

Supply

Minister in charge of the Wheat Board says that we will deliver some grain, but he is not sure how much. There is no willingness to give direction, set goals and go ahead with the original program. As a result, it is working on idle. The opportunity in that province to establish major opportunities in transportation, the construction of new prototype grain cars, developing the port as an alternative, moving ahead in the urban transportation area, and using those agreements to give that region an opportunity for economic growth and development is again put in low gear. Nothing is happening. There is no direction, no leadership, no purpose.

Clearly, the point of this resolution is to say that we have a Government that does not understand economic development. It has not provided any leadership in this area. It is forcing the regions to rely upon their own resources by relinquishing the federal role. The Budget on May 23, on the basis of evidence we have seen until now, will be built on the backs of the poorer provinces and the poorer regions. This Opposition is opposed to it. We are simply giving notice now that they have a week to change that Budget. We hope they take our good advice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments?

● (1125)

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I have much empathy with the Hon. Member because we have just heard an anguished cry from purgatory. The demons are at work. We do not know how long the term in purgatory will be, but we sincerely hope that the Member will survive his stint there because it is good for his soul. I think that we are all concerned with souls ultimately.

I believe we have had a lecture on regional industrial expansion. It was a little difficult to track some of it. I would point out to the House that the people of Manitoba were not fooled by regional industrial expansion in their region on September 4. There was certainly a basket of goodies for the Winnipeg-Fort Garry riding, but the people in the other 13 ridings in that province reacted otherwise. We have also had a dissertation on robotics. I believe that the Party opposite can give us some expert advice on robotics since it has practised that art for so many years.

On a more positive note, Mr. Speaker, I will point out one clear example of good results achieved from federal-provincial consultation in these days of economic difficulty. That example is the Cold Regions Laboratory in Edmonton, Alberta. The funding of that laboratory was cut in the November economic statement as part of sharing the pain across the country. I have had the privilege of participating in an alternative plan to revivify that very worth-while project as a combined operation among federal and provincial Governments and the private sector. I am happy to say that it is well on its way to revival and will be fulfilling its role as it should. That is an example of an NRC project that is being revived. That type of consultation did take place prior to the Grande Prairie meeting of Premiers. With this Government it is taking place hourly, daily, weekly, and continually.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Would the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) like to respond?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, in what is becoming a pattern of total absence of mind, the Hon. Member neglected to ask a question. However, I will be glad to answer it anyway because I know what he was aiming at. In his last set of remarks he fell back on the great premise that there is a wild and wonderful system of consultation. I would like him to comment on another independent objective source, *The Western Producer*. This newspaper is read by virtually all grain producers in the prairie region. The headline reads, "Uncertainty about future bothers many groups". Once again the Canadian agricultural community is in a total state of uncertainty because of the lack of consultation by the Government on agricultural programs. The article reads:

A large part of the unease flows from ignorance and confusion about the Conservative agenda for agriculture mainly because Minister John Wise has yet to articulate a clear vision of where he wants to take the industry.

That is not my comment, Mr. Speaker. That is the comment of very respected observers of the Canadian agricultural scene. Conservative Members are living in a fantasy land where there is daily and hourly consultation. They are simply drinking each other's bathwater. I presume they are talking to one another. At least I hope they are talking to someone rather than being in total isolation tanks. It is clear that they are not talking about what is going on in the country to the Canadians who really count. The provincial Premiers say they did not talk to the Government. Now the farm groups say that they are not talking to it. To whom is the Government talking?

● (1130)

Therefore, I ask the question in return: if consultation is taking place, is it a secret society that is being consulted? Do you have to belong to the Mulroney Club in order to be consulted in this country? Does one have to ante up to the Mulroney Club before one can be consulted?

Obviously in western Canada the major groups are not being consulted. Their interests are not being looked after, as we have seen in the House with the antics of the Nielsen group who have been making all kinds of recommendations that the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Crombie) knows nothing about. Obviously the Ministers of the Crown are not being consulted.

Therefore, I return to my original point. The Hon. Member, in all his interest of having a good policy emerge from the Budget, as I am sure it is his interest, should use his opportunity in the caucus tomorrow to raise the questions he has raised in the House today with his own Ministers.

Mr. Edwards: Has the Hon. Member ever talked to his Liberal friends in western Canada? Indeed, is he aware that there have been six in-depth meetings with his friend, the Mayor of the City of Edmonton, which were initiated by federal Members of Parliament, to discuss matters of mutual