

Oral Questions

per the Hon. Member's suggestion, it will be considered in that light.

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[*Translation*]

SUPPLY AND SERVICES

PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING CONTRACTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services and has to do with the Port-Cartier project management.

We have just learned today that the contract award procedure concerning the Port-Cartier prison construction project management was such that indeed only one firm could even hope to be selected since it is the only one whose staff has had experience within the departmental correctional service.

Why does the Government still follow a contract award procedure which favours one company over another? And can the Minister confirm that this procedure was followed because the Government was afraid it might not be able to meet the Prime Minister's deadline?

Hon. Monique Vézina (Minister of Supply and Services): I am the Minister of Supply and Services. All standard criteria were applied with respect to this tender call. We had a list of suppliers, 13 companies. Eight submitted bids, three qualified, and we chose the lowest bidder because the company has the experience and can do the work.

[*English*]

BECHTEL CORPORATION CONTRACT

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see this Minister answering the questions this week. Another one was answering them last week. In view of the fact that Bechtel Corporation got its contract at the same time that one of its employees was on loan to Correctional Services Canada, does the Minister intend to launch an inquiry to determine whether or not there has been a breach of Section 49 of the conflict of interest code for public servants? If not, why not?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am the Minister responsible for the administration of the guidelines. Allegations have been made of a possible apparent conflict of interest involving members of the Public Service. According to current established practice, a review will be undertaken immediately to ascertain the facts. That will be undertaken by Treasury Board under the mandate we have to administer the guidelines. I have already spoken to the Solicitor General who has requested that this investigation be done with the shortest delays and I can assure my hon. colleagues that that will be the case.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

ALLEGED SEXIST ATTITUDE

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister and only he can answer it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An Hon. Member: That is the end of that. Next question.

• (1450)

Ms. Mitchell: The Prime Minister's Office has been criticized for sexist attitudes toward a female member of the Press Gallery. Can he assure the House and the women of Canada that his staff will stop requesting dates when interviews are requested, whether or not in jest?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I understand that there were press reports, which I think can fairly be categorized as unsubstantiated, with respect to Mr. Gratton. I understand that Mr. Gratton is now consulting his lawyer. I do not think that further comment is appropriate at this time.

PRESS SECRETARY'S CONDUCT

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also directed to the Prime Minister. Since at least one reporter was apparently insulted by his tacky and hurtful act, will the Prime Minister instruct his press secretary to apologize to those he has offended by his unprofessional conduct?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I know the Hon. Member respects the principles of fairness. I think she understands that in this country a person is innocent until proven guilty. I do not think it helps to reinforce the other point of view by repeating unsubstantiated stories in the House.

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APARTHEID

SOUTH AFRICA—POSSIBLE REPRISALS AGAINST NEIGHBOURING STATES

Mrs. Mary Collins (Capilano): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for External Relations. I understand that she represented Canada last week at the funeral of the late Mozambique President, Samora Machel. While in Mozambique did the Minister take the opportunity to discuss with representatives of the front line states whether or not, or indeed how, Canada might come to their assistance in the