

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

Mr. Speaker, my attention has been called on this matter not by people who want to play politics, but by people who want that justice be respected and applied.

The minister would be wrong in seeing in that any kind of political considerations, because the person who first has brought this matter to my attention, Mr. Thibault of Thibault Lumber, does not belong to my political party. In fact, he is well known in Liberal circles and I think the minister knows him too.

Financially responsible companies, such as Thibault Lumber and others—not only this one but others also—could have saved the Department of Public Works about \$50,000 according to their own statement, in the demolition of the old National Printing Bureau.

Mr. Speaker, it is against this injustice, against this apparent collusion between a few important companies wishing to assume “control” of the contracts which the government or the Department of Public Works wishes to grant, or must grant, that I raise my voice. I ask the minister to keep a close eye on the tenderers in future, so far as government contracts are concerned, whether for demolition or construction works.

We do not have the right to play with the Canadian taxpayer's money, with the people's money. We must operate economically and allow contractors and businessmen to have an chance before the law, before the government and particularly before the Department of Public Works.

I rise to protest against such things, Mr. Speaker, and I call the minister's attention to these anomalies which lead some newspapers and even some radio stations to accuse the government of favouring collusion between some companies trying to “fool” the government instead of serving the Canadian people.

[*English*]

**Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of attention to the hon. member for Villeneuve on the subject of awarding contracts for the demolition of the Roxborough apartments and the old printing bureau. I should like to point out one fact in respect of his earlier remarks. The two contracts were not comparable because of the nature of the structures, and that element of demolition contracts regarding the amount of material capable of being sold at the site. In respect of the Roxborough contract this element was an

[Mr. Caouette.]

important factor, whereas in the case of the old printing bureau it was a very small factor, if a factor at all. These facts relate to the entire remarks of the hon. member.

The hon. member for Villeneuve then referred to the method of calling for tenders from a selected list. In respect of the Roxborough it is interesting to note that as a result of the first public call for tender the lowest tender was \$138,000 and the highest was \$169,000. Because of the fact that even the lowest tender far exceeded the estimated cost of the job the contract was not awarded and tenders were again called. The specifications were changed slightly in respect of two things.

As a result of the second public advertisement calling for tenders, we received 14 bids varying from \$19,000 to \$88,000. It was clear that the \$19,000 bid was not realistic. Therefore the contract was awarded to the second lowest bidder. That contract was never fulfilled. Because the job was partly under way, and in an effort to terminate it, bids were invited from a list of contractors to complete the job. The low bid was \$29,985. That was the actual cost of that particular job.

Tenders were invited from six firms in respect of the old printing bureau demolition job. This occurred because the time available was exceedingly short and the job had to be done quickly to provide space for the centennial exhibition to take place at Nepean Point and Parliament Hill.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I regret to have to interrupt the hon. minister, but the time allotted to him has expired.

[*English*]

HOUSING—INQUIRY AS TO POSSIBILITY OF MEETING ECONOMIC COUNCIL TARGET

● (10:10 p.m.)

**Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, for months now people interested in meeting the needs of housing in this country, newspapers in every city including those which support the government, such as the *Toronto Star*, have been devoting pages almost every day to the tremendous housing crisis which our country is facing. The chairman of the Economic Council, Dr. Deutsch, when appearing before the parliamentary committee dealing with prices estimated that this country needs to build houses at the rate of 170,000 per year in order to meet its minimum requirements in this field.