

Mississauga - Federal Constituency

Abbott to probe foreign aid grant

LPC

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The use of foreign aid monies sent by Canada to Jamaica last year will be investigated by Mississauga MP Tony Abbott, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Abbott was told Sunday at a brunch-meeting at the Flame Steak House and Tavern that Jamaican Prime Minister Mike Manley used some of the \$90-million in Canadian aid to buy votes.

Ted Gittings of Comac Communications Ltd. said that while recently in Jamaica he spoke to several residents who, he said, told him "Canadians must be crazy. Look what he's (Manley) doing with your money."

"I hope the money wasn't squandered," Abbott replied, "but some of it probably was. I will investigate the matter and report back."

He said it is not difficult to look at the many "horror stories" associated with Canada's foreign aid program, "but overall it is evenly balanced."

Fresh from a language learning vacation in France, Abbott fielded several questions from the 147 people in attendance at the brunch.

Asked to explain the waning support for the Liberal Party, the Minister said, "We've been in power a long time and the Prime Minister has lost a lot of popularity."

Abbott said the pilot strike, wage and price controls, inflation, recession, "and a general mood of disenchantment" were also responsible. "Canadians are generally fed up with govern-

ment," he said.

The Liberal's troubles are analogous to Canada's problems, he said, but the future holds hope.

Questioned about the lack of Liberal power in western Canada, Abbott said the west believes it subsidizes the east. "It will be extremely hard to rebuild our fortunes in western Canada, but in time I think we will."

Abbott related a story he heard recently in western Canada, which he said expresses the thoughts of many westerners. If Canada was shaped like a cow, with its head in the west and rear in the east, Abbott said, "The cow gets fed in the west, milked in Ontario, and you know what happens to it in the east."

Abbott returned to Ottawa Sunday evening, as the House of Commons returned to business following a 32-day vacation. He said wage and price controls would be one of the main topics of discussion.

"Most people feel the controls have been effective, but it will be as difficult coming out of them as it was implementing them."

Canada's future, he warned in conclusion, will depend on capital investment. "We must either grow economically or face severe unemployment prospects. I'm hopeful that things will improve."