

Oral Questions

Why was the \$150,000 awarded without any tender at all?
Why was that done? • (1500)

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I am not sure what contract he is talking about.

An hon. member: The computers.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member should allow me to answer because in fact what happens in respect to computers, given the government's requirements and needs for many of these, a broad general request for proposal is made to the suppliers. Based on the economics and the best deal possible, an agreement is signed that the government will purchase from that supplier the computers as they are needed.

In fact a competition, a tender if you will, was held but it was for the broad general purchase of these. As I say, DND requires them and has purchased them. DND is allowing the inquiry to use them and they will then become part of DND's stock as something that is needed. They are not a special purchase and it was not contrary to Treasury Board guidelines.

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CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina—Qu'Appelle): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Communications.

I have a letter dated May 21, 1993 from the president of the CBC, Mr. Gérard Veilleux, to the minister. In the letter the president stated that the budget cuts to the CBC announced in the April budget would "jeopardize our ability to meet our mandate".

I also have a letter sent by Mr. Paul Racine, assistant deputy minister, communications, to Mr. Tony Manera, senior vice-president of the CBC. This letter shows that the Department of Communications is preparing to set up an in-house task force of bureaucrats to review and cut back the CBC's mandate and services.

My question to the minister is—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I think it would only be fair for the Speaker to hear what is being said without screams from both sides of the House.

Mr. de Jong: Madam Speaker, thank you for reminding some hon. members about proper decorum in the House.

Will the minister refer the question of the CBC's mandate and finances to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture where it can be studied in an open and participatory forum rather than by a closed door committee of bureaucrats?

Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of Communications): Madam Speaker, I am a bit surprised at this question. The hon. member is a member of parliamentary committees. He knows that the parliamentary committees are masters of their own fate and can look into any matter whatsoever within their mandate.

Certainly any time that annual reports are produced, any time that estimates are produced, Parliament can at least have the scope to look at anything it wishes to look at.

If he asks me if it is more difficult for the CBC to meet its mandate under a period of restraint, or course it is. If he is asking if the mandate of the CBC is under review, of course it is. He is well aware of the fact that the CBC itself is undertaking a review of its mandate and taking a look at a whole repositioning exercise, that he should be well aware of, to ensure that the public broadcaster is able to discharge its responsibilities in serving Canadians.

The hon. member will also be well aware of the fact that the Canadian taxpayers are providing a subsidy of over \$1 billion a year to the CBC to assist it in doing that.

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[*Translation*]

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications. Bell Canada has indicated to the