

Supply

properly and so on. It was a scheme that the Liberals carried on in 1980 after they were returned to office and is in place today. They of course appointed somebody they had confidence in to head up the group on contracts and we did the same thing. The individual is Mr. Bob Byron, with 35 years experience. I quote a civil servant: "Civil servants who deal with him say that he will have forgotten more about advertising than I have learned in my lifetime. He is an expert and full value according to civil servants for all he does".

• (1600)

In addition, what the government did in 1984 was establish a process for selecting agencies. It is notoriously difficult for government, and I was supply and services minister at the time, to contract for professional services. You cannot ask for closed tenders from lawyers, engineers, architects, accountants or advertising agencies because it does not work that way. You do that if you are having somebody build a building. You give them the plans and say: "Give us a tender; we'll cut the envelope". You cannot do that for professional services because there is something called quality that goes into it.

What industry does in terms of advertising is ask several agencies to come forward and make a pitch, to come forward with suggestions as to how they would handle the advertising campaign the client has in mind.

We put in a process where a department wants to run a campaign. We will have a committee of civil servants hear the pitches and make a recommendation. It is as fair a system as we know how to devise. It has been working pretty well, a lot better than the system before it.

The Citizen with its intrepid reporters, Kennedy and Cobb, wrote a piece in regard to the major contracting on national unity and the 125th anniversary. The headline is: "Ad contracts given without bids, sources". Sources say without bids.

What in fact happened was that the minister responsible, who happens to be a senator, sent a letter to the editor saying the article was wrong. As a matter of fact there was a committee of five public servants, Gagnier, Guité, Parkins, Uteck and Cardinal, who listened to pitches from six agencies, Académie, Burghardt, Wolowich, Crunkhorn, Camp Associates, La Boîte à Idées, Palmer Jarvis and Publitel and in fact awarded two of

them, Palmer Jarvis from Vancouver and I think it was Publitel from Montreal with the contracts.

Did that satisfy the reporters that they were wrong? Absolutely not. They went on. The first thing was they went to Daryl Bean and asked what he thought of the contracting. He was outraged that there was no competition.

You can forgive Daryl Bean because he was given the same false information from those reporters. Not resisting an opportunity to scream in outrage, he reacted. We know Daryl Bean. I see that he is committed to helping the Bloc Québécois in the next election, which is interesting too.

What really did happen? After being given these names, these reporters phoned and talked to some of the civil servants. I want to relate a little bit of the conversation they had with one civil servant who is a 30-year veteran. He says that he worked for the Diefenbaker government, the Pearson government, the Trudeau government, the Clark government, the Trudeau government again, the Mulroney government, and if the next government is the Rhinoceros Party he will work for them. He says that nobody knows how he votes. He has no partisan leanings.

In answer to this intrepid reporter, he said that he had no colours and that tomorrow nobody would know if he voted pink, blue, yellow or any different. He said: "All I am saying to you is that the system that is in place now, and I speak strictly as a public servant, is a helluva lot better than it was 10 years ago. It is a helluva lot more honest than than it was 10 years ago". That was the testimony of a 30-year public servant.

Did that turn off our intrepid reporters, Messrs. Bernstein and Woodward, who are digging in? Not at all. After this they wrote another piece saying: "Ah, but they didn't file a report". The policy statement says that they did it over lunch at Henri Burger's. "Jeez, my goodness, a business lunch. Oh, horrors".

What absolute nonsense.

The hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell stands and refers again today to evidence of corruption in advertising and says that this government has no interest in being fair and having competition. We have had the testimony of five public servants, the one in particular who said: "The system in place is a hell of a lot better than it was 10 years ago and a hell of a lot more