

Oral Questions

with that yesterday. He indicated several ways in which the funding of the cash requirements of the corporation in the current fiscal year would be met. The hon. member specifically used the words "cash drain" in relation to the \$180 million. The hon. member may like to read the statement again, and he will see that it is to be a provision in the accounts against potential future liabilities, rather than actual cash drain at this point in time.

ARGENTINIAN CONTRACT—DATE WHEN MINISTER OF FINANCE
LEARNED OF LOSS ON RENEGOTIATED CONTRACT

Mr. Sinclair Stevens (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Minister of Finance. Would he indicate to the House when he first learned of the extent of the true loss in AECL?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago.

● (1140)

INVESTIGATION OF QUESTIONABLE PAYMENTS—MINISTER'S
CO-OPERATION

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It is with respect to his role vis-à-vis AECL. Having regard to the fact that he has indicated that he feels no responsibility for this mess, I wonder if he could now give the House an assurance that there is not a limitless supply of money available to be lost by AECL, regardless of their activities, incompetence and indecision, and whether or not he is in fact co-operating with the authorities in connection with the investigation of other payments that may have been made. It was reported, for example, in the *Financial Post* of June 18 that the investigation would:

... include a number of newly discovered suspect payments made by Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd.

The article stated that:

Among the transactions reportedly being examined by the RCMP is a duplicate \$400,000 item for which there is said to be inadequate accounting.

What I am asking the minister is whether he is co-operating now with the RCMP officials and personally involving himself with the minister responsible, and whether he even knows about the particular investigations that are going on.

Hon. Alastair Gillespie (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): There is a very strange dichotomy on the other side. At one moment they are saying they want you to involve yourself deeply in some situation—as I understood the hon. member he wanted me to involve myself deeply with the RCMP—but if I were to do that or even try to interfere with the RCMP investigation, I would be the first to be attacked by the other side.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The answer simply escapes any reasonable person. I do not understand what the minister is talking about. I simply ask the minister whether or not he is co-operating—the word is co-operating—with the RCMP in their investiga-

[Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale).]

tion of newly discovered suspect payments by AECL. Is the minister denying now that there are any further payments that are under investigation, or is he now saying that this is the final loss we will suffer with respect to the past transactions of AECL? He can certainly answer that question.

Mr. Gillespie: Perhaps the hon. member would reread his first question. He will see then why the answer I gave him was the right answer.

On the second question, if he is asking me about the RCMP investigation into other payments that might have been made by the corporation, I am in no position to tell him. The RCMP have not come to me, they have not asked me for any information with respect to any payment. I know of none. I have no reason to believe that the RCMP would be looking at any other. It is for the RCMP to determine. I offered my full co-operation and AECL has offered its full co-operation to the RCMP.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: That is nonsense. Yesterday in the House the Solicitor General acknowledged there are investigations on an ongoing basis being made with respect to AECL operations in answer to a question from my colleague, the hon. member for Northumberland-Durham. I am asking the minister now if he will come clean and tell the House clearly and directly whether or not he will co-operate with the RCMP.

Mr. Lang: He just said so.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: What the minister said, with all due respect, is nonsense. I am simply asking—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister just answered the very question the hon. member is asking.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: The minister indicated that, personally, he has absolutely no knowledge with respect to that. I am asking whether he will conduct an investigation with the officials of AECL so that, in fact, he can assist them in co-operating with the RCMP in order to make sure that all illegal and suspect payments are brought to the attention of the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that if the hon. member reads the record he will see that that is the very language the minister used in answering him. His words were that he would co-operate and AECL would co-operate with the RCMP.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

ALLEGED BREAK-IN AT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
RESOURCE ASSOCIATION—EFFECT ON DECISION TO HOLD
INQUIRY

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Solicitor General. Did the break-in at the International Education Resource Association on Cypress Street in Vancouver, on January 29 of this year play a