

their line, but then consistency is not the forte of the Hon. Member.

SPECIAL RECOVERY CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAM—
SCHEDULING OF EXPENDITURES

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. The Prime Minister in reply to my colleague mentioned all of the programs except one. This is the program on which I want to focus his attention. It is called the Special Recovery Capital Projects Program. For example, for this fiscal year it has a budget of \$1.1 billion. We know from a cabinet document of last October that scheduling of expenditures under that program since the April 12 Budget was falling far behind. This is the area where funds are being withheld.

Given the extent of the unemployment problem, given the fact that it is immorally reprehensible and politically indefensible to hold back these funds when they could be providing jobs now, will the Prime Minister give us an assurance that all of the expenditures under this program will be released by the regional political Ministers?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member was here when the Budget was read. Indeed, he is right that there was less money spent last year than had been foreseen under the capital recovery projects. But this means we will be spending substantially more money this year than had been planned or anticipated, as he mentioned, to the tune of some \$1.1 billion. That expenditure is going on at the present time in every province.

No funds are being withheld. No funds are being held in reserve. On the contrary, we are monitoring regularly in Cabinet the progress of expenditures in that regard. We have instructed our officials to make sure that the planned expenditures would be incurred and that the capital recovery projects would proceed this year in an expeditious way so as to spend more than we had anticipated, as I said, to the tune of some \$1.1 billion.

REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ASSURANCE

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I have another question which I will direct to the Minister of Finance. Can he give us an unqualified assurance that programs under the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, including Small Craft Harbours, programs under Public Works, and programs under the Post Office, all of which come under the category of special recovery capital projects, are not being withheld or held up by regional Ministers in their political capacity? Perhaps he can also give us some indication of just exactly how much money is left in that program.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly give the Hon. Member that assurance for the good reason that these funds have never been in the purview of regional Ministers to withhold. The Minister of State respon-

Oral Questions

sible for economic development is in charge of that program. There is a special team of officials who are supervising this program. As I told the Hon. Member, the Cabinet committee responsible for economic development is reviewing the progress of expenditures in that regard on a regular basis. Any funds about which there might be some delay of expenditures might be the result of a reallocation of funds because a project which had been approved is not proceeding as fast as anticipated, and things like that. These are the only types of circumstances where I could see some foreseen expenditures not occurring.

As far as the exact figure is concerned, I am afraid I do not have it with me today but I will inquire of the Minister of State for Economic and Regional Development and his officials.

If that Minister is not in the House tomorrow I will be very happy to provide the Hon. Member with the information.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT—SUGGESTION ONTARIO
HYDRO USE WESTERN CANADIAN COAL

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment. The Prime Minister might know that last Thursday the acid rain subcommittee released its second report during this Parliament. It reiterated its concern over the acid rain emissions which continue to fall all across the country. In particular the committee suggested that although the federal provincial environment ministers have set a target by 1994 of a 50 per cent reduction in emissions, in fact emissions in most of the major areas have increased.

Would the Prime Minister direct someone in the Cabinet or have the Government undertake discussions with the Government of the Province of Ontario, the purpose of which would be to try to convince the Province of Ontario that it would be better, both from an emission point of view and from a creation of employment point of view, for Ontario Hydro to purchase coal from western Canada, which has a lower sulphur content, than to purchase coal which Hydro presently uses and gets from the United States?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I take this to be a specific representation to the Minister of the Environment. I will make sure that he is informed of it. That being said, the Minister of the Environment himself has deplored the lack of progress in the fight which the Governments and the private sector must carry on to improve the quality of our environment.

I can assure the Hon. Member, having just returned from a discussion of this subject in Europe, that the Europeans are concerned with the same situation there, and in a much more serious way because of the more limited space. Their countries and ours are looking forward to the international meeting in Munich, I believe in a few months, where we will try to tackle