

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Shefford, only one question, please.

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THE CONSTITUTION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister, I direct my question to the Minister of Justice. Being aware of the speech delivered by the Prime Minister at Buckingham and the representations made by Jean Chrétien before the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, as the constitutional issue stands now, can the minister tell me whether they amount to the same thing? Could she tell me the difference between the constitutional position of Jean Chrétien and that of Brian Mulroney?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): This is a challenging question, Mr. Speaker, and I could respond in more detail if we had a few hours to spare. But the answer is simple, Mr. Speaker. The Prime Minister has a vision of Canada and he has always tried to achieve it. I think he made the necessary efforts to hold the country together during the Meech Lake Accord process and that he will continue to work to that end, Mr. Speaker.

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[English]

SENATE REFORM

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley—Hants): Mr. Speaker, I want to wish you a Merry Christmas. In that light I appreciate very much the opportunity from this row to ask a question and further the answer of the Minister of Justice as to the mandate of the Prime Minister.

Since there is no minister here for interprovincial or inter-federal relations—that minister is in the Senate, wherever he may be—I ask the question of my old friend, the Acting Prime Minister in a semi-serious way. I hope that there will be some consideration of this question, as there are many things to consider over the break.

Since we have finished the circus in the Senate, with all of that disgraceful situation, my question is for the Deputy Prime Minister, the Prime Minister and/or whoever is the minister in this House for federal-provincial relations. I hope some day there may be a minister in this House for federal-provincial relations.

This is the last question before Christmas. Will the Deputy Prime Minister seriously consider something that is not going to ever be resolved unless we consider this question? The question is this: forget about constitutional reform, will this House of Commons, in the new resumed session after Christmas, decide to have *de facto* Senate reform by cutting off the Senate water, the Senate electricity, and the Senate money so that we do not have to worry about Senate reform?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: How that meets the spirit of Christmas I do not know, but the minister may want to reply.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to return the hon. member's wish to the House for good cheer and hope that he will enjoy his share of it in the course of the holidays.

I can advise the hon. member that it is not the plan of the government to do anything to try to deprive the members of the other place of any of the requisites necessary to do their jobs, however those may be defined.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: I should like to take a moment to express to my colleagues—

[English]

A very sincere wish to all of you and to all of your families for a happy Christmas and a good new year and I include in that a wish for our country.

There will of course be this afternoon from four o'clock on a reception in the Speaker's chambers, and I would like to invite all hon. members to join with me.

I thank you for your help and co-operation during the year.