

Points of Order

Let me say that among the principles we are including—and the council of ministers on the environment has been directly involved in the process and my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, has consulted on it—the environmental chapter will include provisions that will prevent provinces from weakening environmental measures as an inducement for investment. The chapter will encourage upward harmonization of environmental measures. Finally, the chapter will allow for the use of the precautionary principle.

These are key points. I know Reform Party members are not interested in the environment. They are indicating that by their response. We think it is important and I think it is important as well.

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GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Nelson Riis (Kamloops): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister of human resources who, along with all Canadians, was delighted when the United Nations identified Canada out of 185 countries as the best place to live and raise a family.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Riis: We will also realize that one of the main reasons for that designation was the incredible wide range of social programs that reflect a caring and compassionate society.

The minister has indicated some dramatic, drastic changes and, from some of the leaked reports, perhaps even draconian changes. He has also indicated he will release his proposals in the middle of July when Parliament is not sitting. To keep in line with the traditions of the government to announce to Parliament first—

The Speaker: Order. We had a comment earlier that there must be a full moon. I suggest the moon is going to be out if we have long questions like this. Would the hon. member please put his question.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, when you only get one question a year you have to take advantage of that.

The Speaker: It surely should not take a year to put it.

Mr. Riis: To keep the tradition of the government of making major announcements when Parliament sits, would the minister give some thought to recalling Parliament in the middle of July so Parliament can receive his report and provide an opportunity for some immediate debate on this very critical set of changes?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker,

will the hon. member give a cast iron undertaking that he will definitely be here?

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POINTS OF ORDER**COMMENTS DURING QUESTION PERIOD**

Mr. David Chatters (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to correct the record.

During my question to the minister and in his response he said that we refused to meet with the Council of Yukon Indians. In fact we arranged a meeting with the Council of Yukon Indians.

The Speaker: I just want to make a clarification before I start getting some letters.

When the hon. member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake rose to make a statement today I mentioned he was from Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing and then I said that was close enough.

I meant of course not that your ridings were close enough but that your seatmate was next to you. I just do not want to get any letters on that and I wanted to clarify it.

● (1205)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, yesterday during clause by clause consideration of Bill C-33 and Bill C-34 in the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development the member for Yukon was present and allowed to vote at the committee.

She was not a legal voting member according to Standing Order 114(2)(c). The standing order reads as follows:

At any time when no list has been filed with the clerk of the committee pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section or when no notice has been received by the clerk of the committee pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section, the Chief Whip of any recognized party may effect substitutions by filing notice thereof with the clerk of the committee, having selected the substitutes from among all the Members of his or her party and/or the independent members listed as associate members—pursuant to Standing Order 104(4)—

The relevant phrase is: "the independent members listed as associate members". House of Commons records will indicate that the member for Yukon was not then and is not now an associate member of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Although a substitution form was filed by the chief opposition whip with the clerk naming her as a substitute, she did not meet the requirements as an independent under the standing orders in order to be a legitimate voting member. Yet the chairman of the committee allowed her to vote on more than one occasion.