

Oral Questions

on Public Accounts cease doing its good work. But what we are saying is that there are specific projects before us. At the present time, Treasury Board is considering an overrun in the Prince Rupert grain drying facility, in the MAPP facility in Montreal, in an environmental centre in Newfoundland, and we would like the advice of a parliamentary committee as to how it thinks we can arrest, somehow or other, these dreadful overruns which we are now experiencing. We would like the committee to tell us, have we done enough to arrest the deterioration as far as the expenditures are concerned? Do they have any suggestions?

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NATIONAL DEFENCE**FEASIBILITY OF STATIONING NUCLEAR SUBMARINES IN GREAT LAKES**

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs. It concerns the rather startling reports that the United States department of defence presently is seriously investigating the feasibility of stationing Trident nuclear submarines in the Great Lakes as an alternative to the MX program.

Has the minister informed his American counterpart that such a plan would place the United States in violation of the Rush-Bagot agreement, and has he taken steps to inform the United States that Canadians are not prepared to accept, under any circumstances, Trident nuclear submarines in the Great Lakes?

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Frankly, Mr. Speaker, it has always seemed to me that the idea was too preposterous to take seriously.

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SUPPLY AND SERVICES**CALL FOR TENDERS ON CONTRACTS—INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT HAS CHANGED POLICY**

Mr. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Supply and Services why he changed the policy relating to Media Buying Services Ltd. When he testified before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, he repeated three times that the government would use the tender system for contracts to advertising agencies. Now, the House knows about two contracts which were awarded to Allan Gregg and a third one about the tourism bureau without any call for tenders. Why did the minister change his policy?

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, the answer is quite simple. When the committee asked those questions, I referred to an eventual contract which

[Mr. Stevens.]

was to be signed in the short term. That contract should be signed very soon now. I clearly stated to the committee that I could not say anything about that contract because it had not been signed yet. Given the old practice of calling for tenders, we hired a company specializing in that field for the reasons we have already told the House. That mechanism allows us to achieve the goals that we had already set—reduction of expenses and quality of programs—and we trust that MBS will give us the best possible information because of its experience and qualifications in the field.

INQUIRY AS TO PAYMENTS MADE TO MEDIA BUYING SERVICES

Mr. Bob Kaplan (York Centre): Mr. Speaker, since there is no contract at present between the federal government and that firm, and since the latter has nevertheless started to award contracts, and so on, has the government already made payments to that firm? If so, how much, and how does it figure out how much a firm that is doing so much for the taxpayers will be paid without a contract?

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, given the responsibilities of MBS, I am talking about an over-all contract, but my department has already signed three contracts for July, September and October in the amounts of \$39,000, \$20,000 and \$21,000. Contracts have been awarded by my department and we hope to sign at least a medium-term, over-all contract for the responsibilities entrusted to that firm.

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**DATE OF PROGRAM TO PROVIDE NEW IMPETUS IN UNDERDEVELOPED REGIONS**

Mr. Marcel Dionne (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Supply and Services. Last week, he said that we have made a lot of speeches and now the time has come to act. Now that the government is about to unveil the details of a broad strategy for economic recovery by all underdeveloped regions, including Chicoutimi, may I ask the minister when that announcement will be made and what economic sectors it will deal with?

Hon. Roch La Salle (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I think I do not have any particular news to give the hon. member for Chicoutimi today. I simply said we had made a lot of assessments and we are about to announce certain projects that will please Quebec as a whole and Canadians as a whole. The budget of the Minister of Finance is forthcoming, and there will also be statements by the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion which will surely please, I hope not only Canadians as a whole but also the people of Chicoutimi.