

conomic union, and thus improve the economic well-being of every family in Quebec.

[English]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In the constitutional package the government proposes to turn over residual powers to the provinces. This could mean, of course, that in future if an area is not labelled in federal jurisdiction it would be turned over to the provinces.

The environment is not specifically under federal jurisdiction in the Constitution, which would by implication mean that jurisdiction could completely be turned over to the provinces.

I want to ask the Prime Minister: Is it this government's intention to abandon federal responsibility for the environment?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister indicated in an answer just a moment ago, it is certainly not our intention to do that.

I would remind the Leader of the New Democratic Party that such actions as the Government of Canada has had to take regarding residual power, regarding the peace, order and good government clause, has been done under the national and the emergencies portions of that clause. It is a portion which, if she reads the document, she will see the Government of Canada intends to retain for itself.

I would also remind her of the suggestion by this government of the inclusion in the preamble to the Constitution of references to sustainable development, making it clear not only that environment is an issue of interest to us all but that a sustainable, respected environment is considered by this government to be a fundamental value of the country.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister.

Clearly, I think, all Canadians would agree that concern for our environment must be a concern of all

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Canadians, but the government does propose in its constitutional reforms to turn over such areas as forestry and mining to the provinces. It may also turn over such things that are mentioned in legislative areas such as wildlife, conservation protection, transportation of dangerous goods, and soil and water conservation. All of these areas are environmental areas. Obviously they affect all provinces and territories of this country and there must be some kind of federal overview.

I want to ask the minister: Will his government commit today to supporting a clear statement in the Constitution that the federal government has jurisdiction over the environment?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this government's concern for the environment is very clear in the references to which I referred earlier. If we were going to propose moving the environment, we would have done so. We did not propose it because we do not intend to do that. We believe it is a field in which existing federal jurisdictions must be respected and must be maintained.

• (1430)

If the Leader of the New Democratic Party wants to propose a change that would weaken the federal power over the environment then she is free to do that in the committee, but it is not our intention to do that.

[Translation]

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the minister.

Obviously, the environment does not respect boundaries. Canadians must have a right to clean air and clean water. My question for the minister is: Can he quite simply guarantee Canadians these rights to a clean environment through a social charter?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, for the first time, it is proposed to entrench environmental concerns in the Constitution. That is part of our proposal.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party talks about rights. As she knows, the word "right" has some implica-