

Oral Questions

[Translation]

—I would like to ask him myself. The Minister of Communications, who, for instance, roundly criticized the National Arts Centre for buying flowers for performers, a custom that is much appreciated . . . In fact, the Minister took a JetStar or Challenger to I do not know where, and that cost us \$60,000. So how does he intend to justify this waste of taxpayers' money?

Some Hon. Members: Fly, fly away!

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I am not quite sure what everybody had for lunch today.

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, this morning I had occasion to say, in another debate, that the party opposite is a party that has no memory of the past and no hope for the future. I think the same comment is appropriate at this point, since their references are irrelevant to the story, which I could tell when circumstances permit. Now seriously, on January 24 of this year, Mr. Speaker, the vice-president of Northern Telecom asked the Canadian Government, through the Department of Communications for which I am responsible, to accompany them on a trip to promote Canadian trade and industrial interests, which meant travelling to Algeria and Saudi Arabia. The projects in these countries included an Algerian request to the CBC for an investment—

● (1420)

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the interest of the Minister but his answer is now becoming a Statement on Motions.

Does the Hon. Member have a short supplementary question?

[Translation]

PROGRAM REVIEW TASK FORCE REPORTS

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri-Westmount): Mr. Speaker, the answer was totally irrelevant to the question. But in any case, yesterday I put a question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Mr. Masse: You do not want an answer!

[English]

Mr. Johnston: He said in his speech, which I have read three times: "Canadians have a right to know that these programs are administered to the satisfaction of the new Government".

In the name of open government and accountability, those things in which the Deputy Prime Minister believes, are Canadians entitled to know what are in those recommenda-

tions? Are they not entitled to know, unless of course the recommendations are so extreme that national security is at stake, which is suggested by the RCMP investigation into the non-existent document of yesterday?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, with respect to information in the form of advice to Cabinet, the Hon. Member, who is a former Minister, knows the answer to that question.

With respect to a definition of the programs themselves, there is a very excellent publication put out by the Department over which my colleague, the Minister of Supply and Services, has jurisdiction, listing all of the government programs that are available. I am sure if the Hon. member would take the time to read it, he would find it extremely interesting.

In addition to that, there is a further publication put out by FBDB which lists all of the programs that are available to small businesses and others in the country. If the Hon. Member wished to seek the information, all he has to do is a little more reading. If he wants an index, I would be very happy to supply it to him.

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NATIVE PEOPLES

DISCLOSURE OF ALLEGED CABINET DOCUMENT—RCMP INVESTIGATION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. It concerns the important matter of openness and frankness in government. The Party now in government promised change, if elected, and to put an end to the old cover-up practices of the previous Liberal administration.

For the past three days we have been trying to get the Government to admit, specifically the Minister to whom I am putting this question, that his Department was responsible for a certain document. Considering that for the past two days, including, during that period, the submission of the document to the Minister himself, the Government has done nothing but evade the truth, and considering that now the RCMP has begun an official investigation into the documents in two Ministers' offices at least, will the Deputy Prime Minister come clean and acknowledge that the document in question was produced by his Department, and acknowledge that he himself is certainly responsible for it?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member and his colleagues are past masters at the art of evading the truth.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: Perhaps he has expertise in that. They have another skill as well, that is, total distortion of the facts in any given instance and in any given case.