

Oral Questions

Boeing's original bid which satisfied requirements was in fact more expensive. Its latest bid would have refurbished the Labrador helicopters but they would not be able, for example, to go out and rescue people off the *Ocean Ranger* which was a search and rescue requirement.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, we heard that bid or that quote of \$600 million last night from a spokesperson on behalf of the government. I called Boeing Canada at two o'clock and I spoke to the vice-president, George Capern, whose name is on this letter to the Prime Minister. I asked Mr. Capern whether his quote of \$10 million a unit cited on July 14, 1992 stood. Mr. Capern has confirmed that bid stands and that this upgrade can be done at a cost savings of \$1 billion.

I want to ask the government House leader to stop making excuses and to start making common sense by getting on the phone to Boeing to see whether or not this government can realize savings in the vicinity of \$1 billion for the taxpayers of Canada. Is it not time to listen to common sense and stop listening to Tory lobbyists for these sweetheart deals?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the search and rescue helicopter procurement is \$800 million, not \$1 billion. Second, if these Labrador helicopters are to be updated and modernized to the extent that they can perform the same function, it would cost \$1 billion. They can in fact be updated for \$10 million but they simply would not be able to go out in foul weather.

As for the question of lobbyists, the president of the firm that was the head lobbyist for the EH-101 is a former Liberal executive assistant.

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISEMENTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. The Minister of Employment and Immigration just said moments ago that he had to cut expenditures to the unemployed because the government did not have enough money.

If that is so, why is it that it has lots of money to give Tory advertisers \$21 million worth of untendered advertising contracts, look-alike contracts at that?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the news article upon which the member based that question is totally and absolutely false. There were six companies which engaged in the competition—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Andre: If the opposition does not want to hear the answer it should not ask the question.

The six companies were Académie in Montreal; Burghardt, Wolowich, Crunkhorn in Toronto; Camp Associates, Toronto; La Boîte à Idées, Montreal; Palmer Jarvis, Vancouver; and Publitel. They made submissions to a committee of five civil servants: the deputy secretary to the cabinet; the director of advertising, Public Opinion Research, Supply and Services; the director of communications of the PCO; the director of operations, Communications Secretariat, PCO; and the executive director of communications, Federal-Provincial Relations Office.

They were following the policy exactly from 1985. That newspaper story is an example of poor journalism, not the government not following its policies.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, the minister never told us that they were in fact formal bids. He knows they were not. There were invitations sent to a half dozen people; that is what happened.

Again concerning the \$21 million worth of contracts, why is it that a member of the national campaign of the Conservative Party is the one engaged in giving those contracts through the Tory agency that works for the government to Tory firms that are the recipients in the end? Is there not something wrong with that?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not going to be dissuaded by facts.

What happened was that these six firms made proposals to a committee of civil servants, and the committee of civil servants assessed the representations and decided which agencies should perform this service. This policy has been in place since 1985. It has been a successful policy.