

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Then perhaps Hon. Members would allow the answer to be heard in silence.

Some Hon. Members: Shhh!

Mr. McMillan: May I conclude my answer by saying this. In the relatively short time that I have been Minister of the Environment—

Mr. Rossi: It has been too long.

Mr. McMillan: —I have received one question from her, and that is the one she asked me today, on environmental matters, at a time—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ouellet: Answer the question.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ouellet: That is not an answer to the question; that is irrelevant.

Some Hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Hon. Member: He is bluffing.

Mr. Speaker: I think we will leave it there. The Hon. Member for Yorkton-Melville.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

NOTIFICATION OF JOB VACANCIES IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is for—

Some Hon. Members: More, more!

Mr. Nystrom: My question—

An Hon. Member: Table the Minister.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, if we can calm down the Liberals, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board. Last Friday I asked the Minister why, for several weeks this fall, Prince Edward Island Members of Parliament received seven-day advance notice of job vacancies in both DVA and Employment Canada in that province. Since a senior official has said that this was a very serious mistake in terms of violating the merit principle, can the Minister tell us why Prince Edward Island Members of Parliament received a seven-day advance notice of job vacancies in that province? Can he confirm that Peter White, who is the Prime Minister's patronage man, was at the meeting on September 10 in an attempt to steer patronage jobs in that province to the Conservative Party?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the Hon. Member last Friday, I inquired of the Public Service Commission, which is a body that reports to the House or to Parliament through the Secretary of State, not to Government, and I was informed that that meeting had in fact taken place, and that the decision taken or reached at that meeting, which was an informal meeting which the PSC apparently conducts—

Mr. Broadbent: Oh, oh!

Mr. de Cotret: —The decision taken then was that MPs would receive, at the same time as they are posted, notices of vacancies. It was further misunderstood, unfortunately, by some officials who construed that Members should receive prior of seven days notice. I can assure the Hon. Member that, upon learning of this, the Public Service Commission immediately put a halt to it.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION'S ROLE

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for that answer. However, in light of the statement made last night by the Minister of the Environment on television that he would do it again, and the fact that I found out today that similar meetings have also taken place with MPs from both New Brunswick and Quebec, what assurance can the Minister give the House that this practice indeed will not happen again, when a Minister who sits right behind him says that he would do it again if he had the chance?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of the comments of my hon. colleague. I would doubt very much that he is being quoted correctly. I can assure the Hon. Member that from conversations with the Public Service Commission, they were quite disturbed that this unfortunate error at the level of officials had taken place. They have assured me and my office that they will have corrective measures in place to ensure that it no longer continues.

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

MARCHMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Bruce Halliday (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister responsible for the Canada Post Corporation, I will direct my question to his Parliamentary Secretary. The special committee, known as the Marchment Committee, named by the Minister's predecessor to study the problems and future of the Post Office in Canada, will soon be reporting. Will the members of that committee be able to hold a press conference so that they can elaborate on their findings and on their recommendations, and respond to questions?

Mr. Bill Domm (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Canada Post): Mr.