

Oral Questions

tion in tasks", would the minister advise the House where the reduction will take place? Which of the four main tasks of the Armed Forces will be affected?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): We do not contemplate any drastic reductions, but common sense adjustments, and these will probably be in most of the tasks performed by the Armed Forces.

Mr. McKinnon: Is the minister prepared to specify the order of priority he assigns to the four main tasks? In other words, which of the tasks of the Armed Forces would be the least susceptible to cutback?

Mr. Richardson: I am presenting a number of alternatives to my colleagues. When the cabinet has reached a decision it will be made known.

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SUPPLY AND SERVICES**SALE OF FOYMOUNT RADAR BASE—REASON FOR REFUSAL OF BID BY PERLEX INTERNATIONAL**

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Supply and Services, in relation to the Foymount Radar Base. Can he tell us why the government, through his department, did not accept the highest bid by Perlex International Chemicals Limited of \$1,542,360 and, instead, accepted a lower bid of \$351,000, a decision which cost the Canadian taxpayer the sum of \$1,191,360?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Minister of Supply and Services): Mr. Speaker, we received eight tenders varying from \$350,000 to \$110,000, including one in the amount of \$1,500,000. The International Perlex bid for \$1,500,000, could not be accepted because a cheque for 10 per cent of the amount offered was not enclosed and because the financial stability of the company was not established to the satisfaction of the Corporation.

[English]

Mr. Dick: If the bid was not in order, in that the deposit at the time of opening the bid was insufficient, why was the bid not rejected outright in conformity with the rules of tendering? Why, instead, did negotiations go on through the minister's office, a practice which is not in accordance with tendering rules, in an attempt to have the bid brought within the possibility of acceptance?

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, no negotiation was conducted in my office. Negotiations have been effected through the Corporation and then, because a tender does not comply with the Corporation's rules, there is no reason for us to reject all the others. In this case, we had seven other valid tenders.

● (1440)

Mr. Dick: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. The minister has just informed us that no officials of his department conducted any negotiations, yet on page 3—

[Mr. McKinnon.]

An hon. Member: He didn't say that.

Mr. Dick: I am sorry, I meant officials in his office. However, on page 3 of the press release he gave today, it states that he did not meet personally, but officials of the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation and "my office" did meet with them. So perhaps he is now directing himself in an attempt to try to perfect his answer a little better than he perfected the original tender.

[Translation]

Mr. Goyer: Mr. Speaker, on this point of order, I would simply say that because some people met officials of my office it does not mean that negotiations have been conducted there. Some representations have been made which were conveyed to the Corporation for consideration. Later on, they were rejected because they were not bringing anything towards the solution of a settlement.

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AGRICULTURE**REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO QUEBEC FARMERS—REPRESENTATIONS BY PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I wish to direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture.

Last week, over 2000 Quebec farmers invaded Quebec City to let the provincial Minister of Agriculture know about their dissatisfaction with the price they are paid for their products. Can the minister tell the House whether following this demonstration he has received representations from the Quebec Minister of Agriculture requesting financial assistance for those farm producers?

[English]

Hon. E. F. Whelan (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I received a direct representation from the Quebec minister, but I certainly have from Quebec members of our caucus.

[Translation]

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, on a supplementary. May I ask the Minister of Agriculture whether leaders of the Union des producteurs agricoles have made representations to him following that demonstration and the representations made to the provincial Minister of Agriculture?

[English]

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that if I received a message from the provincial minister of agriculture for la belle province I have not seen it yet.