

*Oral Questions*

I therefore ask the minister to assure us that the necessary funds will be available for this program, which is very worth while, gives hope to many jobless Canadians and seeks to put Canada back on the road to work and prosperity.

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, it is nice to hear that it is honourable. It is honourable under the law that we reformed despite the Liberals' fierce opposition. Today it is fun to appear to everyone as holier than the pope, but what he does not say—

He said that it was honourable to spend \$43 million in Ontario last year under section 26. This year, we will spend three times as much, \$125 million, just to meet the needs of Ontarians.

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[English]

**THE CONSTITUTION**

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the right hon. Prime Minister, who last night observed that Afro-Canadians had had many rivers to cross and said that as long as he was Prime Minister he would cross those rivers with us.

We have a river to cross, and it is a statement by the minister in charge of the Constitution that the present constitutional revisions will contain no recognition of equality in the preamble, in the Canada clause or in the body of the charter.

My question for the Prime Minister is simply this. Why should I as a member of Parliament and why should those who are members of ethnic, most particularly coloured minorities, vote for a proposition that so explicitly excludes us?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for the reference to our participation last evening at the WAZEE awards, which are the new awards to celebrate the achievement of black Canadians.

I think all members of the House would join with me in congratulating the five recipients last evening, and all of those minority groups but in particular the black Canadians who contributed so much to the well-being of Canada.

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

**Mr. Mulroney:** In my brief remarks last night I discussed the evils of racism and the need to include all of our citizens in all of our processes and that included the

constitutional process. It would be of little value if people were excluded.

I would be happy to hear from my hon. friend in regard to any specifics he has in mind, because obviously we would want the Constitution of Canada, if it is successfully amended, if it is going to meet the criteria of fairness and openness and justice, to make sure that black Canadians and all Canadians could identify with the Constitution as an instrument of unity.

He makes precisely the point why so many French-speaking Quebecers do not identify, as they perhaps ought to, with the Canadian Constitution. It is simply because it was not endorsed in 1981 and we would want all Canadians, including black Canadians, to feel proud of the Canadian Constitution.

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that any non-Afro-Canadian Liberal or non-Afro-Canadian New Democrat that had been invited last night would have been pleased to congratulate the winners of those awards.

But I nevertheless have to say that I appreciate the Prime Minister's remarks with respect to the Constitution. I put the question to him squarely, provided that he understands that Afro-Canadians are not asking for anything special. I ask the Prime Minister if he will support in section 27 a non-contingent provision that all in this country are equal to all others regardless of race or ethnic derivation absolutely?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to examine that with my hon. friend, but I think that is already adequately covered in the charter. I may be wrong, but I will be happy to examine that very carefully with him.

My hon. friend said that he would have been pleased last night to have been invited—

**Mr. McCurdy:** I was invited.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Oh, he was invited, because the implication is that he was not, which surprised me—

**Mr. McCurdy:** Non-Afro-Canadians.