

Oral Questions

at this time of crisis and giving it to the French? Why does he not stand up for Canada? That is what I want to know.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I remind the Hon. Member that the Prime Minister and all members of the Government are indeed standing up for Canada, quite unlike those members of the Government of which he was a part, who sold out our interest to France in 1972.

Furthermore, it is the Hon. Member who characterizes the problem as a crisis. In fact, earnings and the value of landings have increased over the previous year.

Mr. Rompkey: For the big companies.

Mr. Siddon: Nonetheless, there is a regional variation in the return of cod to the inshore fishery and we are attempting to find a solution to that problem.

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DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION

OVEREXPENDITURES—MONTHLY FORECASTS

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the overspending at DRIE. The former Minister said that as soon as he found out there was some difficulty he launched an inquiry. He noted that he began receiving monthly financial reports very soon after being sworn in as the Minister.

If the former Minister began reading these financial reports as soon as he said he did, and being a chartered accountant himself, why was he not suspicious when six of the eight monthly periods covered from August, 1986, to March, 1987, forecast an overexpenditure? Why did the Minister not notice this, and why did he not bring it to the attention of the Government?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Science and Technology)): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can answer this question on behalf of the Minister. It is true that certain measures were implemented as soon as the warning signals were sounded. Of course the problem occurred as a result of the additional take-up of the programs we had modified. A lot of slippage had been experienced in the past. In other words, programs were committed but not taken up. The fact that 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the offers were never taken up caused the problem. It is now corrected.

Mr. Blaikie: It is my understanding that action was not taken until June of this year.

GOVERNMENT'S AWARENESS OF SITUATION

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I remind the Minister that the review stated that it was in August, 1986, that the first indication of a potential deficit arose and furthermore, starting in the fall of 1986, very real concerns were being expressed about potential problems in 1987-88. Why was the Government not aware of this much earlier?

Considering the statements by the new Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion on Friday, what other Departments are undergoing this kind of study now?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State (Science and Technology)): Mr. Speaker, to my knowledge no other Departments are undergoing this kind of study. As soon as the Government was aware of the real possibility of an over-run, the measures were taken and the funds were restored. As a result, DRIE will be spending significantly more money on programs that have been positively modified and will have significant benefit to the regions for which they were designed.

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CITIZENSHIP

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO MONARCH

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State. It concerns a recent discussion paper from his Department about downgrading the sovereignty or eliminating any reference to Her Majesty in a new oath of citizenship.

Since there appears to be no consensus in Canada, or no group asking for this removal of allegiance to the Queen, will he assure the House that he has no intention of following this proposed report by officials in his Department?

Hon. David Crombie (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I can give that assurance. The position paper was put out for discussion purposes two months ago and dealt with a variety of issues affecting the Citizenship Act. One of those issues was the one mentioned by the Hon. Member. The volume of correspondence that I have received on it and a number of other matters has indicated clearly that Canadians are interested in continuing the reference to the Queen in the Oath of Allegiance. Therefore, I can assure the hon. gentleman, indeed all Members of the House, that it is not the Government's intention to withdraw Her Majesty from the Oath of Allegiance.