

Oral Questions

REQUEST THAT MINISTER'S LETTER BE RESCINDED

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Moments ago we heard of tampering with the immigration process—

Some Hon. Members: Sit down!

Mr. Speaker: Due to the hour, I am sure the Hon. Member will want to put his question.

Mr. Boudria: Now we hear of interference with the CRTC. I ask the Prime Minister if he will order his Minister of Communications here and now—

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Boudria: —to rescind that kind of interference with a quasi-judicial body, the CRTC? Or is he going to allow this kind of abuse of power to continue? When will these Tories ever learn?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, during the passage of Bill C-13 I was of the impression that members of the Liberal Party were against the subscribers of Bell Canada, that they really did not want to see the subscribers to a telephone system in this country get a fair break. What I am saying in that letter is that there can be no subsidy paid by Canadian subscribers, the telephone users, to an international operation of Bell Canada International. We will not stand for that. I wish that the Liberal Party would have the same concern about the subscribers to our Canadian telephone system.

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● (1500)

SUPPLY AND SERVICESCONTRACT TO VIDEOTAPE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS
FUNCTION

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Supply and Services. It is based on a report in *The Daily News* of Halifax which reports that the Ministry of Supply and Services and DRIE failed to give companies in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island a fair opportunity to bid on a contract to videotape the 1987 Canada Awards for Business Excellence which will be held in Halifax on September 22.

The Halifax and Charlottetown companies had three days to prepare a bid while Toronto-based Steve Shaw Productions had been working on it for a month. My further information is that other companies based in Newfoundland—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will know that preambles are to set the stage for a question. I am sure that the Hon. Member will put his question.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, in view of the Government's stated interest in regional development can the Minister give the House an explanation of why Atlantic companies are being treated unfairly in this way by the Government? Can he tell the House what he will do to prevent this type of thing from happening again?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, this question was brought to my attention last week. Having examined the situation and the various problems, I can assure my colleague that in this case all regular procedures were followed by the Department of Supply and Services.

[English]

REQUEST FOR INTRODUCTION OF NEW TENDERING PROCESS

Mr. Jack Harris (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, if all regular procedures were followed in this case, can the Minister tell us what new procedures he will put in place to make things more fair for Atlantic companies?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, it must be recalled that this is a national event, five propositions were received and accepted. Of course, the best proposition was selected and awarded the contract.

I should also like to remind my colleague that this year's winner is the same as last year's. All instructions and provisions were adequately followed, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I want to advise the House that this will be the last set of questions. The Hon. Member for Trinity.

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TAX REFORM

FOOD TAX ISSUE—TRADE ASSOCIATION'S STUDY

Miss Aileen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It concerns the assessment by a trade association that sales tax on food as described in the White Paper would push food prices up 12 per cent to 13 per cent. Will the Minister tell the House how he considers that low-income Canadians could handle such an increase without hardship?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, that is speculation on the part of that industry association. It does not know the results of the consultations that we are going through regarding the composition of the tax base for a new sales tax, nor does it know the rate or the refundable sales tax credit which, as the Hon. Member knows, will be paid regularly in advance. It is a speculative comment.