

• (1455)

Will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs acknowledge as well that common sense and reason along with the rules and practices of international law in the matter of state succession provide very clearly that, when sovereignty is proclaimed, all of the assets of the federal government located on Quebec territory automatically become the property of Quebec?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I see the opposition is opinionated, not to mention hard of hearing. This is the sort of question that makes it hard to concentrate on the goal of the referendum. The goal of the referendum is as follows: "Do you want to separate from Canada?" This is the question. All the rest are hypothetical questions, which have no bearing.

In the present matter, once again, we must not get carried away with marginal issues. What those of us on the no side want is for Quebecers to remain in the federation, because it is in their interest and in Canadians' interest for them to do so and this is why we are going to vote no.

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the minister that we are talking about what he said himself. So if there is a diversion, he is the cause of it.

As Quebec has paid for over 20 per cent of all federal assets in the rest of Canada and abroad, will the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs acknowledge that Quebec will be entitled as well to its share in the ownership of these other federal assets and this is why Canada will hasten to negotiate a quick and equitable division the day after the referendum?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the statement I made is true, it speaks for itself and it stands. What is important is that, in the last week of the referendum, we can no longer divert Quebecers' attention onto such matters, we must concentrate on the basic issue, because a third of the voters in Quebec still believe they will continue to remain in Canada, even if they say yes. This is wrong. Quebecers must know the truth, and the truth is that separation will mean they can no longer live in Canada.

Oral Questions

[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Robert Heinrich, the committee chair of federal affairs for the Liberal Association of Saskatchewan, was my opponent in the last federal election. Guess what? He has been appointed to the National Parole Board. On a daily basis, that is more lucrative work than being an MP. It pays to be a loser if you are a Liberal.

Can the solicitor general describe to the House the rigorous selection and screening process used to assess the qualifications of appointees to these plum positions?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the position was the subject of a public advertisement. Candidates submitted applications. The applications were reviewed by the chair of the parole board who carried out an interview process and made recommendations. It was on the basis of competence and merit that the decision was made.

Mr. Lee Morrison (Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, at least there is consistency here. A few months ago, Mr. Heinrich's campaign manager received her reward. She was appointed to the board of the Farm Credit Corporation.

My question is for anybody over there who feels competent to answer it. After all the defeated Liberal candidates and all of their campaign managers have received their lollies, what is going to be done for all of those hardworking Liberals who handed out—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton East.

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HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

All Canadians value our well earned reputation throughout the world for being a nation with a deep respect for human rights. Canadians continue to be concerned about the human rights situation in Mexico, our NAFTA partner.

• (1500)

Can the minister tell us how the government is responding to those concerns?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for giving me advance notice of her question.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.