

Oral Questions

I want to ask the person who is answering questions now, the government House leader—

[*Translation*]

—is he denying today that the contracts were awarded to Mr. Small in violation of Treasury Board regulations? Is he telling us that awarding such contracts is a perfectly legitimate procedure in this government? Is he telling us that Treasury Board approves this kind of procedure? If so, I suggest he talk to his colleague two seats down!

[*English*]

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I am saying again, as has been said in this House several times, that the accusation by the hon. member of violation of Treasury Board guidelines is false.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Last Friday the federal government unilaterally dumped responsibility for 10,000 treaty Indian people receiving social assistance from Indian Affairs on to the provincial welfare system in Saskatchewan.

This move is causing organizational chaos, all kinds of stress and anxiety for society's most vulnerable families, and amounts to a \$25 million off-load on to the already beleaguered taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

Can the minister tell us today that he is reversing this utterly callous and irresponsible move?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, the government has been trying to persuade the province of Saskatchewan for over two years to accept the realignment of constitutional responsibility for native social services programming off reserve on the following basis.

All provinces have a responsibility under the Constitution for health and social services to all Canadians living within their precincts. This has been upheld by the courts. Of reserve the province of Saskatchewan has responsibility for social services for aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons without discrimination, and we intend

to use funding to enhance the programs on reserve to the equivalent level.

Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River): Just because the government has managed to off-load its fiduciary responsibility on to other provinces does not make it right in Saskatchewan, and especially not the way it was done here.

My supplementary is for the Prime Minister. In the last budget the government cut the budget for Indian economic development by 28 per cent. It eliminated the rural and native housing program for Métis people and off reserve Indians and it failed again to address the chronic housing shortage that has been well documented in our Indian communities.

Therefore I would like to ask the Prime Minister if it is the deliberate policy of this government to force Indian people out of their communities by denying them jobs and housing and then to shirk any responsibility for them at all in the communities that receive them? Is this his policy or does it just look that way?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, in terms of the preamble to the question about off-loading, the federal government pays 50 cents of every dollar contributed to health and social services for all residents in Saskatchewan, notwithstanding the fact that it is a 100 per cent provincial responsibility.

In terms of the federal budget for aboriginal programs, it now exceeds \$5 billion. There was a \$350 million increase in the last budget. There is a \$347 million allocation to economic development, and the International Labour Organization—interestingly enough—recently found that Canada is one of the few nations in the world that has made significant progress on behalf of native peoples.

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• (1440)

BOSNIA

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will know that yesterday on both sides of the House there was an expression of how heartsick Canadians are about the continuing slaughter in the former Yugoslavia and in the lack of action by the world community to stop that.