

Oral Questions

in this area whose livelihood has been destroyed by mercury pollution from the Reed Paper Company?

● (1430)

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, there is no obligation for the bands to go through my department in approaching DREE. They can approach DREE directly.

* * *

[Translation]

THE MINISTRY

INQUIRY IF MR. OUELLET'S STATEMENT ON DISTRIBUTION OF PENSION CHEQUES IN QUEBEC REPRESENTS GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Claude Wagner (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs.

While congratulating the minister for his astounding success in taking part in the Quebec electoral campaign, I would like to ask him, Mr. Speaker, if he was speaking on his behalf or that of the government when he stated a few days before the election that a PQ government in Quebec would compromise—and that is the term he used—the distribution in that province of old age pension cheques and other similar social welfare benefits?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of State for Urban Affairs): I am quite pleased to answer the question, Mr. Speaker, because it will enable me to state clearly in the House that I made a speech which lasted almost an hour during which I presented a complete panorama of what is Canada as an ideal country where a man can live. I listed the social programs available to Canadians and especially Quebecers and I said that should a PQ government separate Quebec from Canada, it would be necessary to make a choice in that series of programs and that it was not sure that those welfare programs could have the same scope as those now available to Canadians. Part of that speech was taken out of its context, reported and taken up today by the hon. member. I wish to state that such was not the implication of my comments in Montreal.

Mr. Wagner: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a supplementary question.

In view of this rather strange admission, to say the least, on the part of a minister of the Crown, I would ask the minister whether he feels that the use of such blackmailing methods, and rumour-mongering as well as stratagems of this kind reflect an adequate knowledge of Quebecers' maturity and pride?

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I am in favour of one Canada and I am amazed by the hon. member's remarks after the explanations I just gave him, remarks that are suggesting that I have made some statements I have not made. I am wondering whether the hon. member is not trying to revive a concept which the Progressive Conservative Party used to call associat-

[Mr. Symes.]

ed states or a particular status. If as a Progressive Conservative the hon. member wants two Canadas, that's his business, but as far as I am concerned, as a Liberal, I am in favour of one Canada.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

REQUEST FOR ESTIMATE OF SPACE REQUIREMENTS IN OTTAWA FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Public Works. We have noticed that the former president of the treasury board and the present Minister of Public Works have assured the mayor of Ottawa that any loss of jobs or office space from the national capital region because of decentralization will be more than offset by the requirement for space as a result of government expansion. Does the minister have specific plans set out for additional government office requirements in the national capital area for the next five years and if so would he be prepared to table those requirements?

Hon. Judd Buchanan (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, when I chatted with the mayor a couple of days ago, I acted on the assumption that if the growth of the public service in the next three to four years were kept at or under one per cent, the proportion that would normally be located in the national capital would require—I should get the exact figure—it seems to me around 200,000 square feet per year, so that that added up would offset the effect of decentralization.

Mr. McKinley: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that this assurance to the mayor is rather hollow unless the minister has a specific plan to lay before us. It seems to me that actually all he is telling the Canadian people is that the government bureaucracy will continue to grow.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Northumberland-Durham.

* * *

INQUIRY OF THE MINISTRY

Mr. Allan Lawrence (Northumberland-Durham): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Would the Prime Minister table his reply or at least give us the nature of his reply to a memorandum under date of November 15 sent to him and to all members of the government purportedly from the hon. member for Vaudreuil calling in pretty strong language and giving strong arguments for a national federal Liberal leadership convention immediately.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Vancouver South.