

Oral Questions

huge corporations that do not need the money, lobby groups and friends of ministers. Which one of these incompatible ministers are we supposed to understand?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, not only have I not made the statement the member alludes to but I would say to him that he has made a startling allegation and it is incumbent upon him to provide facts, dates, numbers and names. We will be happy to look at them.

Let me say also that a key component of an economic development strategy has to be one that recognizes the differences that exist among and between the regions of this country. We have a very large country with quite a varied economy.

The role played by the federal government in understanding the differences among regions, in meeting the needs and requirements of sectors as diverse as those in natural resources as well as those in the manufacturing and new advanced technology sectors is one which requires a great deal of co-ordination across government. That is what we are endeavouring to do.

Mr. Randy White (Fraser Valley West, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I could have retracted one statement because these people do not have too many friends.

We are releasing a report this week on regional development which showcases the government assisted gravy train which is off the tracks.

The Minister of Industry is on record as opposing massive grants and subsidies to businesses. Therefore, what assurance can he give the business community and Canadian taxpayers that he will fight the difficult decision among the ministers of goodies who have two different messages coming out, one from two ministers of goodies and another from the Minister of Industry?

Hon. John Manley (Minister of Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us try to keep some perspective on what we are trying to accomplish here.

The member will know the concern I have about assistance to business is that it be very strategic in target. That is in line with the strategy other ministers who have responsibility for economic development are pursuing.

As the member will know, we need to make sure our investment in economic development is strategic. It is targeted and focused. It recognizes the need to recognize those sectors in which high risks are prominent, in which other countries are providing assistance to their businesses, in which the markets for goods and services being produced are international and therefore subject to the discipline of international marketplaces.

Those are criteria that apply to regions. Those are criteria that apply to sectors. We have been very consistent in seeking to put our assistance to business programs on that kind of footing.

[Translation]

SITUATION IN BOSNIA

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence.

Yesterday in Budapest, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that we should give the search for peace in the former Yugoslavia a last chance and that he used the expression "last chance" because he thought an agreement was not far off. Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serbs still refuse to listen to reason and accept the peace plan proposed by the major powers, including the United States and Russia.

• (1450)

Could the Minister of Defence tell us what grounds his colleague at Foreign Affairs has for being so optimistic, at a time when the Bosnian Serbs still refuse to accept the peace plan proposed by the contact group?

[English]

Hon. David Collenette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Budapest the Minister of Foreign Affairs was stating the obvious and I believe a position all Canadians would support. That is that this country believes the only way out of the terrible tragedy which is unfolding in the former Yugoslavia is through a negotiated settlement.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs was expressing that optimism. I hope the hon. member shares it. If he does not I would like to hear the alternative from him.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am sure we would love to share the optimism of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Could the Minister of Defence indicate what the Canadian government intends to suggest at the meetings of the CSCE that would help revive negotiations and lead the Bosnian Serbs to finally accept the proposed peace plan?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Prime Minister himself stated the importance of a negotiated peace. There is also the fact that at this very moment, 55 Canadians are still being detained in Bosnia, and I think that, following the release of 53 Dutch and British soldiers, we first want to ensure the release of our soldiers over there.

That being said, their release is expected to be imminent, and the pressure is being kept up at all levels, including the CSCE, the UN forces and all international means, as the Prime Minister did this morning.