

Oral Questions

My department makes a significant contribution to Forintek technology. My department makes a significant contribution to the research into fusion. We make a significant contribution to the Canadian Centre for Geomatics in Sherbrooke. We also make considerable contributions to the Varennes laboratory. My department has a significant research practice in Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, even if we mentioned the whole list, it would still be only 13 per cent of the total.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Crête: Quebec is already being robbed of \$650 million a year in expenditures by the Department of Defence. The Department of Justice awards only one per cent of its external contracts to Quebec, and now the Department of Natural Resources refuses to give Quebec its fair share of R&D contracts. Can the minister explain why Quebec is once more being robbed of its fair share?

[English]

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Prime Minister pointed out to me that in addition to those facilities and contributions there is another important one. In the city of Montreal this government supports the Canadian Pulp and Paper Institute, the centre of pulp and paper research.

If the member wants to talk about percentages, if we exclude megaprojects which are sunset projects and which will be taken from my budget in the year 1996-97, and if we exclude the national capital region, the percentage of expenditures in my department to Quebec is 25, representative of the population.

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EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

I quote from two different red books. The first red book states the Liberals will implement changes to strengthen the Employment Equity Act. The second red book states the Employment Equity Act is widely regarded as adversarial, bureaucratic and expensive to administer.

I am wondering if the minister can tell me if he remembers which quote is from his red book and which one is from the Ontario provincial Liberal red book. I wonder in which direction the government is heading.

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are both heading in the same direction in terms of support for employment equity. We quite clearly support em-

ployment equity in the government. It is part of our priority and we will continue to implement it.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I will leave it to the electorate to determine if they are heading in the same direction.

The red books do not agree which shows provincial and the federal Liberals are divided on this issue. Provincial Liberals want to reduce employment equity while federal Liberals want to make it stronger.

Let me put the question bluntly to the minister. Does he agree with the provincial Liberal leader's policy on employment equity?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is to the point is this government's policy on employment equity.

The member opposite might want to have a look at Mike Harris' policy on this if that is what he is leaning toward supporting. It is certainly not an employment equity policy at all.

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GASOLINE PRICES

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

My colleague from Regina—Lumsden has continually in the House asked the minister to take action on the pricing of gasoline. No action has been taken and yet over the past few days we have seen the price of gasoline go up again by as much as four cents a litre with no apparent economic justification. These new increases could cost the Canadian taxpayer up to a billion dollars.

In light of these new increases would the Minister of Industry now take action to protect consumers and immediately call an inquiry into price fixing at Canadian gas stations?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, there has been a series of investigations by the director of investigations and research under the Competition Act with respect to this issue. Prosecutions have been launched. Some have been before the courts. As she knows, it is my belief that competition is the best way to control prices.

• (1500)

I know it is part of NDP dogma to regulate prices. Perhaps in her next five-year plan she will explain what she sees for fuel prices over the next five years. I do not think that is the way to get the lowest prices for Canadian consumers. We need very tough and effective enforcement of our competition laws, and that is what we propose to deliver.