

*Oral Questions*

and we are going to take all the time necessary to find the solution that will ensure that Quebec is not penalized. If we go for per capita transfers, Quebec will pay a hefty price to opt out of this federal program.

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[English]

## NON-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister.

Is today the day that the Prime Minister is to rise in his place and free the members of this Parliament to represent their constituents by declaring that the government will not consider the defeat of a government motion, including a spending measure, to constitute an expression of non-confidence in the government unless it is immediately followed by the passage of a formal non-confidence motion?

[Translation]

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, this House has had long standing rules of procedure which we follow. I think that it would be very easy, with the majority we have, to embark upon a process that would render the government not accountable for its decisions, but we also have to consider the consequences if, in a distant future, a minority government were to be elected to Parliament.

[English]

We have to keep in mind what would be the long term effect of such a proposition on this Parliament.

Some time ago we came a long way from that. I remember when we lost a vote in the House on the budget when Mitchell Sharp was the minister. Mr. Caouette who was a social creditist, the grandparents of the Reformers of today, made a proposition. He had managed to defeat a budgetary proposition and he said that it was not a defeat of the government. Through that good decision of Mr. Caouette's we remained in power and won the election a few months later.

**Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his answer. I do bow to his expertise.

However I would wonder if the Prime Minister might explain to the Canadian people why he refuses to allow their MPs to represent them faithfully in Parliament.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, this House is not a group of independents who have been elected on their own. We too are members of a party and we had a program.

● (1435)

The government is getting the program before the House and the red book will be implemented. All the promises we have made will be implemented. We stick together because we have the right policies.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## NATIONAL REVENUE

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Revenue has announced that he has withdrawn the action he had brought against the government. Upon verification however, the Federal Court—Appeal Division docket seems to indicate that part of the case is still pending and will have to be heard on appeal.

Does the Minister agree that he is still in a conflict of interest position because of this action pending with regard to his travel expenses since his Cabinet colleague, the Minister of Justice, has to plead against him?

[English]

**Mr. Anderson:** Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker:** It would seem that the question might be out of order. I would rule it out of order. It should be directed to the minister in charge of conflict of interest since it is a matter of law. Perhaps the member could rephrase it.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, it is a question for the Prime Minister to answer. I have been informed by the Minister of National Revenue that the minister has withdrawn his action.

[Translation]

Those are the instructions he has given his lawyer. Now, did the lawyer follow these instructions? I do not know. We will look into this. The minister clearly stated that he had instructed his lawyer to withdraw the action. Was the lawyer remiss or did he do his job? What I was told is that the minister had specifically requested that the case be discontinued.

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert):** Mr. Speaker, I have the discontinuance order right here and it applies only to the cross-appeal. This means that there is still an appeal pending before the Federal Court.

I would like the Prime Minister to tell me: under his new code of ethics, is it appropriate that his Minister of National Revenue be in a position of conflict of interest, based on the facts I have just stated, which were verified no later than this morning by the Federal Court, or should he not choose between resigning his Cabinet seat and withdrawing his appeal?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the hon. minister was in a conflict of interest situation at any time. As a citizen, the minister had rights