

Oral Questions

IMPACT ON CENSUS RESULTS

Mr. Keith Penner (Cochrane-Superior): Mr. Speaker, because this happened in Cochrane-Superior, is the Minister not concerned that unqualified persons will in the process of taking this census invalidate the results?

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I have been given assurances by Statistics Canada that it is absolutely confident that the results will be *bona fide* and that the competency of the people who have been hired is appropriate to the job that has been imposed upon them.

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YOUTH

RECIPIENTS OF MINISTER'S LETTER

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of whether he or the Prime Minister received copies of the letter sent by the Minister of State for Youth at the time they were first sent out?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the hon. gentleman, indeed any Hon. Member opposite, would not expect me to disclose to them the nature of my correspondence. I would no more think of asking the hon. gentleman to disclose his correspondence. In this case, that is the response to him. Surely it is none of his business.

Mr. Deans: It is public business. It is public business when a Minister suggests the expenditure of public funds on private matters.

MINISTER'S CONDUCT

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, now that the Deputy Prime Minister knows the content of the letter, does he deem it appropriate that the Minister of State for Youth should have sent out such a letter to colleagues in the Cabinet, advocating the expenditure of hard pressed taxpayers' public money on the building of the youth wing of the Conservative Party?

Mr. Nystrom: Yes or no.

● (1430)

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, that twist and double twist are totally unworthy of the hon. gentleman.

Mr. Broadbent: It's unworthy of a cabinet Minister.

Mr. Nielsen: I read that which is in the public domain, and the way in which I read it was that it was a letter from a Minister spelling out her program requirements. The Opposi-

tion has latched on to one aspect of the letter for which the Minister has apologized. It should ruddy well be satisfied with that—

Mr. Broadbent: Why?

Mr. Nielsen: —instead of trying to put a murky cast on the entire letter.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Look who's talking.

Mr. Nielsen: The Minister has apologized for the mistake. She has admitted it, and its authorship. Surely that should be satisfactory to any hon. gentleman in this House.

Mr. Broadbent: No, it's not. It's not sufficient.

ALLEGED SECRET MEETING

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State for Youth. She said today on at least two occasions that she would never see public funds being used for partisan purposes. Can she explain why a secret meeting took place on February 27 at the Progressive Conservative Party headquarters office in Montreal for the express aim of securing government summer jobs for people on condition they be active members of the Progressive Conservative Party? Is this blatant abuse of and insult to young people a new part of the Minister's youth strategy?

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of such a meeting.

Mr. Foster: That's what you said last Thursday.

Mrs. Champagne: I certainly was not involved in it.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, would the Minister not agree that this meeting, combined with her own cabinet strategy, which we released two weeks ago, and combined with the letter which was released in the House last week, are enough to demand her resignation from the portfolio of the Minister of Youth?

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): No, sir.

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STATISTICS CANADA

HIRING OF CENSUS COMMISSIONERS

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services. It has to do with his personal role in the whole question of hiring Tory hacks as census commissioners.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!