

Oral Questions

moment—and they are in the process of being completed now—in both instances, with regard to the conduct of Cabinet Ministers as Ministers of the Crown, and with regard to tendering procedures and granting of contracts, we would bring in new guidelines with new degrees of severity. I think those guidelines will be of service to the House and will be very, very frugal in regard to taxpayers' dollars.

RECEIPT OF BENEFIT

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to hear that, but it is not the answer to my question. My question is quite simple. Does the Prime Minister believe that it is appropriate for a relative of a Cabinet Minister to receive the benefit of an untendered contract with the Government of Canada?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, you have a situation where a Canadian citizen tenders to the Government or—

Some Hon. Members: Untendered.

Mr. Mulroney:—services are made available to the Government of Canada—

Ms. Copps: It is a tender situation but there was no tender.

Mr. Mulroney:—and public servants, pursuant to objective criteria, make a determination. I suppose that you may have a question as to whether the relatives of anyone in this House at any time can have any association with the Government, and it is a question which will be considered in the guidelines. But I think my hon. friend, in asking the question, which perhaps inadvertently casts aspersions on an agency—

Mr. Deans: I want an answer.

Mr. Mulroney:—should recognize that a half a million dollars a year of the taxpayers' money has been saved because of that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Fair is fair.

Mr. Mulroney:—and I think Canadian taxpayers are delighted.

Mr. Deans: Your baloney does not sell any more. Why don't you answer the question? Are you afraid of the answer?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

PRIME MINISTER'S STAFF

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I would like to ask him whether any relatives of his staff have been awarded any untendered government contracts.

● (1450)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, some members of the Liberal Party were not here prior to September 4 and are perhaps not aware that the Department of Supply and Services does all of the purchasing of goods and services on behalf of the Government. We process some 350,000 contracts a year. The ones above \$1 million come to my desk. The ones below that are handled by public servants. I will have to ask the public servants to go through that list of 350,000 to find out if any of the companies involved had any relatives associated with anybody in this House. I'm sure the Hon. Member realizes that it will take several years before we can get back to him.

BIOLINK MANAGEMENT LTD.

Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can be more specific. With the greatest of respect I would appreciate an answer from the Prime Minister, because Canadians want to hear from the Prime Minister. Rather than taking several years to answer, he can answer in a few moments. Can the Prime Minister confirm that Biolink Management Ltd. was given a \$220,000 untendered government contract, that the president of the company is a former aide to the Minister of Justice and married to an assistant in his office, the PMO? Does the Prime Minister consider this situation to be a conflict of interest?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have heard of guilt by association, but this gives a brand new meaning to it. What I do know is this. It is perhaps a little less nefarious than the manner just set out. Indeed, a very reputable distinguished man in Ottawa by the name of Chester Burt, who is widely known, rendered distinguished services, for example, to the Hon. Member for Saint-Maurice when he was a Liberal leadership candidate. He worked for him. That is one of the reasons we retained him, his credentials were so high. Apparently he formed an association with another very distinguished Canadian of whom everyone speaks highly, the former executive assistant to the Hon. Member for Windsor West. They formed a company and made an offer of services to the Government which involved the public service, and we took advantage of it, I think to the advantage of the taxpayers of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

PROPOSED DUMP FOR RADIOACTIVE WASTES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment and concerns the dump for radioactive wastes which the American