

Oral Questions

Environment and concerns the juicy rake-off of \$143,000 to a consultant which he made in the 1986 Environment Week publicity campaign.

Yesterday the Minister said in the House in his criticism of the Auditor General that an independent report commended the Minister for the project. Is it not true that the same report says that the Government paid invoices having no idea of the magnitude of the cost? Is it not true that \$75,000 was paid for artists who had not charged for their services? Is it not true that the Department paid \$370,000 to an outfit called *Paroles et Musique* without a copy of the contract, and is it not true that a television show was produced and never used? This being the case, how could the Minister rise in the House yesterday to try to make the people of Canada believe that nothing was wrong with this whole sordid affair?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member quotes selectively from an independent assessment, done at arm's length from my Department, of the program we launched for Environment Week in 1986. Let me quote from the same report: "We are satisfied that total costs were on the upper threshold of acceptable costs—the Department should be commended for having the courage to attempt what it did—we do not agree that the \$1 million spent was a waste of money."

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, please do not let me hire that Minister as an accountant when he gets defeated because it is obvious that anyone would go bankrupt with that kind of mishandling of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will put his question.

[Translation]

ENVIRONMENT WEEK 1986—DEPARTMENT'S EXPENDITURES—
MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Don Boudria (Glenarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, Canadians now know that \$143,000 were uselessly paid in commissions, that expenses were paid without invoices being provided for anybody whatsoever.

Is the Minister now prepared to promise that each invoice concerning this case will be tabled in the House? Is he prepared to appear before the parliamentary committee to account for his departmental outlays in connection with the 1986 Environment Week? If not, why?

[English]

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the question, let me respond directly by saying that I would be pleased and proud to appear before the relevant committees of the House of Commons to defend my budget and my estimates, as I do as a matter of course and as any member of the Cabinet does as a matter of course.

The Hon. Member casts aspersions on a program that was designed to promote public awareness of environmental matters in direct response to a recommendation made to me

and my Department and the Government of Canada by a group of environmentalists from one coast to the other who met in Ottawa in November, 1985. The group released a report which said that the public is not sufficiently aware of the extent or complexity of environmental issues or their possible solutions.

It urged the Government of Canada to use large-scale promotions through television, radio and newspapers to increase the public's awareness and understanding of environmental issues. We did so through an advertising campaign that won the Canadian Public Relations Society's highest award for public service advertising. It also won the United States National Advertising Agency Network award for public service advertising.

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AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

GRANT MADE TO WEST EDMONTON MALL AMUSEMENT PARK
PROJECT

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, my question deals with the Deputy Prime Minister. The record will show that yesterday the Deputy Prime Minister said he would debate the issue with me any time in Edmonton. I look forward to being in touch with his office so we can set it up.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaikie: My question is for the Prime Minister who is ultimately responsible for the Deputy Prime Minister. Given the fact that we have the cumulative evidence of a press release from a former Minister, the wording in the *Gazette* and the words of the Auditor General himself with respect to the ineligibility of this proposal, I wonder what the Prime Minister has to say to the rest of Canada about the fact that one of his Ministers was so eager to break the rules. What kind of signal is the Prime Minister sending to Canadians in general if he is not willing to get up in the House here and now and disavow this kind of behavior on the part of one of his senior Ministers?

● (1450)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend asks what the Prime Minister has to say. I say that I can hardly wait for the debate in Edmonton.

Mr. Broadbent: Okay, let's have it.

Mr. Mulroney: When western Canadians have a choice between that Member and the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada they will choose the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada every time.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: Let's have the debate. Go ahead.