million. The next year they tell us again they are going to spend \$250 million. They have walked away from western Canada.

On Tuesday, the Minister of Finance announced a decrease in transfer payments to the west of over \$2 billion. So the west is now at a net loss in dealing with this government. Next time around, westerners are going to tell this government what they think of its economic development strategy.

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HYDE PARK CHEMICAL DUMP

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, recent newspaper reports say there is growing apprehension on the part of many people regarding chemical emissions from the Hyde Park chemical dump near Niagara Falls, New York. Located on the bank of the Niagara River this dump is the home of the largest single quantity of TCDD, the most toxic strain of dioxin in North America.

A recent study scheduled to be released soon will apparently show that the levels of dioxin build-up in the fish in Lake Ontario are not as significant as those originally estimated by U.S. government officials.

Many fear Occidental Chemical Corporation, the owner of the dump, will use these findings as a lobbying tool in an attempt to have regulations regarding the emissions of dioxins at the dump relaxed.

I ask the Minister of the Environment, using whatever means he can, to ensure that the U.S. government does not relax dioxin regulations at the Hyde Park dump, and in fact, remove this hazardous chemical wasteland from the Niagara River area.

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FISCAL RESTRAINT

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, if we want our children to have the kind of future we wish for them, we must continue reducing the deficit. Spending restraint is the key to Tory deficit reduction.

• (1410)

Since 1984 we have taken tough measures to cut expenditures. Over that period, however—in fact over the last nine years—we have allowed major provincial transfers to grow at more than the rate of inflation each and every year. The measures in this budget will limit that growth to less than the rate of inflation for the first time in a decade.

In our current fiscal situation it would not be reasonable to let provincial transfers continue to grow so much when everyone else is forced to tighten their belts. Spending cuts are never popular. The new ones we have announced are tough but they are necessary.

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NATIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni): Mr. Speaker, by cancelling the native communication program, the Secretary of State has virtually destroyed the native print media in Canada.

The 11 newspapers, funded by the native communication program, played an indispensable role as a media of communication between native organizations and Canadians as a whole. They played an active role in promoting literacy in communities where functional illiteracy often runs as high as 40 per cent. Furthermore, they gave positive media access to aboriginal groups which are either shut out of the national media controlled by the Thompsons, the Southams and Conrad Blacks of this country or else are portrayed negatively or in a confrontational situation.

By eliminating or cutting back on grants to native media and undermining the communications ability between natives and other Canadians the Secretary of State is threatening to create three solitudes in this country rather than simply two. I call on the government to restore full funding of native communications programs and transfer funding of native programs to a