

*Oral Questions*

cumstances leading to the premature release of budget information?

• (1450)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, I would be happy to repeat that I did not know the specifics—even the generalities of the—

**Mr. Clark:** Who knew?

**Mr. Cosgrove:**—provisions of the budget respecting housing until the minister briefed the cabinet on the afternoon of the delivery of the budget, on the twelfth. I did not know the specifics until later on, nor did Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, for which I report to Parliament, know the specifics that were in the budget until afterward. Any release of any information was authorized after that time. I am quite surprised that while we have comments of members opposite who complain that the relief offered was not adequate and does not answer people's needs, they now complain and say the government is not even permitted to advertise what they—

**An hon. Member:** Before the budget was prepared.

**Mr. Cosgrove:**—what they consider to be inadequate relief.

## REQUEST THAT INVESTIGATION BE CONDUCTED

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, the point is, and the minister will understand this, that this advertisement was printed on November 13. It had to be in the hands of the printer in advance of the time the budget was brought down.

**An hon. Member:** The eleventh.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** I understand he will want to investigate this whole matter, but I want to know if he will in fact have an investigation carried out. It is a matter of responsibility for the Minister of Finance who has to ensure there are no leaks. It is the Minister of Finance who has to resign if there are any leaks. If the minister responsible for housing is concerned about his own skin, all I want him to do is to investigate the facts within his own department, lay them before Parliament and make a statement on motions. Will he at least do that so we can say that the minister is an honourable gentleman, rather than leave this House with another impression?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member indicated as he rose to ask the question that he would be repeating a question. I will repeat my answer. I was not aware of the provisions in the budget pertaining to housing until the Minister of Finance released it in this House, or almost simultaneous with that.

**An hon. Member:** You should have been.

**Mr. Cosgrove:** Nor was the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation knowledgeable as to what was in the budget, nor were they authorized to release or request publication of any advertisement that had to deal with the budget prior to that time.

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[Translation]

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## EL SALVADOR—ANNOUNCEMENT OF HOLDING OF GENERAL ELECTION

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

[English]

In light of the recent announcement by the government of El Salvador that the election in that country has been set for March 21, will the minister tell the House the view of the Canadian government on the election process?

**Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Madam Speaker, the announcement by the government of El Salvador of its election is a domestic decision, on which I do not believe we are entitled to comment directly.

I can tell the House that in a meeting, held at the request of the El Salvador ambassador to the United States approximately two weeks ago, I discussed the El Salvador situation fully, and also the proposed election call. I proposed to the ambassador that the El Salvador government should consider having negotiations with the rebel forces, not over the general political situation, which the government refuses to contemplate, but specifically over provisions for a free and fair election without pre-conditions on either side.

I offered the good auspices of our government to the El Salvador government to facilitate such an encounter in any way, to act as a mediator, or to provide Canadian territory or Canadian embassies in Central America as a locus for such talks.

## JAMAICA—POLICE RAID ON CUSO OFFICE

**Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East):** Madam Speaker, I have a similar question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It concerns an incident which happened in the non-government organization CUSO. CUSO is a non-government organization doing excellent work in many countries around the world. It has particularly good programs in Jamaica, reaching people at the grass roots level and involving many Jamaican nationals in its programs.

Last Thursday there was a police raid on the offices of CUSO in Jamaica, in which a CUSO member of the board was held at gun point while police went through the files of the CUSO office. At the same time the Hon. Iona Campagnolo, while not present in the office, was working in Jamaica for