

Oral Questions

that there is an interest in Parliament in knowing the views of the people of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deans: Before the decision is made or after?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I would like the Hon. Member for Davenport to explain to me why it is that he should have a right in this House to express his views, but he denies to his constituents, the people who vote for him, the right to be heard themselves? Why is he more important than the people?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: Shame.

Mr. Caccia: I will just say to the Minister, Mr. Speaker, that he would not have given that answer if he had realized that in his own document, which evidently he has not read, there are no lines of inquiry on the environment proposed by the document itself. That shows an abysmal lack of knowledge of the contents of his own paper.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION BUDGETS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): My supplementary question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Can the Minister tell us what kind of credibility she can sustain in Washington in her talks with the authorities there when she allows this year a cut of \$6.5 million in her environmental protection service and a cut of \$5.3 million in the environment conservation services?

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): I do not think the Hon. Member for Davenport is fooling anyone with his concern for the environment and his repeated protests, because this Government has done more in seven months than those gentlemen in the Opposition did for years.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

GREEN PAPER—ROLE OF PUBLIC

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed as well to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He said a number of times so far today that he and other members of his Government respect the people of Canada. They want to listen to the people of Canada, and believe in the consultative process, and so on. Does it show respect to the people of Canada to set up a consultative process in order to listen to their views and then to announce in

advance that the Government, before the results are in from the consultations, is going to make decisions in the key areas about which it is listening to the views of the people? Is that showing respect or is that showing contempt for the people of Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that is showing respect for the people of Canada and for the parliamentary process. Let me give the Hon. Leader of the Opposition—excuse me, John—the Leader of the New Democratic Party, an example. The question of the Strategic Defence Initiative is, I believe, of interest to Hon. Members in the House. Certainly the Government of Canada, before we have to take our first decision, the decision as to whether or not we accept the invitation of Secretary Weinberger to become involved in star wars research, would like the benefit of the advice of ordinary Canadians about the Strategic Defence Initiative.

The New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party are denying the Government of Canada access to that kind of advice by refusing to establish a parliamentary committee which would let the people speak.

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC DEFENCE INITIATIVE

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, is the Secretary of State for External Affairs telling the House that the Government is now asserting that it will not take a decision on committing the Government of Canada to participation in star wars research until this committee makes its final report? Is that what the Minister is telling the House?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, of course I am not saying that.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): What I am saying is that we are seeking a way that allows the Government of Canada to meet its duty to decide, and allows for the first time the people of Canada to express their views in a way which will have an influence upon the decision of the Government of Canada. There is nothing new, Sir, about Governments having to decide. What is new is that this Government is seeking the opportunity to hear from the people before the decisions are taken, and that opportunity is being denied us by the position taken by the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, we are hearing a phoney process from a phoney Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Once again he has told the House that he is going to consult before he makes a decision. One minute ago in reply to my other question he said, no, the Government wasn't going to wait. I wish the Minister at least would get his lines straight in the House of Commons.