

Oral Questions

What is the minister prepared to do now to stop this harassment and protect women members of the military?

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister Responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise my hon. colleague that indeed there is a very good policy in place within the Department of National Defence dealing both with the military side and the civilian side.

Of course a policy is only as good as the way in which it is implemented. That is why the chief of the defence staff has taken this issue very seriously. We have incorporated into all of our training exercises for our base commanders just as recently as two weeks ago further information and education on how to provide harassment-free work places. This will be ongoing and every effort is being made to educate individuals about their rights as well as supervisors about their responsibilities to deal with the issue effectively.

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• (1440)

THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

The government's constitutional plan seems far from certain. While the minister has refused to declare which of the many options he and the government prefer in order to overcome the current impasse, the clerk of the Privy Council is now embarking on a national tour of provincial capitals while the associate clerk is advocating a constitution based on the Belgian model, which would have serious repercussions for our national government role as well as linguistic rights.

I ask the minister quite simply: What is the government's constitutional blueprint and what is the government's action plan that will guide its deliberation in the next and important few days?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the House knows, we have made considerable progress on a Canada round of negotiations.

We have progress yet to make on four major issues. One is the Senate. A second relates to the amending formula. A third is to ensure that we have means to bring down barriers to trade in Canada. A fourth is to ensure there is agreement on a package relating to aboriginal Canadians.

At my instruction, the clerk of the Privy Council and other senior officials are meeting today in Halifax with senior officials of the Governments of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

They will meet in Calgary tomorrow with senior officials of the Governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and later I believe in Ontario with the Government of Ontario, not to negotiate but to determine where people are on each of those major points.

Then the Prime Minister and I, tomorrow night probably, will come to a view as to the next step we would recommend in this constitutional process. We very much hope that it will be possible for us to achieve agreement among governments.

That is our goal. That is what we are seeking to do. If we can get co-operation from enough governments across the country, as I hope we can, that is the way we will proceed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the same minister.

I think Parliament has a right to know exactly what the federal government's plans are, and it expects the government to be clear about legislation that is very important to all Canadians.

Why will the minister not reveal the next stage in the federal government's plan? Will there be a First Ministers' Conference? Will Parliament be recalled to consider a new agreement or a referendum? Does this government really know when we can expect an end to this constitutional dilemma?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think a number of things are clear. First of all, sometime after mid-July, the Government of Quebec wants to start public hearings and consideration by the committee which is to examine what the Quebec