

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

[English]

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**RENEWAL OF AGREEMENTS WITH NEWFOUNDLAND**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I want to know if all the economic and regional development agreements with Newfoundland which expired on March 31 this year will be renewed. I particularly want to know why the Government of Canada is engaging in an unfair game of economic treachery with the poorest province in our country, the people of Newfoundland. Why have the regional development agreements not been renewed? Why is that arrogant Government making the people of Newfoundland pay to reduce a deficit for which they are not responsible? I ask that of the Prime Minister.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, if I may reply to the right hon. gentleman, I would remind him that what his statement represents is absolute balderdash. This Government has in the past demonstrated a tremendous commitment to regional and economic development. At the present time in Newfoundland there are many economic co-operation agreements still in effect. For example, we have agreements involving ocean industries, highways, harbour resources, livestock, agri-products and so on.

The fact that some of these agreements have recently been mentioned, a couple of weeks ago, indicates that the process is still alive and well in Newfoundland.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Minister for International Trade sat through that response very uncomfortably. I can understand that. I doubt very much if he will retain his patience as this exchange continues.

EXPIRY OF AGREEMENTS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are used to the kind of deception just practised by the Minister. They want to know about the \$22 million mineral development agreement with Newfoundland which expired on March 31. Will it be renewed? The \$21 million tourist development agreement with Newfoundland expired on March 31. Will it be renewed? The \$28 million Burin Peninsula agreement expired on March 31. Will it be renewed? The \$52 million pulp and paper

agreement with Newfoundland expired on March 31. Will it be renewed? If not, why not? Will the Minister please reply?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, it is transparently obvious why the Leader of the Opposition has worked himself up into this semi-righteous mode of indignation today. One can easily understand his new-found interest in Newfoundland.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacKay: It will be interesting to see if his enthusiasm continues later in the week.

This Government has nothing to apologize for in terms of its commitment to regional development. As the Prime Minister indicated, we have practically doubled our commitment to regional development in all of Atlantic Canada. As the Prime Minister indicated today, there are absolutely silly reports that the federal Government plans to slash regional development funding to harmonize with U.S. programs and so on. That is an absolute lie which has been put out. This Government has a continuing commitment to regional development in Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Prime Minister and the Minister of Trade used almost the same vocabulary during the election about unemployment insurance.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): If anyone is going to be indignant tomorrow, it will be the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. They will have something to say about it.

ASSURANCES REQUESTED THAT AGREEMENTS WILL BE RENEWED

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): During the very course of this election, this Government in Ottawa sold out Newfoundland fish to France. It cut unemployment insurance, it stalled on Hibernia and now it has refused to say whether or not those agreements will be renewed. I ask the Minister to answer that.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if there was a question there but it gives me an opportunity to reply to the hon. gentlemen and remind him that this Government has done more to assist Newfoundland than any other government in history.