

*Oral Questions*

There is, for instance, the heritage committee, which will hopefully table a report in a few days, a few weeks at most. There is also a task force reviewing mandates. It is quite normal for the president of the CBC to care about the restructuring that his house, so to speak, is about to undergo in order to make it more effective.

**Mr. Pierre de Savoye (Portneuf, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, given that the budget for the CBC's French network is 40 per cent lower than that of the English network, in spite of similar viewership, does the minister undertake to direct the board of directors of the CBC to spare the French network?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government will do much more than issue directives. It will implement policy in due time, and I have just said when that would be, when we have in hand the reports we requested.

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[English]

### PUBLIC SERVICE

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the President of the Treasury Board.

I want to first congratulate the minister and the leader of the public service union on reaching an agreement to work together on managing downsizing of the public service.

For all of us who are concerned about the future of the public service and about the tens of thousands of employees who are worried about their jobs, I wonder if the minister would explain exactly how this agreement will help those affected by downsizing and how it will improve relations with the employees and unions.

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I signed a joint agreement with union leaders that will provide for joint adjustment committees to assist employees who are leaving the public service as a result of the downsizing that is taking place. This is in order to help them find alternate jobs. This will provide transition support services. For example, one such committee here in Ottawa next week is providing a job fair for a number of people who will be leaving the public service. So these joint management and union committees right across the country will assist on a regional, local, and departmental basis to help the people who are being displaced by downsizing to find new jobs.

[Translation]

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

According to the auditor general, in the next 30 years, it will cost \$9 billion to safely dispose of the mountains of high-level radioactive waste mainly caused by electric power companies such as Ontario Hydro.

• (1455)

The federal government has already subsidized the development of these companies to the tune of \$370 million, without devising safe ways and sites to dispose of such waste.

How can the Minister of the Environment justify that Canadian taxpayers are currently subsidizing Ontario Hydro to get rid of its nuclear waste, which accounts for close to 90 per cent of all such waste in Canada?

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, The hon. member is right that the auditor general quite rightly identified that we have a long term radioactive waste disposal problem in the country.

The government is working on the problem. In March I went to my cabinet colleagues with a long term strategy to deal with the problem and I will return to cabinet in November with a timetable and with cost estimates as to how we will proceed in the future to deal with the nuclear waste problem in the country.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after investing hundreds of millions of tax dollars in the construction of Ontario Hydro's nuclear power plants, how can the Minister of the Environment now guarantee that she will not ask Canadians across the country to absorb the costs of an operation which is Ontario Hydro's sole responsibility, while the federal government never invested Canadian taxpayers' money in Hydro-Quebec?

[English]

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think I should make something very plain here. When I talk about developing a plan to deal with long term costs for radioactive waste disposal, I am talking about historic waste.

The hon. member is quite right that various utilities across the country generate energy through nuclear power and they are responsible for the disposal of those wastes. We operate on the basis of a polluter pay principle and we as a government are