

*Oral Questions*

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister who just indicated he is concerned with deficits. The COSICS, now SIGNET, system computer contract, which was originally to cost \$111 million for external affairs has now jumped to \$208 million. Today in the estimates it is \$224 million.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister, who just indicated how interested he is in cost reduction, how he can continue to pour money into a scandal plagued scheme that costs \$224 million and does not even work? How can he do this?

**Hon. Otto Jelinek (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Supply and Services and as a former Minister of Supply and Services, I do not for one moment accept the preamble of the hon. member's question.

The facts speak for themselves. Tenders are always very open, very clear cut and allow businesses to compete evenly and fairly. It is my understanding that this contract is being applied according to normal procedures and regulations.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I will let the courts decide on that part of the answer of the minister.

[*Translation*]

My supplementary is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister who said he wanted to cut the fat out of government spending. Today, we have the example of a contract which costs \$224 million, and although experts have said the system is already obsolete and does not work, the government continues to spend money on the project.

How can the government, in good conscience, spend and waste taxpayers' money in this way?

**Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, I disagree entirely with what the hon. member just said. First of all, the COSICS program is over. We are now in a new communications phase, called SIGNET, and everything is proceeding satisfactorily.

[*English*]

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of Treasury Board.

On several previous occasions I have asked this minister to look into incidents of sexual harassment in the Public Service in Halifax. The minister responded that as an investigation was under way, his hands were tied.

The final report has now been released. Sexual harassment was found and it was also found that management did not correct matters. Why is the minister refusing to take the necessary steps to correct this horrible situation?

**Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the hon. member that we are indeed looking at that and the Public Service is taking the proper action.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, Treasury Board guidelines state: "Harassment is an offence subject to disciplinary measures up to and including discharge".

Again, the report found the offences, including retaliation. Nothing has been done. A single mother has been thrown out of work and a mother of two small children has been thrown out of work. Nothing has happened to the perpetrators. Why will the minister not move to discipline the offenders?

**Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, we are dealing here with the Public Service Commission. As the President of the Treasury Board, I have to deal with this matter with some care because the Public Service Commission, as the hon. member knows, is awaiting the final report of its appeal investigation branch. They are still awaiting it and they will be acting upon that report.

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**ABORIGINAL ECONOMY**

**Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of Indian affairs. In a letter written before Christmas, the Prime Minister set the goal of doubling aboriginal businesses over the decade from 5,000 to 10,000 businesses.