

following morning after question period. I attended a meeting of the communications committee of cabinet because I wanted the advice of my cabinet colleagues as to whether the initiative I had taken to put that material in the hands of newspapers—

**An hon. Member:** Impossible.

**Mr. Cosgrove:**—on the weekend was adequate. They said it was, and it was released for large distribution on the weekend.

**An hon. Member:** How could it have been?

#### TIMING OF ORDERS PLACED BY ADVERTISING AGENCY

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe):** Madam Speaker, my question is also for the minister for housing.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An hon. Member:** Not again.

**Mr. Beatty:** I can understand their unease after the minister's answer.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Beatty:** Madam Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for housing. The House will recall that on numerous occasions, including yesterday, the minister responsible for housing indicated to the House that the first time he became aware of any provisions in the budget relating to housing was just a few minutes before the budget speech was given by the Minister of Finance in the House of Commons. If that is the case, why did Vickers and Benson send out orders on the evening of November 9 requesting space to run an advertisement announcing the housing provisions which would be announced in the budget some days later?

**Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, obviously the hon. member has forgotten that I was requested by many members on the opposite side, and I am not sure whether by him in particular—

**An hon. Member:** You are not sure of anything.

**Mr. Cosgrove:**—to assist home owners in this difficult time of high interest rates. I worked three months in preparation, advising the government on its preparation for the budget to deal with that very problem. I took the initiative to have Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation prepared to respond as quickly as possible in light of the interest, not only in this House, but across the country, in the problems of high interest rates faced by home owners.

I am really surprised, Madam Speaker, in light of the requests that come from the opposite side—as late as today there was a request by a member for assistance from me to help one of his constituents—

**An hon. Member:** What are you there for?

#### Oral Questions

**Mr. Cosgrove:**—that I should be criticized for taking initiatives to help them.

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

#### ROLE OF CABINET COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe):** Madam Speaker, you will note that in the minister's hysterical response he did not answer why it was that Vickers and Benson, if he knew nothing about the budget, was reserving space on November 9, well before the budget was brought down.

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

**Mr. Beatty:** The minister's whole defence is that, when it comes to housing, nobody tells him anything.

My supplementary question is for the Secretary of State, who is chairman of the cabinet committee on communications. Would the minister tell us why if Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation had already sent the advertisements out—they were printed in some papers on the Friday morning—why was it that the cabinet committee on communications did not even consider the ads until lunch time? Also, why was Vickers and Benson asked to reserve time and space when the government has the Canadian Media Corporation on contract to the tune of some \$2,430,000 to do that?

**Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member, in his lack of understanding of the system, has combined a number of rather unrelated questions. It might take longer than the time given to me to respond in this House, to educate the hon. member. He might be aware, as I indicated yesterday, that ads are often placed without the recommendation of the communications committee, because it is obviously not possible for every ad to come before that committee. What the honourable and distinguished minister, who is doing a good job for the people in battling housing problems in this country, did, was to come to the communications committee to talk about an ongoing program explaining the provision of housing assistance in the coming weeks and, in the course of that, he presented the ad which had been approved the night before and sent out.

● (1440)

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Dick:** You'd better get your stories straight.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Regan:** Despite the howls of glee on the other side, I want to reiterate what I just said, because there obviously is some collective misunderstanding on the benches opposite. What I said was simply that he came to the cabinet communications committee for a discussion of plans for ads in the coming days, and he brought with him an ad, which the hon. member and other hon. members have referred to as appearing