

*Oral Questions**[English]***CANDU REACTORS**

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this government has a long history of using tax dollars to fund megaprojects that end up costing us billions. Petro-Canada is just one example.

Now the Chinese premier has visited Canada and walked away with another megaproject deal. The government is planning to use the Canada account to finance Atomic Energy's sale of two CANDU reactors to China.

Does the government not realize it is broke? Does it not realize Canada cannot afford to finance a dime, never mind several billion dollars worth of taxpayers' money on this sale?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member ought to take pride in export sales of Canadian technologies. These sales are done on a basis that will provide the maximum amount of returns to the Canadian public. I can assure the hon. member this will be the case here.

The Chinese market, I do not need to remind anybody, is a very important market and is one that is growing at considerable length. It is important that this country establish itself.

On the first point regarding Petro-Canada, thanks to the minister of energy and mines we have completed the most successful privatization of almost any western country in the past decade.

Mr. Charlie Penson (Peace River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I think they gave it away.

My supplemental is to the Minister of Natural Resources, since that is who was quoted here. I quote that minister even further: "The Canadian government will no longer be in the business of negotiating massive support packages for energy megaprojects". If we are not subsidizing megaprojects at home any more, why are we considering doing it overseas where the risk to the taxpayer is even greater?

• (1445)

Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me point out to the hon. member that export financing is a normal part of doing business in this country and in most other countries.

As the Minister of Finance has pointed out in relation to Candu technology, we have technology which is second to none in the world. We want that technology to help solve the energy problems of nations such as China. If we are going to compete with other nations in relation to that technology, it is important to provide export financing.

*[Translation]***REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN**

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Last week, the deputy chair of the no committee, Ms. Liza Frulla, demanded that Ottawa withdraw completely from the area of culture, declaring that Ottawa had no business interfering in this area of exclusive Quebec jurisdiction.

Can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs tell us whether it is his feeling that, in the field of culture as in the other questions raised by Daniel Johnson, Quebecers will be given no response before October 30?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all of the questions by the Official Opposition are along the same lines and our response is that the federation, that Canada, has been very flexible in the past.

It has allowed the province of Quebec, like the other provinces, to acquire a considerable amount of power, even spending power. In the sixties, the federal government had around 60 per cent of the spending power, and now it is the provinces and municipalities which have more than that 60 per cent.

The immigration agreement is one that was signed without any constitutional amendment. It is totally possible to settle the problems that exist without constitutional amendments. And if I may remind the Opposition of one final point, it is they who refused to allow Quebec the decentralization contained in the Charlottetown Accord, while the Prime Minister approved it.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

How can the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs expect the people of Quebec to think that there would be a place for Quebec in his Canada after a no in the referendum, when we are familiar with the points of view of his Prime Minister's best buddies, Clyde Wells and Roy Romanow, and when we know that his Prime Minister systematically refuses to give any hope whatsoever and any response whatsoever to the pleadings of his allies on the no side?

Hon. Marcel Massé (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there has always been a place in my heart, in my soul, in my intellect, for Quebec as a part of Canada, because it is within Canada that Quebec succeeded in developing the world's best standard of living.