

Oral Questions

My question for the Prime Minister: Will the government table the complete list of who was invited to the heritage minister's dinner and who contributed the money for what purposes? The Prime Minister knows full well that Elections Canada documents will not provide the information.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, whether the Minister of Canadian Heritage had debts or no debts is irrelevant.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): We used to have debt, but we do not have debt any more. For the last eight years I raised money to pay the debt. When we raise money it is to pay the debt and to have enough money for the next election. The minister raised money for the Liberal Party that will be used in the next election. That money will compete with the money the leader of the Reform Party is raising when he has his own private dinners around the country.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's obsession with protecting a party loyalist is clouding his judgment.

The heritage minister violated the federal code of ethics, not once, not twice, but three times. He targeted departmental clients for donations. He rewarded some with heritage contracts and appointments, placing himself in direct conflict of interest. Now there is the question of raising money under cloudy pretences to pay off debts that did not exist. Canadians are right to wonder what kind of example this sets for other ministers.

My supplementary is to the ultimate arbiter of government ethics. Since the Prime Minister is unwilling to discipline the Minister of Canadian Heritage, does this mean that other ministers are free to hold similar fundraising dinners that target departmental clients?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ministers are advised as I am that they have an obligation, like any other member of Parliament to help to raise money for the next election of the Liberal Party. They have to do it according to the rules, and the rules are very clear by Elections Canada. Every contribution has to be made public if it is more than \$100. That is exactly what ministers are instructed to do and they are doing it. It is known by the public.

I had great success in the city of Calgary. Many of the friends of the leader of the Reform Party came, paid, and were happy with the speech.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, according to Mitchell Sharp, the government's original ethics adviser, the heritage minister's dinner may be just the tip of an iceberg.

Mr. Sharp said yesterday the government's code of ethics was clear and tough but that some cabinet ministers are not following it. He went on to say that business should be separate from fundraising to eliminate the appearance of conflict of interest and that cabinet should receive a refresher course on the code of ethics.

Since the Prime Minister has personally assumed the role of ethics counsellor, which other ministers are not following the government's guidelines? And will they be invited to an ethics summer course, which Mr. Sharp advises?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Sharp advises me and ministers when we need advice. He is correct when he tells every one of us to be prudent. Being prudent is to make sure that every contribution is paid, a receipt is made, and it is published under the Canada Elections Act. That is exactly what happened in this case.

Every contribution has been above the table and according to the laws of Canada. Unless we pass a law in the House that all political party expenditures are paid by the nation, we will have to raise money according to this law. This law permits ministers and members of Parliament of all parties to raise money as long as they give receipts in accordance with the Canada Elections Act.

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• (1435)

[Translation]

JOB CREATION

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, net job creation over the past six months has been zero, although the Minister of Finance's budget predicted job growth of three per cent in 1995. In addition, economic growth has literally gone flat in the first three months of 1995, with an annualized growth rate of 0.7 per cent, yet the Minister of Finance forecast in his budget that the rate of growth would hit 3.8 per cent this year.

Since everything points to the fact that the minister's predictions will not come true this year, will he acknowledge that zero economic growth will not generate any new jobs and that he is going to have to review his budgetary forecast regarding the deficit?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, firstly, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for getting his leader to allow him to ask a question.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martin (LaSalle—Émard): I know why this is; those hon. members contradict themselves so much.