

Oral Questions

the Minister of Public Works, as had always been the case. To my knowledge, that system had not been changed when the Hon. Member was minister in the former Government. This being said, as far as I am concerned, I had made representations and had extensive discussions with my colleague, the President of the Treasury Board, to see whether we could come to some arrangement, to some system that would allow us to maintain what in my view had been a worthwhile tradition conferring adequate authority to the Minister of Public Works. Later the discussions came to a conclusion and since then, I have complied as have all other ministers with the practices as established.

REQUEST FOR DETAILS OF CERTAIN CONTRACTS FOR SUMS
OVER \$100,000

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is referring to regulations. The last revised regulations go back to September 20, 1982. The Auditor General is stating that in 14 instances contracts have been awarded to architectural and engineering firms for amounts exceeding \$100,000. If I understand the report correctly, the Minister seems to have been at fault 14 times. Here is my question to the Minister: How could he break or evade government regulations providing that contracts worth \$100,000 and over should be awarded after inviting tenders? In 14 instances, this has not been the case. Either the Minister is stating that the Auditor General is lying to the Canadian people, or he violated the regulations imposed on him by the Treasury Board. My question is as simple as that: Did the minister cheat on the Treasury Board regulations, or did the Auditor General in his report lie to the people?

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works): At no point did I indicate that the Auditor General has told the truth or not. What I stated is that in my view the way he reported the facts is incomplete. Here is what I said: We held discussions over a number of months on whether we could come back to the system under which the Minister of Public Works had always operated. After these discussions or in the course of these discussions, I went on submitting proposals to the Treasury Board, which approved them. Those are the 14 sins of which I am accused by our former confessor, the Hon. Member. After Treasury Board had ruled that it actually maintained the maximum at \$100,000, I began inviting tenders just as everybody else did.

● (1450)

[English]

MINES AND MINING

URANIUM CITY, SASK.—COMPENSATION SOUGHT FOR
PROPERTY OWNERS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. It is now the second anniversary of a decision by Eldorado Nuclear Limited that pronounced, in a heartless and deceptive way, a death sentence on the Saskatchewan mining town of Uranium City. That sentence has now been carried out and, for all intents and purposes, Uranium City is dead. Aside from the payments that were obliged to be paid according to law, and they were precious little, all that the federal Government has paid is the moving costs of people leaving Uranium City. A year and a half ago a task force recommended payment of compensation and indemnification. Will the Minister now tell us whether the Government is prepared to take action to compensate those people who have property interests in particular in Uranium City?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am not the Minister responsible for Eldorado Nuclear Limited. It is the Minister of State for Social Development who is responsible for CIDC. I will pass the request to the Hon. Member on to the Minister in the other place.

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENTAL ACTION

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, I am not going to walk across to the Senate to ask questions. I want to know from the Minister what the Government is going to do. He has a responsibility in terms of Energy, Mines and Resources. What is he going to do for these people in Saskatchewan who have been abandoned? The Government not only shut down a mine, but shut down an entire town. I want to have some action on the part of this Government with respect to those people.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Bussières (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member who is so upset about the closing down of a whole town ought to focus his indignation on his leader who is something of an expert on the subject. He could show him what he did to Schefferville.

As for the Auditor General's Report, I can assure the Hon. Member that I shall be meeting the Minister responsible and that I will provide the appropriate answers as soon as I get them.