

Mr. Neil: If the minister refers to page 557 of the Auditor General's report, he will find that the computer system which was set up is not adequate as far as the fund is concerned.

I have a supplementary question for the minister. In view of the report of the Auditor General respecting the lack of authority for compensation payments under the James Bay Agreement, has the minister taken or does he intend to take any disciplinary action respecting the officials who were involved?

Mr. Faulkner: Mr. Speaker, certainly I will look into that matter. I will be pleased to answer the question in committee. I think I meet with the parliamentary committee next week. Of course, the hon. member avoided dealing with the other recommendation or area brought out in the Auditor General's report, namely, the arts and crafts fund. He studiously avoided that because, in fact, we took action. Where we take action does not seem to be the subject of any comment in the question period.

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FISHERIES

DREDGING OF MIRAMICHI RIVER

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. Can he tell the House whether he is prepared to sign an ocean dumping permit to facilitate the dredging of the Miramichi River? If so, can he assure the fishermen of that area that all of their concerns will be adequately protected in that permit?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Fisheries and the Environment): Mr. Speaker, repeatedly we have made it very clear that no permit would be issued until all doubts were removed. Obviously, there may be some situations in which monitoring will be required. To this effect I suggested a committee on which fishermen will be represented. The operations we put together when we had the cable going from New Brunswick to Prince Edward Island, with fishermen involved in the monitoring, were most satisfactory. I am willing to look into this as a precedent.

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GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES

AWARDING OF ADVERTISING CONTRACTS

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the right hon. Prime Minister: it refers to the report of the Auditor General.

● (1152)

Studies now indicate that the federal government is the largest single advertiser in Canada, exceeding any of the large companies. At page 307 of his report, the Auditor General

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indicates that one company, namely, Vickers & Benson, was given advertising accounts by the Employment and Immigration Commission without tender. In fact, 80 per cent of that commission's total advertising went to Vickers & Benson.

In view of the statement of the deputy minister to the committee yesterday that it is the minister who decides who will get the advertising budget, may I ask the right hon. Prime Minister on what basis the government decides who will get its advertising contracts?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, regarding the size of the advertising budget, I should like to point out to the hon. member that the government considers that it is its duty to ensure that Canadians are informed of the programs and policies which are of interest to them, so that they can benefit from whatever government policies exist. I would wager that if you total the ten provincial budgets for advertising, they would probably be higher than that of the federal government. That is the way federalism operates, Mr. Speaker: each level of government must inform its citizens of the programs which affect them.

With regard to the choice of advertisers, we look for competence, imagination and economy.

Mr. Epp: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister has indicated that there are certain criteria, but when one looks at the Auditor General's report and at the answers of the deputy minister, political patronage seems to be very much a factor as to how the minister will decide who will get the advertising. At page 307 of his report, paragraph 14.172, the Auditor General recommends that tendering procedures be used in advertising, and in fact the commission has said that they will follow those guidelines if treasury so dictates. Therefore, I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether it will now be the policy of Treasury Board that these advertising contracts be awarded under the competitive tendering system.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in a matter as abstract as judging the quality and efficiency of one type of advertising as against another, somebody has to make a decision. We think it is better that the elected representatives of the people make the decision, rather than the bureaucracy, and I would be surprised if the hon. member disagree with that.

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NORTHERN AFFAIRS

APPOINTMENT OF COMMISSIONER OF THE YUKON

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. As he knows, the provisions of the Yukon Act require the governor in council to appoint a commissioner of the Yukon Territory. In view of the fact that there now exists, as of the last election in that territory, a clear and decisive majority, having been exposed to the party system, will the Prime Minister assure me and the people of