

Oral Questions

of Canada. That is a slanderous, defamatory statement and the hon. member should have the decency to apologize for it.

• (1145)

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Madam Speaker, to set the record straight, what the minister just quoted from is not *Hansard* or my comments in the House. What the minister has just quoted from is the document that I made available to the press yesterday. He is not quoting from anything that I said anywhere inside or outside the House.

Let me quote again. What I have said with respect to Mr. Ralfe and Mr. Small is that both had received contracts, both have ended up in senior positions on the campaign, and I stand by that.

Let me quote again the question at hand. The Minister of the Environment is quoted in today's *Globe and Mail*—let us be careful and let us listen carefully, minister—as saying: “The people working on our campaign are not on the government payroll, as is the case from what I understand for those who are working on other campaigns”.

The story goes on to say: “The minister refused to name which candidates he believed were bankrolling their campaigns from the public purse”.

I want to ask the minister, given that the Minister of the Environment has alleged that campaigns other than his are currently bankrolling their leadership campaigns from the public purse, what action will he take to investigate this allegation? Will he talk to the Minister of the Environment and will he put an end to this abuse?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): What we are seeing here is an abuse of the principle of parliamentary immunity, where the hon. member stands up and slanders and libels individuals. He said he was quoting a document, therefore he is immune. In other words, if somebody puts a piece of libellous material in his hands he feels it is perfectly reasonable and appropriately responsible to stand up and damage reputations.

I would to remind the hon. member of what Shakespeare said: “Steal my purse, you steal trash; steal my

reputation, you steal my life”. The hon. member should think a little more carefully and be a little more responsible before he goes after someone.

I repeat again: What he just said—

Ms. Copps: Answer the question.

Mr. Harvard: He is quoting your own minister.

Mr. Andre: If hon. members would keep their mouths shut and not interrupt me I would continue.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. minister may finish.

Mr. Andre: The hon. member is incapable of keeping his mouth shut apparently, Madam Speaker. The hon. member quoted, saying that “no one on our campaign is on the government payroll, as is the case I understand”. In other words, that is the case in other campaigns as well. It is clearly, clearly contrary to the rules set down by the Prime Minister when we announced the leadership campaign that nobody working full time on campaigns can be on the government payroll. That is clearly the policy.

The hon. member has no evidence. Yesterday he made allegations, his colleagues made allegations about David Small. They are all false. Have the decency to withdraw those allegations unless you have proof.

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FORESTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Forestry. It relates to a decision made by the government in the recent budget to allow forest agreements between the federal government and the provinces to expire once those agreements have run out.

The minister will know from previous statements in the House and other comments on the record that the government had at one time viewed these agreements as an excellent demonstration of effective co-operation between the federal and provincial governments, which have joined with the forest industry and private forest managers to work toward a more economic wood supply, along with providing very important funding for work in replanting, silviculture work, research and the management of woodlots.