

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the Gallery of the Hon. Keith Flax, Speaker of the Legislative Council of the British Virgin Islands.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF MINISTER OF ECONOMICS FOR THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Mr. Speaker: I also wish to draw to Members' attention the presence in the Gallery of the Hon. Martin Bangemann, Minister of Economics for the Federal Republic of Germany.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the self-described Minister responsible for patronage in government advertising.

Some Hon. Members: Order, order!

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I do not know why I am interrupted by the Tories. I am trying to achieve what their Hon. Member for Edmonton—Strathcona says should be done, that is, that the Government clean up its act on patronage.

● (1440)

I want to come back to the limited internal inquiry that has been called for by the Minister which, as she just said, is supposed to look only within her own Department. Unfortunately it will not be able to deal with the whole network and look into the Ritz-Carlton committee, Roger Nantel, Senator Bazin, and Mr. Meighen. Who will inquire into the involvement of all these Tory friends? Will the Minister not make the right decision now and call for a full public inquiry into all the aspects of how the Government awards contracts?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, I am looking for a term to characterize the question just put by the Hon. Member. I suggest it is mudslinging by association. I never heard of the committee you are referring to. I referred yesterday to a selection, jury made up of public servants from the client departments, that evaluated the tenders submitted. I never heard anything concerning that committee.

The investigation is limited to my Department.

Oral Questions

PÉLOQUIN AFFAIR—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, if the Minister does not know of the committee I have just described, she certainly knows Mr. Pélouquin. Concerning that individual, she is reported as saying yesterday, and she will confirm if true: We are keeping Mr. Pélouquin in office for the time being. And I read in the paper the following quote, between brackets: "We still need him right now". What I would like to ask the Minister is this: How can she keep in office someone who is being investigated, who is suspected of conflict of interest? How can she say that she still needs him? Is the Minister not prepared to do the right thing and state in this House that Mr. Pélouquin is now suspended until the investigation is completed?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Pélouquin is a consultant. A consultant is hired by contract, a legal effect that warrants the hiring of a consultant. That contract ended on March 31. On his request, we did not renew that contract. Mr. Pélouquin is no longer in our employment. Faced with the allegations that have transpired, as Minister in charge, I have therefore ordered an investigation on the legal aspects of the allegations that were being made. Mr. Pélouquin no longer works in my Department.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AWARDING OF CONTRACTS—INQUIRY WHY QUEBEC
ALLEGEDLY IS LESS FAVOURED THAN OTHER PROVINCES

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State responsible for Science and Technology. This morning *Le Devoir* reported that Quebec had received less than 10 per cent of the research contracts funded by the federal Government during the first fifty-one weeks of 1986-87, while Ontario and British Columbia received a larger share. In the light of its commitments, how can the Government justify this kind of imbalance?

[*English*]

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I too read the article in the French press and was rather surprised. My first instinct was to make sure that the article was reprinted in the press in Vancouver.

Upon reflection, I found that the figures used in the article are as irrelevant and false as similar figures presented in the Vancouver press which indicate that, with 12 per cent of the population, only 3 per cent of federal contracts have gone there. The figures are quite erroneous and false.