

Oral Questions

that is being done will be made available to Members of the House of Commons so that the people of Canada can see what is going on in this Department?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians are concerned about, if they look very carefully, is the shallow, misleading rhetoric that is emanating from the Leader of the socialist Party.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: He had the audacity, Mr. Speaker, in Question Period the other day to say, in reference to the billion dollars that was being earmarked for the Atlantic Opportunities Agency, that that is only a few cents per citizen.

Mr. Broadbent: I said no such thing!

Mr. Mazankowski: In other words, he is saying: "What's a billion?" Remember the expression of C. D. Howe when he said some time ago: "What's a million?" We have the new version here right now.

REQUEST THAT STUDIES BE MADE PUBLIC

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, neither the people in Atlantic Canada nor anywhere else will be impressed by this very shocking ignoring of the Minister's responsibility to answer a question. I want to ask him again, and I would like him to cut out his silly, misleading rhetoric—

Mr. Mazankowski: Cut out your silly, misleading nonsense.

Mr. Broadbent:—and answer a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member will put his question, please.

Mr. Broadbent: I want to ask the Minister a straight question again. I hope that he will give us a straight answer.

There is an internal audit being done in the Minister's Department. There is a study being done by Price Waterhouse of the profound bungling in the Department. Does the Minister not believe that the people of Canada have a right to see those studies? If he does, will he guarantee that they will be made public?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to say that three investigations or examinations are being done at this time.

We have one internal investigation requested by the Comptroller General. There is a second investigation which we at the Department requested and which is being done by an outside firm, Price Waterhouse. The third investigation is being carried out by the Auditor General. So we have absolutely nothing to hide in this respect.

Today, I can assure Hon. Members I will do everything in my power to ensure that the truth comes out, that all the facts

are clear and that a full explanation is given of what happened in the Department.

DECISION-MAKING POWER WITHIN DEPARTMENT

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and also deals with regional economic development.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that since 1984, regional economic development budget allocations have been cut by several billion dollars, and the Minister himself has now admitted, Mr. Speaker, that if we were to take into account the specific payments made in view of the situation in western Canada as a result of falling wheat prices, those cuts in the regional development funding would be even greater. Meanwhile, the Minister has just stated that not one, or two, but three enquiries are required to shed some light on the management of that department.

In view of this hodgepodge, could the Deputy Prime Minister tell us who is responsible for decisions in the present context at the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion?

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): I am, Mr. Speaker.

INQUIRY CONCERNING GOVERNMENT'S INTENDED PROPOSALS

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the Minister what action he intends to suggest to this House in particular, but mostly to the people of Gaspé, and more specifically to the people of Murdochville, in order to help those 400 jobless workers and families. Some of them have already been laid off, and the rest will be by the end of June. I ask the Minister if he could step up the implementation of the second stage of the development of eastern Quebec and implement immediate programs to help the people of Murdochville who are faced with an unbearable situation which actually prevails throughout the eastern part of the peninsula.

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the first stage of the Eastern Plan, the first five-year stage, is indeed to be completed soon, and our Government believes in consultation. That is why we spent over the last weekend, with the Minister responsible for that region, more than 60 hours consulting with people in every district and area of the peninsula covered by the Eastern Plan.

What we have here therefore is concern, a consultation process and sensitivity on the part of the Government in that respect.

With respect to Murdochville, a consultation committee has already been set up, and it should be reporting by June 19. I therefore wish to assure people, Mr. Speaker, that we are deeply concerned. Although it is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, as my colleague for Energy mentioned earlier, we are always willing to listen to the needs of each and everyone of those areas.