

Oral Questions

The parole board released Panacui even though they acknowledged: "You are serving a very long sentence for a very violent crime and drug addiction was a factor in your criminal lifestyle".

Why is the minister allowing the parole board to release violent criminals and jeopardize the safety of Canadians?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the law passed by Parliament creating the parole board set it up as an independent organization, an administrative tribunal operating at arm's length from the government. The law I referred to does not give the Solicitor General of Canada any authority to intervene in the decisions of the parole board.

However, I will be happy to make sure the hon. member's concerns are brought to the attention of the board.

Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, another case in point. Dwayne Archie Johnson, who in 1970 abducted, beat and eventually stabbed Helen Betty Osborne 56 times before he left her body in a ditch, was convicted of second degree murder and in 1986 sentenced to imprisonment for life with no chance of parole for 10 years.

In March of this year he was granted day parole after serving seven years of his sentence. According to section 135 of the corrections act, the minister can direct the commissioner of the parole board to review and revoke parole.

• (1155)

When will the minister intervene against violent killers or will he continue to jeopardize the safety of Canadians by not acting at all?

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would be very happy to carry out the duties given to me by Parliament.

It is my understanding that the parole board operates at arm's length from government and from parliamentarians. Having said that, I will be happy to review the act and see what should and could be done under the terms of the law passed by Parliament.

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[Translation]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

On three fundamental elements, namely the right of veto, a distinct society and respect of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction, there is an increasingly marked contradiction between the positions of the no committee and of the federal government.

Quebecers have a right to know whether the federal government fully endorses the position given in the brochure of the director general of elections distributed throughout Quebec with respect to the right of veto, a distinct society and respect of Quebec's areas of jurisdiction.

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no contradiction whatsoever between the policy adopted by the committee for the no and that of the government of Canada. This is a written document in which there is a full partnership. Where the contradictions lie, however, is in the policy of the Leader of the Opposition, who claims one day that he will negotiate Canadian citizenship and the next day Quebec citizenship.

One of them says he wants to negotiate with Canada, the other says what he wants is a country. Where the glaring contradictions lie is with the policies of the separatists, who do not want to tell Quebecers the truth. I know that Quebecers are not fools and they will certainly understand that the question on October 30 is yes or no for the separation of Quebec, and the answer will be no.

Mr. Roger Pomerleau (Anjou—Rivière-des-Prairies, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is a simple one. We are 11 days from referendum day. Does the Prime Minister endorse all of the recommendations of the committee for the no in this brochure, or does he not?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister himself has stated that he had a hand in these documents and endorses them fully. The issue about contradictions lies not with the document of the no side, but with the separatists themselves, who are going all around Quebec claiming that they want to negotiate something with Canada while at the same time, as they finally admitted yesterday, really wanting a separate country. They want nothing to do with Canada, they want Quebec passports, Quebec citizenship, and that is the choice that will be made clearly on October 30 by Quebecers, when they say no to the separation of Quebec from Canada.

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[English]

FISHERIES

Mr. Mike Scott (Skeena, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

When the Atlantic groundfishery was announced last year, \$300 million was allocated for capacity reduction. To date