

### PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

[Translation]

PUBLIC BUILDINGS—OTTAWA—CONTRACT FOR DEMOLITION OF OLD PRINTING BUREAU

**Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve):** Mr. Speaker, the matter I intend to raise tonight—I am happy to see that the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McIlraith) is present—concerns the contract awarded for the demolition of the old printing bureau, a matter uppermost in the minds of the people of Hull and the area.

As a matter of fact, the president of Thibault Lumber stated to *Le Droit*, on Wednesday, March 8, that the federal government, the Department of Public Works in particular, was in fact making a gift of \$50,000 to the firm of Cohen & Cohen to which the contract for the demolition of that building was awarded.

Now, following publication of this statement of Mr. Thibault, who incidentally is president of a Hull business specializing in building demolition for 35 years, the Minister of Public Works said to the representative of *Le Droit* of Ottawa:

Those who had time and competence were invited to bid.

This means that the other contractors within the area and without did not have the time and mainly that were non competent. Those who were invited to bid for a contract of some \$100,000—the contract was awarded to Cohen & Cohen for \$92,777—without any public call for tenders, through the newspapers, were: Hugh Grant Limited, of Ottawa, \$99,000; Teperman and Sons Ltd., Ottawa, \$102,420; Greenspoon Bros. Ltd., Toronto, \$115,000; Palmer Levitan Ltd., Hull, \$117,200 and Hurdman Bros Ltd, Ottawa, \$119,750.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the minister to tell us if some French Canadian contractors could not have been asked to submit tenders at that time? What would have been the reaction of the English speaking contractors if the minister had asked French speaking contractors only to submit tenders for the wrecking of the old printing bureau?

I think that this is a clear case of discrimination. There is something else. It has been rumoured in the area that someone in Toronto

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was asked to submit a tender. Were people in Montreal asked? Were companies in Hull asked to submit tenders for the wrecking of the old printing bureau? No.

Mr. Speaker, when Mr. Thibault claims that he could have done the wrecking for \$50,000, that is far less than what the government is now paying, people begin to wonder. Have public funds been fooled around with to play politics? Are the contractors concerned personal friends of the Minister of Public Works? Did the companies agree that the firm of Cohen & Cohen should be awarded the contract for \$50,000 or \$40,000 more than others could have done the work for? Would there be in this a possible gift to the electoral funds of the Liberal party of the Minister of Public Works? Would the companies not have agreed among themselves, for instance to take \$4,000 or \$5,000 each and let Cohen & Cohen get the contract for the demolition of the national printing bureau?

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is some discrimination in that case. When we see in other newspapers during the same period that is on March 3—another here on February 24—that for trifles the Department of Public Works is calling for tenders amounting to \$2,000 or \$3,000 and those calls for tenders have appeared in the *Progrès de Hull* on two occasions: tenders for the removal of ashes and refuse at the testing laboratory of the Department of Public Works to empty trash cans—one wonders what is going on.

To install chemical extinguishers in the Hunter building, tenders have been called, but to demolish a building for an amount of \$92,777, the minister answers:

We then checked the financial stability of each one of those companies.

Does this mean that only these six companies are financially stable? The minister is fully aware of the fact that if he had used the press or a public channel to call for tenders for the demolition of the old printing bureau, perhaps 15 or 20 contractors would have tendered for the contract. For my part, I do not discriminate against anyone; I do not care whether one is English speaking, French speaking, a Jew, a Ukranian, it makes no difference, the party submitting the lowest tender must do the work, unless he is insolvent. It does not take three weeks to find out whether a contractor is solvent or not, as the minister knows; his officers have only to phone the bank manager, who knows about the solvency of contractor Thibault or Filiou or of any other contractor in our area.