

Oral Questions

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, those are the kinds of answers that the people of British Columbia and the other provinces do not accept.

I wonder if the minister could confirm for this House, in light of his negligence and the negligence of the Social Credit government in British Columbia, that they started the shut-down and slow-down of FERDA forest activity in British Columbia and the cancellation of advisory committee meetings, and also confirm to this House that in his view, with the cancellation of these agreements, we will see the amount of wood supply to industry from our forest communities decline and we will see layoffs in forest communities throughout British Columbia and across the country.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I can tell my hon. friend that these agreements will not be cancelled. They will be in place before another planting season starts.

I have an interesting article that I came across this morning, where the head of one of the major environmental committees says this about the NDP stand on the environment and some of the important issues in British Columbia.

An hon. member: Who is it?

Mr. Oberle: I will tell you in a moment. I just came across this. It is the chairman of the Western Wilderness Committee. He said:

I am really disappointed that the NDP have not formulated any policy at all on how to deal with old growth forests and how to deal with wilderness areas or parks, or how to deal with the Carmanah, specifically.

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PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, the court has asked the government to review all the bids for the goods and services tax data centre. Instead, the government has changed the contract requirement by abandoning its policy for awarding the contract to the lowest qualified bidder. This has created a serious mistrust of the process.

Why has the government acted so unfairly?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, the government has always acted in a way that

tries to get the best value for the government. The best value does not necessarily mean the lowest price. There are a number of other factors that are also important.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree that by changing the rules half way through, his government decision has caused chaos for the bidders on the data centre? Will the government in light of that investigate allegations of unfairness and subjectivity in the bidding process? Also, will the government make its finding public?

Hon. Paul Dick (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, the government has followed what the court has suggested. We have gone back and opened up the tendering process and gone back to retender. We have set things out very clearly in the requests for tenders this time and there should be no more problems. People have what they requested.

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STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): In the absence of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, my question is directed to the Acting Deputy Prime Minister.

• (1200)

Last month the Minister of Employment and Immigration announced a \$41 million cut-back in the student employment experience development program. We now know that these funding cuts will cost Canadian students over 17,000 jobs. How can this government justify the decision forcing 17,000 more students on to the unemployment lines this summer?

Hon. Marcel Danis (Minister of State (Youth) and Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I would like to tell the hon. member first that there has been no reduction to the government's expenditure on youth. What we have done is to redirect funds from post-secondary students to high school students, a substantial number of whom we feel are at risk. We have set up a new initiative which is a stay-in-school initiative. Over all the budget for youth has increased from \$198 million to \$218 million.

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Mississauga East): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister is hoping that there will be fewer students to study this government's programs. The