

Oral Questions

reference, I am prepared to do that. Otherwise, I can read them, Mr. Speaker, but it will take a little while.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps the hon. member in his supplementary question could ask a more specific question. I think the hon. minister is right. If it is a lengthy reply, it should be done in another way, but I will hear the hon. member's supplementary question.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I would be quite content if the minister would table the terms of reference to which he has referred, and perhaps in answer to my supplementary question he may wish to summarize it.

I would like to ask him, in addition to that, whether he has ever visited Kingston Pen, in his professional capacity, I may add. The prison was built in 1837. As the minister will know, the staff and inmates are trying to survive in really impossible medieval conditions.

• (1150)

Would the minister agree to go to Kingston to meet with the inmates, the staff and the officials? Would he be prepared to ask his officials to finally launch a plan to close this institution, which is such a disgrace to the country?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as hon. members know, I have been Solicitor General for just about three weeks now. I have not had time to visit all those institutions. As part of my responsibilities, I intend to visit as many as possible.

I did visit the women's prison in Kingston last week. Unfortunately time did not permit me to visit that particular institution. If it is possible, I surely will. It is an important institution, as my hon. colleague knows, and when time permits I will be there.

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GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

Today we heard from a Public Works lawyer that the government could lose \$2 billion a month if a dispute over a home for the unwanted GST data centre continues.

The dispute involves claims that Public Works is in fact violating government policy for awarding contracts to the lowest qualified bidder.

Can the minister tell the House exactly what he intends to do about this dispute and how he plans to prevent this from happening in the future?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, today I am representing the Minister of Public Works who is meeting in Atlantic Canada.

My understanding is that the issue raised by my hon. friend from Ottawa Centre is before the Federal Court at the present time. It would be inappropriate for us to comment on it at this time.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I respect the statement of the minister.

If the Canadian people have their way we will never see or need a home for the GST anyway.

My supplementary question is also directed to the same minister. With millions of square feet of office space in the national capital region occupied by the federal government, with downsizing, and with thousands of public servants being laid off, can the minister give the assurance to the House that every effort was made in order to accommodate the GST centre in existing buildings rather than going out and spending millions of dollars renting a new one?

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Privatization and Regulatory Affairs)): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the government has set up an expenditure review committee which examines every dollar that can be saved and that every dollar spent by the government is wisely spent.

I can also assure the hon. member that the procedures followed by the government are those to assure that the taxpayers of the country get the best value for the dollar spent. I can assure him of that.

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CANADIAN EXPLORATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The termination of CEIP will have a crippling impact on the Canadian exploration industry. Without CEIP, capital spent by exploration firms on exploration will fall drastically and dramatically in 1990 and will fall even further in 1991. That is a period in which even the energy