

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend is probably referring to two questions. There is a full-time professional Public Service, and of that there can be no doubt. All of our activities are designed to respect the integrity and independence of the Public Service.

Perhaps he alludes to former ministerial assistants who have been politically active and who are seeking reintegration into the Public Service. I would tell my hon. friend—as I did when I had the opportunity of speaking with the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition—that I view this kind of service as very honourable. The Government and the Public Service have been instructed to facilitate the re-entry into Public Service positions of former advisers to Liberal Cabinet Ministers, and to be as helpful and as forthcoming as possible. I think that political service and activity are an honourable calling, and we have instructed the Public Service accordingly.

[Translation]

HIRING OF COMPETENT AND IMPARTIAL PEOPLE

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

Considering the Prime Minister's reply, is he prepared to instruct his Ministers and deputy ministers, especially his deputy ministers that the Public Service Employment Act should be applied unconditionally, and to explain that from now on, on the basis of this legislation, they must try to hire people who are both competent and impartial?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** We intend to act in accordance with the provisions of the legislation, but I also wish to inform my hon. friend that it is important to recognize the legitimacy of positions held by former assistants of the previous government. They have a number of vested rights, which we intend to respect.

\* \* \*

SHIPBUILDING

PRECARIOUS SITUATION OF NOVA SCOTIA SHIPYARD

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Supply and Services.

The shipyard is now in receivership. Could the Minister inform the House whether his department will continue its contract in order to maintain the remaining 950 jobs?

[English]

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Supply and Services):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I am not in a position at this point in time to be able to give definitive answers to the Hon. Member about the disposition of that work. But our intention is always to preserve whatever jobs can be preserved. As soon as I am able to get more information in this regard, I will get back to the Hon. Member.

[Translation]

**Mr. Skelly:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. Will the Minister inform the House whether the Government of Canada will help the Government of Nova Scotia to find an acceptable buyer for the shipyard in order to ensure these jobs will continue to exist?

[English]

**Mr. Andre:** Mr. Speaker, the receiver who was appointed by the Government of Nova Scotia will be reporting to the Government of Nova Scotia on January 8. It is my understanding that there is a good possibility other owners will come along to take over and run the yard. We are hopeful in that regard. I have a senior official who is now in Halifax working with the receiver. Hopefully, early in the new year the situation will be clarified in a way which will preserve those jobs.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

BUDGETARY CUT-BACKS—NEWSPAPER REPORTS

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Mr. Speaker, according to the December 18 editions of *La Presse* and *The Globe and Mail*, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation would have preferred to make cuts in programming instead of reducing administrative staff, to meet budgetary cutbacks. The Minister of Communications told journalists that the report in *The Globe and Mail* was substantially correct, according to Canadian Press on December 19.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question, please.

**Mr. Prud'homme:** I am getting there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Juneau has just announced that the CBC never planned to cut back on programming rather than personnel. Could the Minister inform the House who is telling the truth: the President of the CBC, or the Minister when he told *The Globe and Mail* that the report was substantially correct?

**Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my hon. colleague the assurance that my relations with Mr. Juneau, both in public and in private, have always been marked by a civilized and statesmanlike exchange of views, and that I do not intend to let speculation, rumours or allusions to the media draw me into a debate that is not the kind I care to indulge in.

[English]

CORPORATION PRESIDENT'S EXECUTION OF DUTY

**Mr. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis):** Mr. Speaker, I think I will switch to the Prime Minister of Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!