

Mr. Nystrom: Will the Minister tell the house whether or not the real reason for switching this contract to a Chicago run company is because at least 20 partners of that company threw at least \$1,000 each into the Conservative Party? Is this the real reason why they got the contract?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the answer is no.

AWARDING OF CONTRACT

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, in that case can the Minister tell the House and explain to the House why, to the best of my knowledge, none of the other eight big auditing companies in the country were asked for a formal proposition or a formal bid on that particular contract? Why was there not any tender? Is not the real reason that these people threw money into the Conservative Party?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member should be aware that we reject out of hand his sleazy suggestion that political contributions were a factor in this matter. As the Hon. Member well knows, firms of chartered accountants give money to all sorts of Parties, just as his Party receives contributions from labour interests.

Mr. Deans: We don't give them contracts.

Miss Carney: I can add, as the Hon. Member should know, Section 141(i) of the amended Financial Administration Act sets out that the Governor in Council and the appropriate Minister, after consulting with the board of directors of a Crown corporation, make the recommendation. Petro-Canada's board of directors reviewed a number of firms, including the firm of Arthur Andersen which has offices in a number of Canadian cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, and Calgary, and recommended Arthur Andersen & Co. The incumbent, Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co., have had that account for 10 years.

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[Translation]

SHIPBUILDING

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT PERMIT VICKERS TO BID UNDER MULTISHIP-SIX PROGRAM

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Supply and Services.

When the Vickers workers left Parliament Hill yesterday they were disappointed because the Minister had not given them any assurance that the Government would intervene to prevent lay-offs.

The Montreal shipyards do not even have the option of tendering under the Multiship-six program because depart-

ment officials claim that Montreal icing conditions prevent Vickers from undertaking repair work in wintertime.

I want to ask the Minister whether he would be prepared to reverse the decision of his officials and allow Vickers to submit tenders under the Multiship-six program, keeping in mind the fact that Vickers has been doing year-round repair work for the past ten years.

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I was at the meeting referred to by the Hon. Member. I received the very distinct impression that the workers, after being apprised of all the elements, were very satisfied on my undertaking to do everything we could to accommodate their situation. Specifically, with respect to the question, there has been no change in policy precluding the Montreal shipyards from bidding on the multiple ship contracts. The only prohibition is that if the work is to be done during the winter, and if the Seaway is frozen, then the ships will not be able to get there. If the work is to be done in the summer, then they have the option to bid on that work.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR PROMPT DECISIONS

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is having second thoughts, and well he might, can he assure us that the Government will step in before workers are laid off, which means in the immediate future? Lay-off notices will be issued as early as at the end of the year and, unless something is done before next March, none of the 500 shipyards workers will have a job.

Will the decisions be made in time? That is what I want to ask the Minister.

[English]

Hon. Stewart McInnes (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the Government is reviewing all potential alternatives to accommodate the situation which is a matter of concern to us and everyone in the east end of Montreal. I gave an undertaking that I would keep the workers apprised. We are meeting with the Chairman of Vickers within the next two weeks. I undertook to report back to the workers, and I will do that.

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[Translation]

TEXTILE INDUSTRY

IMPORTANCE OF SAVING JOBS IN QUEBEC

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion.