

Oral Questions

[Translation]

DISASTERS

EXTENT OF GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENTS

Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, following the rainstorm in Montreal which caused nearly \$230 million worth of damage and took one human life, the federal Government promised to contribute about \$17 million.

Considering the extent of the disaster, could the federal Government show some leadership and increase the amount it is willing to commit to compensate the people of Montreal?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member is well aware, an agreement exists between the provinces and the federal Government which provides for federal funding in such circumstances. In July I wrote a letter to Mr. Gilles Rocheleau, Quebec Minister of Supply and Services, informing him of our intention to provide the necessary funds.

EFFECT OF AGREEMENT ON QUEBEC

Mr. Robert Toupin (Terrebonne): Finally, Mr. Speaker, could the Minister guarantee before the House that the people of Montreal will not receive less, proportionally, than the people of Edmonton? Could the Government, could the Minister guarantee that the agreement concluded with the provinces is equally fair to Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and Quebec?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Defence): Yes, Mr. Speaker, the agreement is the same for all Canadians. It provides the same treatment for all Canadians across Canada. We have an agreement with all the provinces, and the terms are the same for each province.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister.

This morning the Prime Minister swore in his MIST, or mess I should say. I should like to ask the Prime Minister—the fact that he has announced a plan for Western Canada, a plan for the Atlantic, a plan for Northern Ontario—how he can justify leaving Quebec in a vacuum, leaving Eastern Ontario without a program? What is the policy of this Government with respect to regional economic development? And why was Quebec ignored?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Quebec was not ignored at all. My friend mentions the Province of Ontario.

Unemployment figures were released last Friday and they indicate among other things that the unemployment rate in the Province of Ontario has now dropped to 6 per cent, which is quite a remarkable job creation effort. So I should think that the situation is relatively good in the Province of Ontario

Quebec as well did experience a rather significant economic upswing. We have been holding important discussions with the Quebec Government over the past three years, discussions which involve the new Minister whom I commend for his excellent work. We intend to continue working with the Quebec Government at an unprecedented rate to speed up the job creation process in all regions of Quebec.

SITUATION OF QUEBEC

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): I have a supplementary for the Prime Minister. He says he is going to co-operate with the Government of Quebec. But does the Prime Minister realize that as federal Prime Minister he must make sure that the fight against regional disparities continues? His own DRIE Minister at the time had announced last June 5 that DRIE had sufficient funds, both to honour commitments made during the previous year and to make new ones for this year.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister ought to know that the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion misled industry leaders and various interest groups in Quebec. The President of the Association des commissaires industriels du Québec . . .

Mr. Speaker: Please. Would the Hon. Member ask his question, please?

Mr. Lapierre: I would like to ask the Prime Minister why he does not show any concern for regions like Beauce, the Eastern Townships, Châteauguay, Valleyfield, Saguenay, Lac-Saint-Jean? Why does the Prime Minister have different standards? Some regions are favoured while others are completely ignored.

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister responsible for Industry, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely appalling and even disgraceful to hear comments on this subject, particularly from this colleague who implies that Quebec has been ignored, when we can recall for instance that a regional economic development agreement of nearly \$800 million was signed with Quebec, an unprecedented initiative. In addition, more than 1,300 projects have been approved since September 1984 under regional industrial development programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am not mentioning the assistance we gave Petromont, Domtar, Canadair, GM, Sainte-Thérèse, Hyundai and a lot of others. When I am told that Quebec is being ignored, that Quebec is badly represented, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Quebec will understand.