

*Oral Questions***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment.

The government has cut \$38 million from the department responsible for the highest priority of Canadians, the environment. It has cut over \$130 million additionally from the programs of other departments which impact on the environment.

Will the minister tell us now what specific environmental programs will suffer from the cuts announced on Friday? What specific programs?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to answer to my hon. colleague that there will be no program cuts.

The cuts announced by my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, will be reflected in increased efficiency in operations and management. It is O and M expenses that will reflect the cuts.

In terms of programs I would like to repeat, for the benefit of my colleague, that the budget of Environment Canada has been increased by 9.4 per cent for 1988-89 and 11.7 per cent for 1989-90, without counting for the current period an increase announced in the supplementary estimates of an additional \$78.3 million to Environment Canada.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Finance.

We are all aware of how the budget of the Department of the Environment was gutted in the first mandate of this government, and now it is just starting to get back. Canada is likely to have a white Christmas long before it has a Green Plan. The minister has said repeatedly in the House he knows the cost of the Green Plan and that the government has set aside reserves for this.

• (1500)

Will the minister tell us exactly where in these supplementary estimates we will find the money for the Green Plan? What page? What line?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): I find it very hard to accept the word that the hon. member used

when she said that the Environment Canada budget was gutted by this government. This gutted budget went from \$777 million to \$973 million. If that is gutting a budget, I do not know what increasing a budget is.

The hon. member has asked where the moneys are for the Green Plan. We have made it quite clear that there have been reserves that have been established for this purpose. The Minister of the Environment will be announcing the Green Plan in due course and that will set out more detail on this matter.

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Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. Robert Cliche, the federal negotiator of the joint environmental assessment for the Great Whale project is quoted on the weekend as saying: "It is very, very, very unlikely that Quebec will ratify the agreement". There is an old saying that I am sure the Minister of the Environment is aware of, three strikes and you are out.

Given that two years have been fiddled, piddled and diddled away trying to negotiate a joint agreement on the Great Whale with the province of Quebec, will the minister stop dithering today and call for a full environmental assessment and review process of the Great Whale project, the dams, the flooding and the reservoirs, before the proponents start bellyaching that there is not time for assessing the environmental impacts of the project.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat what I said last week. There will be an environmental assessment of the project, the roads and the airport. It will be a public process.

I stated very clearly, at that time, that we would prefer that process to be a joint process with the other interested parties, namely, the provincial government and native people. That is what we are discussing with the province at the moment and, hopefully, we will have news to report shortly. But there will be a process; it will be carried out; and, the process will be complete.