

Oral Questions

untouched by immigration and pure in population and culture. I read *Hansard* carefully as you suggested, Mr. Speaker, and found that the Minister did not follow your lead and that of the Deputy Prime Minister by asserting a true understanding of his region within the Canadian reality.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister act to overcome the regional petty politics of the Minister of Employment and Immigration and ensure that the Minister follows the admirable lead of the Hon. Member for Kitchener on Monday by issuing a full and complete apology for his highly offensive statements?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the Minister of Employment and Immigration is presently at a federal-provincial conference. I make no pretence of being objective with regard to my feelings toward the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I think it is generally agreed within this House that the words used by him lent themselves to interpretation. He readily admitted that yesterday. However, no one has ever questioned his intent. We believed that we turned the page on this yesterday. We hoped that the Hon. Member shared that feeling. In the two years during which he has been Minister, the integrity or thoughts of the Hon. Minister on that issue have never been questioned.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, it is a simple fact that the page has not been turned on this. I continue to receive representations demanding more.

CONTENT OF STATEMENTS

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Prime Minister, as head of the Government in the House today, point out to the Minister of Employment and Immigration that the statements he made a couple of weeks ago are quite contradictory to the campaign which the Minister responsible for multiculturalism launched this Monday which was designed to ensure that Canadians recognize that our society is no longer composed of two solitudes and the others? Will he point out the contradiction between that and the Minister's statements made on Radio Canada?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, the contradiction here is that the Hon. Member would want to flog this issue when it is so evident that there is nothing more to be said. The contradiction which we see is that the Member would want to use this issue for petty politics when it is so important to Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

ACID RAIN

INQUIRY WHY GOVERNMENT COULD NOT CONCLUDE ACCORD SIMILAR TO UNITED STATES-MEXICO AGREEMENT

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of the Environment, I shall address my question to the Deputy Prime Minister.

A federal study has revealed today that forest growth in Quebec and Ontario has been reduced by two-thirds because of problems caused by acid rain. We are already aware that the *Union des producteurs agricoles* is losing \$1 million a month because of acid rain.

In view of the so-called special relationship between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States, why has the Government been unable to obtain an agreement on acid rain similar to the one which was signed today between the United States and Mexico?

• (1200)

[English]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member might want to read the answer that I provided earlier to a similar question. The fact is that this is an issue of very high priority and urgency on the timetable of the Government. It was raised with Vice-President Bush. It will be an issue that will be fully discussed with the President when he comes here in April. We have expressed our disappointment about the inaction in the United States and we will continue to press for full compliance of the arrangements that have been made.

Ms. Copps: The fact is that almost two years after the shamrock summit we have had no action on acid rain. At the same time, on this very day, Mexico and the United States have signed an agreement.

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. How long is the Prime Minister prepared to drag his feet, pretending to have a special relationship with the United States, while the Canadian environment and economy are put at risk?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member complains about two years of inaction. That is absolutely wrong because there has been action, movement, and progress. It is quite different from the 25 years of inaction from the Government with which she was associated. Nothing was done for 25 years. We are moving ahead, and moving fast.