

Oral Questions

program and so on. I can assure the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra we are moving forward and improving management practices across the system. I am confident the Auditor General will agree that great progress has been made and we can look forward to more progress.

Mr. Clarke: Madam Speaker, since one of the agreed upon solutions was the appointment of a high level departmental comptroller in all departments, and since the Auditor General again found it necessary to state this was not taking place, can the minister tell the House why he is taking so long to act on this program?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, it is not a question of delaying that agreed upon program. We consider that a senior financial officer in each department and agency is essential. This is very much a part of the program which has been moving forward. It is difficult in all circumstances to find the adequate personnel to fulfil these functions but I know the office of the Comptroller General is acting rapidly and efficiently in terms of moving forward on this front as well.

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION**RELEASE OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ON CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS**

Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher): Madam Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Justice. On November 28 my colleague, the hon. member for Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe asked the Prime Minister at that time whether he would release the three polls that particularly had polled public opinion on the government's constitutional proposals. At that time the Prime Minister said he would check whether he could release them. I understand the minister has made a decision. Could he now give us the decision as to when they will be released?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Social Development): Madam Speaker, I intend to make public within a few days that part of the poll which covers the constitutional issue.

[English]

Mr. Epp: Madam Speaker, I must admit I did not get the full import of the minister's answer.

An hon. Member: There wasn't much import in it.

Mr. Epp: If I understood him correctly, he did not give us any date. He said he would do it in terms of the committee's work. I suggest to him the committee has been working for some time.

Yesterday a Gallup poll came out clearly showing that Canadians are opposed more than two to one to the program or the plan of the Prime Minister. I should like to ask the Minister of Justice how the government can reconcile a policy

where, on the one hand, they are going to restrict the number of expert witnesses to five and they will only be allowed to appear before the committee after they have passed a litmus test as to what they might say.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Epp: Why is it that the policy of the government when, on the other hand, they are now planning another advertising program, or considering one, to con the Canadian people with their own money and yet will not allow experts to appear?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Madam Speaker, the committee decided yesterday to allow five experts to appear, two to be named by the official opposition, two by the government party and one by the New Democratic Party. This is the decision of the committee and I shall respect it.

As for the advertising campaign mentioned by the hon. member, no decision has been made as yet, but I would like to remind him that the Quebec government has now spent nearly \$1.5 million since September for advertising which is sometimes questionable. For example, a parish priest says the proposed constitution is not moral. As for the poll, since the hon. member did not understand my first reply, I shall repeat that I intend to make them public in a short while. And since he did not understand what I said in French concerning the polls, perhaps I could quote this sentence from Cicero: *Plus apud nos vera ratio valeat quam vulgi opinio*. This means, Madam Speaker, that we should be guided by reason rather than by public opinion.

We therefore intend to make these polls public, but if we are right, we plan on going on in the same way.

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[English]

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**COST OF POLICING SERVICES IN PROVINCES**

Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General, who recently announced major increases in the shares to be paid by provincial and municipal governments for RCMP contract services—increases unanimously opposed by the eight provincial attorneys general involved—and the shifting of a \$100 million tax burden from the federal government on to provincial and municipal taxpayers. I have before me a document prepared by the RCMP showing, for the first time, the actual increases proposed amounting to over 100 per cent in some cases and to an increase of over \$2 million a year for the municipality of Burnaby alone.

Why is the government proposing to pass on an extra \$14 million in RCMP headquarters administration costs, and how can the federal government justify this totally unwarranted