

*Oral Questions*

Why would anyone follow the Prime Minister's lead in the national unity area when there is no consultation, no mandate, no rationality, no democratic legitimacy behind his proposals?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** First, Mr. Speaker, we had three discussions in caucus about this matter before I went public with it. Second, I do not know if the people will follow the leader of the third party. Last week he was asking us to give a veto to the province of British Columbia and—

**Miss Grey:** The people of B.C., not the government.

**Mr. Manning:** Why do you not understand about people versus government?

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** Yes, and after that he voted against his own proposition last night.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**An hon. member:** He could not even convince his own caucus to follow him.

**Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** I understand that his two neighbours to his left had the good sense not to look ridiculous like their leader and voted with us on the motion.

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[Translation]

**RADIO CANADA INTERNATIONAL**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

When questioned in the House yesterday, the heritage minister suggested that the future of Radio Canada International would be determined by the Juneau report, which will be submitted to the government on January 15. However, 20 minutes later, the director of Radio Canada International told his 125 employees that RCI would shut down in March.

Can the heritage minister clearly state that, when he was eluding our questions yesterday in the House, he did not know that, 20 minutes later, the director of Radio Canada International would announce that his service was going to shut down?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I know what goes on at the CBC. What I said yesterday, and my answer is the same today, was that Radio Canada International is the international component of the CBC. It is part of the CBC's overall mandate.

Therefore, the future of Radio Canada International will be decided when we review the CBC's mandate, along with the recommendations made by a special committee.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, if the minister knows what goes on at the CBC, why did he tell us yesterday that the CBC's mandate would not be changed before the Juneau report is submitted, considering that 20 minutes later it was announced, without waiting for the Juneau report, that Radio Canada International would shut down?

• (1435)

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear that no decision will be made on the CBC's mandate before the Juneau report. That is clear. Similarly, we will not know the future of the CBC's budget before the next federal budget. That is precisely what I said yesterday.

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[English]

**CANADA PENSION PLAN**

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government is trying to sell the provincial finance ministers on its freedom 67 plan, raising the age of retirement from 65 to 67.

The finance minister says that freedom 67 should be his choice. It should not be his last choice. It should not be his first choice. In fact, it should not be his choice at all. Will the minister commit right now to abandoning his freedom 67 package?

**Hon. Douglas Peters (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the question relates to the Canada pension plan. There is a study being done by the provinces and by the federal government on the Canada pension plan which has not yet been completed. There has been no decision on that. Sixty-seven is not the issue.

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I do thank the hon. member for his very clear response on that question.

The Reform Party plan to renew the Canada pension plan will allow people to choose when they wish to retire. The Liberal freedom 67 plan will break the government's contract with seniors by cutting their pensions. Six months ago, the Liberals locked in their gold plated MP pensions and now they are poised to hammer seniors by cutting pensions, raising the age of retirement and increasing CPP taxes.

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. How can this government justify attacking seniors' pensions when her government just locked in its own gold plated MP pension plan?