

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. friend knows, on August 24 we offered Quebec a model that would serve as a future generation forest resource development agreement.

The province wanted to take some time to assess its own priorities. I indicated subsequently that failing any response from the province we would consider other options that would perhaps assist us in enlarging our traditional role in research and assistance to private wood lots.

However, I can report to my friend in the House that on Friday there was a very useful meeting with Quebec officials, and it seems now that there is a desire to arrive at a new agreement quite soon.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in his role as the minister responsible for the core area initiative.

For the first time since the Great Depression, there are thousands of Canadians who can no longer feed and clothe themselves or their families. If we look at the supplementary estimates, we see there is nothing but bad news for all regional development projects.

I would like to ask the minister about a very special project in Winnipeg, the core area initiative, which thousands of Winnipeggers depend upon and look forward to its renewal. The project is due to end on March 31, 1991 and yet there has been no announcement from the federal government.

Will he tell the House today what the government intends to do about the core area initiative?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, there is very good news about regional development in western Canada.

In terms of the estimates, my colleague, the Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds who is responsible for western diversification, has stated that any reductions will be done in the area of management and operating costs. I know his staff is working on that, and I think it is fully in harmony with that.

I remind the hon. member of western diversification in his own city with Boeing, a tremendous expansion in the aeronautical industry. He was a member who decried western diversification giving money to Boeing because it was another one of these ugly multinationals that happened to be in Winnipeg and happened to create over 1,000 jobs for us.

That is what western diversification has done for our region and, if he does not want to praise his city, I will, including the great results yesterday in Vancouver.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, the minister is the first western minister to announce that a cutback is a gain for the west. I am sure that will be well received throughout western Canada.

Second, he refers back to the Boeing example of the federal government giving \$9 million to that corporation while in fact another department was paying out \$150 million in a legal settlement. Quite obviously the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing when it comes to economic development.

The minister refused to answer the question. I will ask it again. The core area initiative has less than six months to go. You have not said anything. People think you are about to bail out on this city. Would you tell Canadians you are not going to bail out on Winnipeg?

Mr. Speaker: I would ask hon. members to direct their questions through the Chair?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased the hon. member now feels that the Boeing deal is a good deal for Winnipeg and for Canada. I find it surprising, if he is talking about the CAI deal.

That deal was there before this government came into power in 1984. It has cost the country a tremendous amount of money, and the only person who has really benefitted is a certain Liberal who happened to be a supporter of that party in Manitoba.

An hon. member: A lawyer.

Mr. Epp: He is a lawyer of course but, more seriously, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the core we will be having a tripartite meeting on Friday of this week. I say to the hon. member that I appreciate his interest in core and that we will do the right thing for Winnipeg.