

tive changes in his department take about ten years to develop, while veterans wait. Will the minister use every means at his disposal to persuade his colleague, the Minister of Finance, of the immediate need for this legislative change? What efforts has the minister made to date?

Hon. W. Bennett Campbell (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Madam Speaker, first of all I do not accept the premise of the hon. member's question that it takes ten years to introduce legislative changes as they affect the veterans. I think the hon. member is quite aware that all hon. members of this House have been very co-operative in terms of responding to legislative changes. I can tell him, in response to his proposal that the interest deductibility provision be considered, that it is under active consideration right at the moment.

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SUPPLY AND SERVICES

CONTRACT TO STAGE FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State, in the absence of the Minister of Supply and Services. It concerns a very recently awarded contract for \$430,000 to put on fireworks displays in 16 cities on July 1. Ampleman Pyrotechnie of Montreal, a small firm, underbid the winning firm this year. It did half of the job last year in half of the cities. It received its invitation to tender documents in the English language only, although the principals of the firm are French-speaking. Would the minister tell us why the contract was awarded to Hands Fireworks this year, and why the bidding practices were substantially changed on a matter of importance?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I am afraid I am not able to give him full information on it today. I will take notice in the absence of the minister. I may say to him that my preliminary understanding, in the short period of time since last evening when I first heard of the situation, is to the effect that the person in question did not bid on the entire contract, but, rather, only on portions of it. However, I would appreciate the opportunity of inquiring further into the matter and giving a fuller answer, either through the Minister of Supply and Services or myself.

REQUEST THAT CONTRACT BE SPLIT

Mr. David Kilgour (Edmonton-Strathcona): Madam Speaker, the contract was divided last year, as the minister will find. Mr. Cardinal was given four days in which to tender this year. The contract is of prime importance to the survival of his business, I gather. Is the minister prepared to look into the matter? If he finds that the bidding practices were substantially changed, is he prepared to divide the contract again between now and July 1 so that Mr. Cardinal's firm can survive in this manner?

Oral Questions

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, we are certainly prepared to look into the matter thoroughly to be assured that fair and equitable practice was followed. On behalf of the Minister of Supply and Services I will certainly undertake to report to the hon. member on the matter.

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HOUSING

ASSISTED HOME OWNERSHIP PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF GRANT PROVISION

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, my question, which is directed to the minister responsible for housing, specifically deals with AHOP homes, and primarily with a Hamilton area subdivision, though it has application across the country. Last year, when interest rates rose so substantially, the minister agreed to defer the \$5,000 grant repayment for a year, and has subsequently decided that repayment should now be commenced at an interest rate level of 18 per cent. I ask the minister, given the fact that interest rates have once again risen to 20 per cent, and the same kinds of situations that prevailed a year ago prevail today, in fact, might even be worse, would the minister consider extending the \$5,000 grant provision for four more years without any change, to allow those people the opportunity to keep their homes so that they can have decent places for their families to live?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, one of the first matters that came to my attention upon taking office in 1980 as the minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation was, in fact, the AHOP program. As members know, that was a plan that provided preferred incentives to house purchasers for the first five years of occupancy of homes. In 1980, because of the difficulties with the program, its benefits and plans were extended for 12 months. I indicated that, if the situation did not improve, it would be reviewed. Indeed, it was reviewed and extended last year, in 1981. I can say to the hon. gentleman asking the question, the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain, that a review of that program by the government is under way and will take his representations into account.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER COMMUNICATE WITH HOME OWNERS

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Madam Speaker, would it be too much to ask the minister if he would correspond with all of the people who have been given 30 days in which to choose how they will commence their repayments, and assure them that, since the government is reviewing the program and giving consideration to extending the period for repayment, they need not respond to the letters they have received and that some further communication will be forthcoming?

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, yes, I can give the assurance to the hon. member that