

*Oral Questions*

ter tell the farmers of Canada and this House the status of the negotiations over Irish beef imports?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Hon. Member's concern about the subject, as I do that of many colleagues in all quarters of the House who, I expect, have received many representations on the subject. I must make it very clear that despite what has been said from time to time by various people, both within and outside the industry, and despite what certain people have read, the fact of the matter is that the negotiations continue. As of this date no final decision has been reached.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST****EMPLOYMENT OF DOUGLAS ROBSON**

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, like most Canadians, I am amazed, astonished, and in fact deeply offended, as I am sure is everyone in the House, by the incredible series of events which have taken place in the office of the Minister of Finance. I have reviewed the record. I would like the Minister to confirm or deny in the House the following statements, to clear the record: first, that Douglas Robson worked in the Minister's office under an oath of secrecy in September and October, 1984; that Douglas Robson had access to information in that office, classified as secret, and had private meetings with the Deputy Minister of Finance, Marshall "Mickey" Cohen; that Douglas Robson did not sign the conflict of interest guidelines required of exempt staff; that there was a verbal agreement—

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Order Paper!

**Mr. Johnston:** This is all for the record, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** With respect, the Hon. Member has asked three questions. Perhaps we could deal with the first three.

**Mr. Johnston:** Well, Mr. Speaker—

**An Hon. Member:** This is the House of Commons.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. In fact, for the record, the Government has taken 50 per cent of the time of the questions to answer today. I have kept the clock for those who make points to me on the side. I think the Hon. Member has put his question. I invite the Hon. Minister to answer it.

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first question is yes, the answer to the second question is no, and the answer to the third question is no. The reason Mr. Robson did not sign the conflict of interest guidelines was that at that time he didn't have any need to; there wasn't a requirement. In 1979, he didn't. The reason he didn't was because there was a technicality in the conflict of guidelines which would have required him to resign a directorship on a charitable organization that had very close family ties to him. He was trying to negotiate with the Registrar General to

avoid signing the conflict of interest guidelines, or to take those out of the conflict of interest guidelines. The election came and that was never resolved.

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**GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING****AWARDING OF CONTRACT**

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, he took the oath of secrecy but apparently he was not given access to any secrets. That is curious.

My second question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services. Within a month after his leaving the Department of Finance, a contract for \$234,000 was awarded to Lawson Murray. When was Lawson Murray first contacted with respect to that advertising contract?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Supply and Services):** Mr. Speaker, it was the end of October, October 31, that the Bank of Canada—not the Minister of Finance—a separate institution, a separate board of directors, a separate administration—

**Ms. Copps:** But the same Minister.

**Mr. Andre:**—following Treasury Board guidelines, Chapter 485, approached the advertising management group for an agency to undertake the management of its marketable bonds program. We selected Lawson Murray on the basis of its expertise and experience in handling financial institutions. The wisdom of our choice in that regard is demonstrated by the fact that by letter of February 11 it was pointed out that we could save \$500,000 per year by not carrying on the program which had been unnecessarily carried on by the previous administration for years and years. I repeat again, I am proud of the contract, and I am proud of the fact that we selected Lawson Murray.

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

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST****UNTENDERED CONTRACT**

**Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It is the question I asked yesterday to which I did not receive a reply. Does the Prime Minister believe that it is appropriate for a relative of a Cabinet Minister to receive benefit from an untendered contract with the Government?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I indicated to the Member yesterday—

**Mr. Deans:** You didn't answer me yesterday.

**Mr. Mulroney:** If not to the Hon. Member, then to one of his colleagues, surely. I indicated that at the earliest possible