

Oral Questions

• (1150)

We have to respect the law of the land. After the judgments were rendered we had a public inquiry. We could not have both together. With time, when he gains experience, he will know the law of the land a bit better and perhaps one day he will be ready to take over what will be left, if anything, of the Reform Party.

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[Translation]

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. In Quebec, there are 25 federal research facilities employing 3,000 workers, which represents 13.4 per cent of the jobs in federal facilities of this type in Canada, whereas, in Ontario, the Chalk River nuclear research centre alone employs 2,227 people. Overall, federal centres employ 11,000 researchers and technicians in Ontario.

Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that the federal government has consistently penalized Quebec in the area of research and development, undermining its scientific and economic development? Would he also explain why, under such conditions, he is cutting funding for research in the DIPP program, which is crucial to the aerospace industry located primarily in Quebec.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as regards the DIPP, the hon. member should be aware that, in recent years, nearly 50 per cent of funding has gone to Quebec, to business in Quebec.

We have to be realistic when we talk about the DIPP, because we have long known the size of the defence industry in Quebec. When the transition was made with the DIPP funds, almost 50 per cent of these funds were, in fact, paid to businesses in Quebec.

As far as research and development is concerned, we acknowledge that the proportion spent in Quebec is approximately 25 per cent, which is still very close to the proportion of the population.

Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec we receive only 17 per cent of funds intended for research and development. According to the Minister of Finance, the figure is 13 per cent.

How does the Prime Minister justify this imbalance between Quebec and Ontario in the distribution of federal research facilities, whereas Hull, Gatineau and Aylmer are within the National Capital Region and could have received a greater proportion of these facilities?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has repeatedly explained, there are a whole lot of people in the

greater metropolitan area of Ottawa–Hull working at research and development centres. Let us leave this aside.

The hon. member should note that, even though the Bloc Quebecois and the Government of Quebec claim 17 per cent of federal funding for research and development goes to Quebec, we contend and are prepared to show proof that approximately 25 per cent of the Government of Canada's funding for research and development goes to Quebec.

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[English]

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, in November the Alberta government will ask grain farmers whether they are in favour of having the freedom to sell their wheat and barley to any buyer, including the Canadian Wheat Board, into domestic and export markets, yes or no?

In response, the federal minister of agriculture states the Alberta plebiscite will not be the last word on this issue. When will the minister of agriculture give farmers the last word on this issue and have a plebiscite across the whole Canadian Wheat Board area to settle this issue?

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture has made it very clear for a number of months that farmers will be involved in the future of the Canadian Wheat Board in Canada.

To emphasize that, he has recently put in place a very expert panel to go right across western Canada to talk to farmers, chat with farmers, and consult with farmers in all of the industry about their views on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

We will continue to deal with everyone and consult with everyone in the industry in order to talk about and deal with the future of that great wheat board.

• (1155)

Mr. Leon E. Benoit (Vegreville, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, panels, studies, commissions and reports, and it has been two years and nothing has been done.

Alberta farmers are being asked for their opinion on the issue because the Alberta government believes that farmers have the right to make this decision. Who will have the last word on whether farmers should have the freedom to sell their wheat and barley into all markets? Will it be the farmers or will it be this father knows best minister of agriculture?

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri–food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that farmers will be consulted. I also remind the hon. member of the disappointment of all of us when the third party in Parliament recommends to farmers to break Canadian law and supports them in this.