

Order Paper Questions

Other operators have expressed an interest in this service so it must be let to tender.

The discrepancy is obvious. I should like it cleared up.

Mr. Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege arising from the answer given, when I was unavoidably absent on Monday, by the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) in response to my question No. 2414.

For fully three and one-half months my question concerning the Opportunities for Youth program sat unanswered on the order paper, and I rose at one point to draw my question to the attention of the parliamentary secretary.

The refusal of the Secretary of State to supply answers to questions on the order paper within a reasonable time limits the usefulness of putting questions on the order paper in the first place. This minister has made it clear that he will not answer letters from members of parliament concerned about the program. In my case, for example, I wrote the minister on July 23 and September 11, and since that time called his office once or twice in regard to one project. All I have received in the intervening three months is a letter from the minister's liaison officer dated July 30 stating that the minister would be in touch with me "in the near future."

On Monday the minister answered my question on the order paper by refusing to give information to which members of parliament, who ultimately must accept the responsibility for government programs, are entitled. The first aspect of my question, which dealt with grants requested and given within the constituencies of ministers and parliamentary secretaries, was dismissed with the assertion that "OFY does not maintain statistics on grants by constituency."

In my hand, Mr. Speaker, I am holding a copy of the applications sent me by the minister last April 2 in which he included a memorandum, sent to me, requesting my comments and stating that the bundle represented "copies of the summary sheet of all submissions concerning your constituency." It is quite apparent that the applications were sorted out by constituency. The minister's memorandum which was addressed "To all Members of Parliament," and his assertion earlier this year that members of parliament would be requested to comment on applications from their constituencies, should leave no doubt of that fact. Yet the minister on Monday informed this House that no such data is available. No doubt there are bound to be errors in the sorting of applications by constituency, but the minister did not even bother to try to provide the information and his answer only served to mislead the House.

The second aspect of my question that was dismissed by the minister was my request for the names of the people who acted as references or contact people for applications who also were made members of the local advisory boards passing on their projects, and further information concerning the acceptance or rejection of their projects. The minister's reply to me was that, "Information is not available as to the number of reference or contact people involved with the making of OFY applications who were also members of a local advisory committee."

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

No answer could be more patently incorrect unless this multimillion dollar program is so incompetently organized that the department does not know to whom money is given or on whose advice it is given. Unless, after sending copies of this information to each of the members of parliament concerned, the department mysteriously destroyed the information for some unknown reason, this data is still available. Indeed, the minister sent me the relevant information for my constituency, and I have it here in my hand.

In two instances the reply given on Monday by the minister was demonstrably false and he has misled the House, albeit unintentionally, with his sloppy and inadequate responses. As a member of parliament, and as a member of the standing committee responsible for overseeing the administration of Opportunities for Youth, I believe that my rights to obtain important information have been abridged by the minister's answer, and it is for that reason that I rise on this question of privilege.

Mr. Reynolds: Mr. Speaker, my point of order concerns a question I have had on the order paper since May 17 regarding Collins Radio Canada Ltd. of Toronto, Ontario, and Triton Industries of Vancouver involving a contract awarded to the Ontario company on a tender, and not submitted to the company in Vancouver which already had the radio in question in stock. I would like to know when the government intends to answer this question because it is a very important issue.

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I ask that the notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might raise a point of order with respect to the lack of response to motions for the production of papers that were passed by this House many moons ago. The parliamentary secretary and I have had a number of conversations about this matter. I do not want to misrepresent his view, but I gather that each time he spoke he said they would be tabled soon. I am talking about an exchange of papers relating to a fish cannery in British Columbia. Can the parliamentary secretary tell me when these will be tabled?

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, these papers will be tabled as soon as we have the translations.