

Supply

How will the committee properly assess the problems in the oil and gas sector in its report when it is to report in January after having had its last hearings on that industry in June? Does the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville think that this will be a fair appraisal of the oil and gas sector? Does he think that it would be better at the end of its hearings for the committee to return to western Canada to hold additional hearings in Calgary, Regina, or Edmonton, to bring its information up to date, more or less?

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I think they should return to western Canada because I do not think it would be very fair for them not to do that. Unfortunately, I cannot make any announcement on behalf of the Government because I do not have that document with me.

Mr. MacLellan: It is the only one you have not got.

Mr. Nystrom: I will try to obtain it and answer the question in the appropriate way. I could be very forthcoming if I had the document to work from.

The Hon. Member asked about the oil industry. Perhaps I should tell the House what is the purpose of the document entitled *Western Diversification Initiative*. It is as follows:

Progress towards diversification of the western Canadian economy, to position it to capture new opportunities in the face of severely deteriorating markets for most resource products, is a priority objective of the federal Government.

Of course in some way this may refer to the oil industry and the question the Hon. Member asked.

I do not see anything specific in the background in terms of oil, except for the fact that the following is mentioned:

The sharp decrease in world oil prices has resulted in a \$5 billion loss in revenues to oil companies and a dramatic reduction in exploration and drilling activity resulting in steadily growing unemployment in the sector and related industries. The mining and minerals processing sector is suffering from over-supplied international markets, declining prices and high transportation costs. In the forestry sector further modernization is necessary—

There is a bit of a reference to oil and gas. Turning to DRIE participation, there might be some way in which DRIE will be involved, but I do not think so. All it says about DRIE participation is the following:

The Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion is launching an intensive effort, in collaboration with the private sector, to identify the major opportunities and constraints to diversification of the manufacturing and service sectors in western Canada and the measures industry and government might initiate to take action on these opportunities and constraints.

Again there is no reference to oil and gas. Again I say that the western diversification initiative of the Government is not something which will involve the oil industry. We have had this tremendous build-up. People are expecting from a mountain to get a small molehill. This article goes on to state:

Diversification Strategies will be developed in each of four areas by DRIE—

● (1750)

DRIE is the key Department. It goes on to state:

—high technology industries, resource processing, traditional manufacturing, and service industries. These Diversification Strategies will include—

an evaluation of the diversification potential of the sector in western Canada, with explicit descriptions of any major impediment;

a review of possible options for promoting diversification, including a discussion of possible forward and backward linkages, and the public policy impacts associated with each option including estimated costs where possible; and

a recommended approach for diversification of the sector, including short, medium and long term measures that could be undertaken.

Under the DRIE operational plan, there is nothing about oil and gas. Again there is talk about manufacturing, the service industry, high-tech and resource processing, but nothing specifically about the oil and gas industry. The objectives are also stated here. I just do not have time to go over everything.

We in western Canada—and I know that of the people of Saskatchewan and, I am sure, of ordinary average Albertans—want some action very soon on western diversification. We want to know why there is such a major delay. I am told by reliable sources, whom I cannot name, that the delay is not because of the Public Service. The Public Service is ready to go. The delay is because of the slowness and the insensitivity of the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada to make a decision on behalf of western Canada.

Mr. Mayer: What a windbag.

Mr. Nystrom: That is what I am told. I have lots of documents outlining the western diversification initiative. My sources are very reliable. It is about time western Canada knew why we are being shortchanged and why there is this insensitivity to the problems of the West. It is amazing when there are so many western Ministers and so many western Members of Parliament. That is why that Party is in third place and that is why that Party will suffer a humiliating loss at the polls in the next election.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. Debate. The Hon. Member for Edmonton East (Mr. Lesick).

Mr. William G. Lesick (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to spend the last eight minutes of this debate enlarging on some of the aspects about which the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) spoke. It took him 15 minutes to read some of the things that we are attempting to do. It must be a source of great distress to him to know that we devoted months and months of work on our attempt. It took him a great deal of time to read things out, and yet he did not read everything. He does not know what it is all about, but he is praising us. I do not know why he speaks with such a forked tongue. While he is talking, we are doing things. The magnitude of the Western Economic Diversification Program—

Mr. Nystrom: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mayer: Sit down and let him speak.

Mr. Nystrom: I really hesitate to rise, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member accused me of speaking with a forked tongue. I