

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### INFORMATION CANADA

#### DATE OF TREASURY BOARD APPROVAL OF LEASE FOR MONTREAL BOOK STORE—REASON FOR TENDERS NOT BEING SOUGHT

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, while waiting for the Minister of Labour to volunteer a statement in his leisure time about the unique arrangements in respect of lease accommodation for Information Canada in Montreal, I should like to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether the lease arrangements in question were approved on February 16, 1972, did Information Canada open a book store in September, 1972, and, if so, why did Treasury Board approve a lease arrangement that commenced on November 1, 1971, and will the hon. gentleman table the general policy under which lease arrangements of this kind are entered into from time to time?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I think the policy is well known that leases before being entered into do require approval of Treasury Board. There has perhaps been some confusion in the hon. member's mind as to the dates on which the various transactions took place. Approval by the board of the lease, which was discussed in the House on Friday, in fact took place in February 1971, not, as the information was given, subsequent to entering into the lease.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, there is no confusion in the mind of the hon. gentleman. He understands precisely what the government was trying to do. Can the President of the Treasury Board tell the House why the Department of Public Works was not asked to open tenders for space in connection with a situation such as this?

**Mr. Drury:** Mr. Speaker, in some instances the Department of Public Works is required to meet a specification which can be met only in the hands of one possible landlord. In such a case there is not much purpose in calling for tenders.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

#### AUTOMATED INFORMATION MONITORING SERVICE PROGRAM—REQUEST FOR DETAILS AND REASONS FOR ABANDONMENT

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I have one more supplementary addressed to the Minister of Labour who I understand is struggling to find a method of rationalizing and explaining this situation. Would he also explain at the same time the cost involved in the project known as AIMS, automated information monitoring service, which was launched by Information Canada in May of 1972 or earlier at a very substantial cost and was subsequently scuttled because there was no apparent need for it? Could the hon. gentleman explain the details of this program, what happened to it, and why it was in fact scuttled?

**Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I think I may have an opportunity during the course of

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the day to give a short speech on Information Canada and I would be pleased at that time to go into the details the hon. member for Peace River requires in respect of that project.

**An hon. Member:** It had better be a long speech.

#### MONTREAL—ALLEGED PAYMENT OF RENT FOR TEN MONTHS WHILE SPACE UNUSED AND PAYMENT OF \$300,000 TO BREAK PREVIOUS LEASE

**Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Labour. On Friday last certain questions were asked. He promised to give answers today, so I feel sure he has them ready. Just to refresh his memory, we wanted to know then if the government had paid \$150,000 in rent for ten months while the space remained empty and also whether the government had made available \$300,000 to break a lease. He was going to give us some information regarding those two queries.

**Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, to reply to the latter part of the hon. member's question first, no, there was no \$300,000 paid to anyone to break any lease at all. With regard to the ten-month period after the signing of the lease before Information Canada took possession, yes, that does come to roughly \$150,000. I would point out, though, that there is a factor which I think hon. members should take into account. During that period of ten months there was a mezzanine constructed as part of the renovation which gave the tenant, Information Canada, an additional 2,200 square feet—I can check the exact figure—and certainly had a marked effect on reducing the square foot price.

**Mr. Hees:** I would ask the minister then whether any money was provided to break a lease and, if so, how much?

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** I have already said there was none.

**Mr. Hees:** No, you said \$300,000 was not spent. Knowing how the government answers questions I figure it might have been a smaller amount, very slightly less. I would also ask the minister to explain to the House why a price of \$25 a square foot was paid for this accommodation in Montreal whereas the highest prices paid in other cities for, I believe, even better accommodation was \$8 a square foot?

**Mr. Munro (Hamilton East):** I will again answer the latter part of the hon. member's question first. No money whatsoever was paid to break a lease. When the hon. member asks why this particular location was picked, I might point out to him that two other sites in this general vicinity were costed at the time. One was the marine building, which was \$32, and another site was between \$20 and \$21, so this price was not that much out of line. I might point out also to the hon. member that in the comparisons that were used in the article net figures were given for other sites but the gross figure, counting renovations, was used for the site in Montreal.