

Oral Questions

the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion, according to the press release I've got here, is expecting to announce tomorrow that the federal Government will allocate \$440 million to Quebec for the various regions over a five-year period. I wish the Minister would explain why the Western provinces, and I have nothing against them personally, received \$1.2 billion from the federal Government and the Atlantic provinces \$1 billion, while Quebec is getting only \$440 million?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member mentioned the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean in connection with a by-election involving Lucien Bouchard. He forgot to mention that yesterday, Premier Bourassa of Quebec said that Mr. Bouchard would be an important Quebec presence in Ottawa and that obviously, he hoped he would be elected, and I hope so too.

I agree that we have made some very important decisions in favour of regional economic development in Western Canada and the Atlantic provinces, and we will certainly do the same tomorrow, to the great satisfaction of Mr. Bourassa and, who knows, of the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie.

An Hon. Member: Defeated candidates don't count!

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, my friend Robert Bourassa may be right when he says that Mr. Bouchard would be a good representative for Quebec in Ottawa, but he overlooked the fact that Mr. Bouchard is running in Lac-Saint-Jean and that he would not be a good representative for Lac-Saint-Jean in Ottawa. What they need is a guy from Lac-Saint-Jean, not a guy from Meech Lake!

● (1500)

CREDITS ALLOTTED TO QUÉBEC—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is as follows, and I hope the guy from Lac-Saint-Jean will take care of Lac-Saint-Jean... I would like to know, and the Prime Minister failed to answer my question, it is just that \$440 million means less than \$100 million annually, while under the old agreement, Quebec was to receive \$300 million annually. Is that what you call a strong Minister from Lac-Saint-Jean, someone who is going to make Quebec lose \$200 million annually? Those are the kind of zeros we don't need!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the Hon. Member, I feel I must point out that Lucien Bouchard, a great Canadian and a great Quebecer, was born in Saint-Coeur-de-Marie in the riding of Lac-Saint-Jean. He is a valid representative of that riding here in the House, and very shortly he will be able to speak with great pride about his roots here in the House.

I think the document that will be tabled tomorrow, and the project to be announced by the Minister tomorrow in Quebec City, with the collaboration of the Government of Quebec, are important to Quebec's economic development, especially that of the outlying regions that were seriously neglected by the Liberal Government. Mr. Speaker, in concluding I would like to say...

[English]

I want to tell the Hon. Member, who showed up unannounced yesterday in my office with a sack of something, harassing my receptionist, Betty Green, this. She told the Hon. Member to stick it in his ear, which is the best advice he has received in a long time.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

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SUPPLY AND SERVICES

WESTERN PROCUREMENT EXPENDITURES

Mr. Don Ravis (Saskatoon East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services. As the Minister is well aware, his Department spends approximately \$1 billion a year on procurement in the west. However, this is approximately one-third of what the west deserves on a proportionate basis.

The western directorate of the Department indicated in Calgary that the Department is eager to add to its procurement list of expenditures. Can the new Minister indicate what steps he is prepared to take to ensure that this imbalance is corrected?

Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, in fairness, the west was ignored by previous Governments for some 20 years and there is a lot of catching up to do.

The policy and goal backed by this Government are to bring fairness and equal opportunity to all regions of Canada. Some progress has been made. The west received a 20 per cent increase in procurement orders from last year to this year. My colleagues and I, particularly the Minister responsible for western diversification, are working on building on that success. We hope to be making some pretty good announcements in the very near future so that we can meet our goal of bringing fairness and equality to all regions of this country.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to advise that given the time we will have to close off Question Period.

I have had a request from the Hon. Member for Cumberland—Colchester to address the House very briefly on a personal point of privilege.