

### Oral Questions

Each of these committees worked in isolation and then reported its findings to the proposal evaluation committee. This was supervised by Price Waterhouse and then a process auditor from the private sector examined all of this. There were almost 80 persons involved in this evaluation process. Two-thirds were senior officers in the government and one-third was from the private sector.

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, for the people who are watching at home, from the minister's own press release it says:

The evaluation was carried out by—private sector financial, technical and business authorities.

What authorities? It continues:

The method and criteria of evaluation were themselves audited by an outside, independent expert.

Who is the expert? If we listen carefully we can hear the election clock ticking on this one.

With the minister's unwillingness to let the facts speak for themselves, will he now admit that the \$750 million contract is intended as a job creation program as he states, or is this a last ditch effort to repay supporters of the Prime Minister and the Conservative Party of Canada?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I am astonished that my hon. friend would talk that way about Don Matthews who is the father-in-law of former Liberal Premier David Peterson.

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### SALMAN RUSHDIE

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Today British author Salman Rushdie, in Ottawa with representatives of International Pen, called upon Canada and other nations to end their silence on the terrorism of the Government of Iran and urged Canada to call for the lifting of the *fatwah* on his life. Salman Rushdie also asked to meet with the Prime Minister of Canada.

Why will the Prime Minister not agree to meet with Salman Rushdie, as the premier of Ontario did last night, in an act of solidarity and support for this courageous

author and to stand up for the fundamental principle of freedom of expression for all authors? Why is the Prime Minister refusing to meet with Salman Rushdie?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, whereas there were some preliminary inquiries made about various visits, the important point about this is twofold.

First, Salman Rushdie was welcomed to Canada by myself. He said this morning that there were very few foreign ministers in the world who have chosen to meet with him. He also expressed his thanks to myself, to the Prime Minister and to the government for that.

**Mr. McLean:** And to the committee.

**Mrs. McDougall:** And to the committee as well. To put the question that way is unfortunate, given our willingness and the forthcoming nature of our response to his situation right from the time it first developed in 1989.

We will continue to speak publicly about the human rights violations in Iran, about the importance of Salman Rushdie and his position as a symbol for the freedom of expression in the world. We will pursue it in any number of forums in which we find ourselves in the future as we have up until now.

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Prime Minister. I think Canadians are asking why a Prime Minister who has time to meet with Chief Buthelezi will not meet with Rigoberta Menchu or Salman Rushdie? I think that is a fair question to ask the Prime Minister.

My supplementary question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The secretary of state indicated that Canada will speak out at any opportunity.

• (1440)

When we had an opportunity last week at the United Nations during the speech on human rights in Iran by Canadian Ambassador Louise Frechette, why did the Canadian Ambassador not say one word about the lifting of the *fatwah* on Salman Rushdie?

Why is our government continuing to offer a \$1 billion line of credit to Iran, to a terrorist government which allows a *fatwah* on a British author? Why will this government not break the silence at the United Nations and suspend that line of credit?