

Oral Questions

House decided yesterday evening to hold hearings on the entire Port-Cartier question and to ask the Prime Minister to appear before the committee, could the Deputy Prime Minister take steps to ensure that the Prime Minister will do so?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, for the information of Hon. Members, I reviewed all the contracts awarded for the F- . . . , for Port-Cartier.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. de Cotret: And the F-18 too! I reviewed that one as well.

I can inform you, Mr. Speaker, that in both cases, contracts were awarded on a competitive basis. And in both cases, this was done in accordance with the Treasury Board's criteria and guidelines. I shall be delighted to give any Member of this House a list of the contracts awarded, with the amount, date and conditions governing the contracts.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER APPEAR BEFORE
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, if you can find any relevance there to my question, you must be a genius!

I will repeat my question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

Since a committee of the House decided yesterday evening to hold hearings on the Port-Cartier question and has decided to ask the Prime Minister to appear before the committee, can we expect the Prime Minister to appear before the committee and clarify this whole case?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I think I already answered the Hon. Member's question—

An Hon. Member: No!

Mr. de Cotret: Do you want chapter and verse on Port-Cartier? Do you want to know exactly what happened in the matter of Port-Cartier?

Mr. Speaker, we shall be delighted, and I shall be delighted personally, if so required, to appear before the committee and describe each of the contracts awarded to the lowest bidder and to the most competent bidder, in each case, and we certainly have no apologies for the way contracts were awarded in this particular instance.

● (1420)

[English]

ARCHITECTURAL CONTRACT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works. I was sent a copy of the letter dated October 27 to which the Minister referred. I checked with the Auditor General's office today and was told that the contracts in question today, namely,

concerning the architectural firms which contributed to the Conservative Party and which are alleged to have received the contract for the prison in the Prime Minister's riding without tenders, are not what is referred to in the letter the Minister has cited.

Is the Minister telling the House that the architectural firms which got this contract did so only after they submitted a bid on tender?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that, as is normal practice, three firms were invited to tender. They all tendered and were evaluated. Their technical evaluations came in at various levels, obviously. The cost was considered and, in the total evaluation made by the Department concerned, the firm with the highest ratio, and by a good amount, got the contract.

I will give the Hon. Member the amounts. The firm that got the contract had a rating of 110.5. The second firm was 98.5. The third firm was 93.5. The cost differential on a contract of over \$1 million was less than \$40,000.

CONTRACT BIDS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, it is important to clarify all of this. Is the Minister saying that the three firms which obtained the contract were the three lowest bidders?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): No. Mr. Speaker, I am trying to be very clear and I will be happy to give the Hon. Member the documents. There were three groups invited to tender. They were evaluated on technical criteria. I can give the technical results. Firm A had 101.5 as a technical rating. Firm B had 96.5. Firm C had 81.5. Once the cost was factored in, following normal procedures and tendering practices, Firm A had 110.5, Firm B had 98.5 and Firm C had 93.5. The contract was given to the firm which had the highest evaluation.

● (1425)

TREASURY BOARD GUIDELINES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, there is obviously a lot of haziness or uncertainty about the criteria used. Will the Minister confirm that the guidelines which the Treasury Board of the newly elected Conservative Government is using are the same guidelines it inherited from the Liberals, which guidelines permit the Government to award thousands of contracts worth millions of dollars without going through the tendering process?

Mr. Benjamin: Nothing has changed.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, those allegations are, to say the least, incorrect.

Mr. Broadbent: It was a question.