

*Oral Questions*

In addition to Mr. Small, I now have information that at least five other contract employees in the Department of the Environment's green plan operations group were involved in organizing a leadership campaign prior to the leadership being called and while these five additional employees were still on the public payroll.

What action is the Prime Minister prepared to take to investigate this improper use of taxpayer dollars to subsidize a Tory leadership campaign?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is usually casting aspersions and slurs without having the facts.

Individuals who work for the government on contract or otherwise on their own time, after hours when they are not working, are free to do whatever they want. They can get involved in campaign activities on behalf of Conservatives, Liberals or NDPers. There is no restriction on that.

It is quite improper for the hon. member to slur these admittedly unnamed individuals at this point and to suggest there is something morally wrong with them getting involved in politics in their own free time.

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte):** Madam Speaker, the minister would be interested in knowing that in addition to Mr. Small, the campaign manager who received the \$200,000 contract, Mr. Tim Ralfe, the director of communications for the Minister of the Environment's campaign, was also on contract. Mr. Mitch Patten, the director of delegate tracking, was also on a contract and three others I will not name here and now.

I want to say to the minister it is very clear that an entire campaign organization was being run out of the Jules Léger building on the 14th floor in Hull in advance of the leadership campaign and the minister knows that is an improper use of taxpayer funds.

What action is the minister prepared to take to ensure that the taxpayers see recovered funds improperly spent without their consent or permission?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member is totally false in his accusation. I would ask him to read this week's *Maclean's* magazine. He will see that when the Minister of the

Environment got on a bus to go to Sherbrooke he still had not made up his mind whether he was going to announce his candidacy.

The moment he announced his candidacy neither Mr. Ralfe nor Mr. Small had received any remuneration. I have looked into the other members. The hon. member is totally and absolutely false and irresponsible in his accusations.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. What we are talking about here is not what people do in their spare time. We are talking about people getting untendered contracts from this government against Treasury Board rules and then going on, if not at the same time, to work in the leadership campaign. That is the issue.

• (1435 )

Will the Prime Minister, in the last few days that he is in office, for once stand on behalf of the people of Canada rather than on behalf of Tory leadership hopefuls?

**Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons):** What I would like to see in the last few days of this Parliament is the hon. member acting responsibly. He keeps making the totally false accusation that Treasury Board guidelines were violated. They were not.

He knows that Mr. Small's contract was in respect of the Rio summit and that as a result of the work he did there the post-summit activities were also contacted to him. He knows that in fact as soon as he assumed the position with Mr. Charest's campaign he ceased receiving any remuneration from the government. He also knows if he is being fair and honest, that Mr. Charest himself did not know until virtually hours before his own announcement.

To suggest that the guidelines were broken is a totally false accusation. To suggest there is something inappropriate here is to suggest there is something wrong with that hon. member's mind.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Madam Speaker, only a week ago today the Prime Minister made similar accusations against me. The person about whom he had to retract later on was forced to resign.