

Oral Questions

have the figures available at this particular time, but the figures I was quoting at that time are relatively accurate.

DETAILS OF MINISTER'S SPEECH

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, will the minister concede that that figure has increased dramatically since that time? Also I bring the minister's attention to the statement he made in his speech that the federal government would be treating advertising in much the same way as a multiproduct national corporation treats the promotion of its product, on the grounds that "government is too complex nowadays to rely on 'policy by press release'; programs must be explained and not by reporters, but rather by the people who created them." Could the minister tell the House how he justifies the expenditure of massive amounts of public funds to promote a partisan point of view and in an attempt as well to prevent the Press Gallery from exercising its function?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, the key words the hon. member used is the question of the expression of a partisan point of view. In no place in the speech could he identify any place where I have indicated that the advertising was to be for partisan purposes. I gave examples in that speech and I will cite one—the amnesty program that I introduced when I was solicitor general, in which I achieved a substantial registration of additional firearms, which had not been contemplated at the time the bill was introduced, as a result of a very progressive advertising campaign. That is the sort of advertising campaign that I feel was described within that particular speech.

AUDIT OF CANADIAN MEDIA CORPORATION EXPENSES

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Dufferin-Simcoe): Madam Speaker, if the minister needs an example he need only look at his colleague, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, who spent massive amounts on advertising. You will note, Madam Speaker, that the minister has not answered the other question on whether or not the \$50 million figure still stands.

The minister will be aware of the fact that he awarded an untendered contract, the largest of its kind in Canada, to Canadian Media Corporation, a company which was created to receive the contract from the federal government; it did not exist before. Due to the fact that Section 6, Item 4, of the contract between the government and Canadian Media Corporation provided that the minister, six months after the contract began, shall do an effectiveness audit, an efficiency audit, of the expenses incurred by the Canadian Media Corporation, with a view to determining whether or not the fee which is paid to that corporation should be adjusted, may I ask him whether that audit has taken place? If so, will he release the results of that audit to the House of Commons?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, yes indeed the audit has taken place. After the initial six months there was a review of the figures submitted by the

Canadian Media Corporation. In effect we are satisfied that the costs submitted were accurate and justified the amounts that had been paid. I would be pleased to discuss the matter further with the hon. member and to review the figures to see whether or not I can in effect deposit them in the House.

In terms of the hon. member's indication pointing to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and his advertising campaign, I might point out that any advertising expended by that minister was conformant to the policies of the government, namely, that it will advertise, identify and provide information to the Canadian public relating to policies which have been adopted by the Government and by the Parliament of Canada.

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CANADIAN UNITY

APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INFORMATION OFFICE

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, I have a question today for whichever minister is capable of answering questions on the Canadian Unity Information Office. I had intended to ask it of the Secretary of State, who is chairman of the cabinet communications committee, but unfortunately he is not here.

● (1420)

Could we have a confirmation from the ministry that the recently appointed director general is one Patrick McDougall, formerly of Vickers and Benson, the agency which between April, 1980, and this date received \$10 million worth of government advertising business through the interchange, and that Mr. McDougall was appointed through the Interchange program which means in fact that at the end of his term he will be going back to Vickers and Benson?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I will gladly look into that but, as a general proposition, I think hon. members should be careful not to impute sins to people who come from other sectors of society to join the civil service. I had a case recently with an article which appeared in *Maclean's* magazine that does that with one of my officials. I think this is unfair, is a reflection on the honesty of people, and is totally undeserved.

APPLICATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

Mr. John Bosley (Don Valley West): Madam Speaker, it is precisely to protect Mr. McDougall's reputation that we wish answers to these questions.

I have a supplementary question for the Acting Prime Minister. In so far as he will be checking the appointment, which we understand to be through the Interchange program, would he confirm to the House that he is willing to check whether the conflict of interest guidelines have been followed in this matter so that we will not have a repeat in Mr.