

knows, project 2000 is designed to streamline the Public Service to bring them into the 21st century, to ensure that the services that are being provided to the Canadian public who are, after all, paying for them, are responsive to their needs and requests.

The suggestions made by the Auditor General in his report will help in designing those plans for the future for the bureaucrats. We look at the Auditor General as someone who helps us with the management of government. As a matter of fact, if the hon. member was fair, he would also point out that the Auditor General said that this government has made great progress in the administration of government over the past number of years.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Madam Speaker, to give only one example, 64 per cent of those who left the Translation Bureau in the last five years resigned. I would ask the minister if the government is prepared today to meet with the unions and discuss seriously an acute problem that is affecting the workers' morale and the stress they are under, namely job security. Is he prepared to meet the unions and hold discussions with them to solve this very serious problem?

[English]

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Madam Speaker, in the last round of negotiations, as I understand it, the unions agreed to contracting out and privatization in the settlement that they came to with the federal government. In fact, Daryl Bean has talked widely about how an employee is protected if contracting out or privatization goes on.

Those negotiations and discussions have gone on. I believe now, because of those negotiations, that PSAC recognizes there is contracting out and privatization that can and should go on.

Sometimes the private sector can do jobs and provide services much more economically and better than the civil service. That has been proven in the past and I am sure will happen in the future.

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SHIPBUILDING

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Transport.

Oral Questions

Some three months ago a Canadian designed ice-breaker reached the North Pole. It was recently built at a cost that was less than one-half of the money currently being spent by the government to overhaul and refit an old and less powerful ice-breaker.

Why did the minister choose to spend all this money overhauling a 21-year-old ice-breaker when it could have built a new and a more powerful one and saved some \$85 million at the same time?

• (1200)

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the hon. member that despite claims from competitors in the shipbuilding industry, a replacement vessel for the *Louis St. Laurent*, with the same capability had been estimated at approximately \$250 million, assuming that the vessel would be built to Canadian standards, Arctic pollution prevention regulations and by a Canadian shipyard.

Any prices and costs mentioned by designer-builders at this stage for a replacement vessel for the *Louis St. Laurent* are totally speculative.

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Associate Minister of National Defence on the issue of gays and lesbians in the Canadian Armed Forces.

In October the minister told a committee of this House that the current discriminatory policy was wrong, that the Chief of Defence Staff said it was wrong, that the Department of Justice said it was contrary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and was thus illegal, and that the policy would be changed well before the new year.

Why has the policy not yet been changed? Will it be changed before the new year? Has the government, according to reports, caved in to the neanderthals in the Conservative caucus?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I would not want to share the sentiments of the latter part of my colleague's questions.