

Oral Questions

Mr. Broadbent: If the government is now going to pay for that luncheon which he should never have had in the first place, to be consistent with this new-found morality in the Liberal Party, will it now pick up the \$30,000 tab, the cost to the taxpayers to fly three ministers by jet to Winnipeg?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Will the government do that? Will the Liberal Party do that? More specifically, I would like to ask the Prime Minister, since there is nothing in the budget for the unemployed and not a cent for pensioners, and since we have a hypocritical minister who goes around doing the opposite to what he is preaching, why does the Prime Minister not show just a little integrity for once on this issue, and demand his resignation?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I just want to clear up one or two points made by the hon. member. The first is that he has used totally exaggerated cost figures for that luncheon. It was bad enough the way it was.

Mr. Andre: How much did you pay?

Mr. MacEachen: When I get the bill, I will be glad to send a copy to the hon. member with a copy of my personal cheque. However, let me tell the hon. member that there is no question of getting caught, because when I returned to my office I issued instructions immediately that the bill be sent to me. I did not have to wait for his moralizing, or reports in the press. I knew my responsibility the moment I attended that event.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE BUDGET

PREPARATION OF CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION ADVERTISEMENT

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the minister responsible for housing who has indicated to us the date of the authorization of this ad by a committee of cabinet. That is not the date in question. The date in question is the date on which budget information was made available to an advertising agency in advance of the publication of the budget.

● (1430)

Is the minister telling the House of Commons that he authorized CMHC, or that CMHC acted on its own, to prepare several ads setting forth various options of policy that might appear in the budget and that those several ads were set out? Is that what the minister is telling the House? If it is, will the minister tell the House of Commons how many ads were

sent by Vickers and Benson on behalf of CMHC to the *Brockville Recorder and Times*.

Hon. Paul J. Cosgrove (Minister of Public Works): Madam Speaker, the ads to which the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition refers set out in very brief form the two points of the mortgage renewal plan.

Mr. Nielsen: How many ads?

Mr. Cosgrove: The first is interest deferral, and the second is a grant provision.

Mr. Nielsen: How many ads?

Mr. Cosgrove: That ad was prepared and authorized on November 13 to appear in the weekend newspapers. I thought it was important that Canadians should know what was proposed in the budget, vis-à-vis assistance to home owners across Canada.

Mr. Blenkarn: That is not correct.

Mr. Cosgrove: I say that because this House has received, and your office, Madam Speaker, has received in the last few weeks petitions containing over 10,000 signatures of Canadians. These people are inquiring about the government's position.

Mr. Nielsen: How many ads?

Mr. Cosgrove: Inasmuch as I personally had to take it upon myself to respond individually to over 11,000 of those people, by writing over 30 hours over the past week—

Mr. Nielsen: How many ads?

Mr. Cosgrove:—when the hon. member did not respond, I felt that that was the only way by which we could communicate effectively and immediately to the Canadian public.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: How many ads?

NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS ISSUED TO NEWSPAPERS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, what the minister is now saying is, first, that he is admitting that the detail in the ad was the precise detail that occurred in the budget. If I understand him correctly, he is also suggesting that the advertisement was prepared after it was received by the *Brockville Recorder and Times*. That stretches credibility even of this minister to some degree. He did not tell us whether or not other ads were sent to that newspaper or to any other newspaper. That is the question I put. How many other ads were sent by Vickers and Benson, authorized by the minister or by CMHC, to the *Brockville Recorder and Times* or to any other newspapers? How many ads?