

[English]

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Elwin Hermanson (Kindersley—Lloydminster, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister of agriculture is having trouble with mastering at least one of the three r's, namely writing.

This past August I had the opportunity to join several farmers touring an area around Lloydminster damaged by the drought. The farmers had asked me to forward their concerns to the minister regarding their grave situation. My letter dated August 18, 1995 read in part: "They have difficult and immediate decisions to make so it is imperative that your department promptly address the concerns raised by these farmers". It has been two months and the minister has failed even to acknowledge receiving my letter, let alone to respond to it and to the farmers affected.

I have also forwarded concerns to the minister about the Crow benefit from alfalfa producers in the dehydrated alfalfa industry. Guess what? There has been no response.

I have heard from a number of my constituents that the minister's office has not responded to their letters as well. Even farm organizations complain to me that they have not heard from the minister when they write.

Can the minister not write, or is the minister's office too busy trying to put out fires with the Crow buyout and the safety net programs that there is no time to respond to the farmers' concerns?

* * *

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, many times in the House by legislative and constitutional means members have presented laws by example to get people to recognize that we should have sexual equality in the country. Yet, right outside these doors during the months of August and September, a female engineer was harassed off the job by her subcontractor. We did not see any reaction in the House, or very little. Two hundred and ninety-five of us let this happen.

• (1110)

We did see to their credit her fellow workers put everything on the line. They walked off the job in protest leaving \$165,000 worth of back pay, \$15,000 or \$18,000 worth of equipment here on the site, which public works will not let them take off.

We should be involved directly. This is our jurisdiction. This is happening under our eyes with our feet—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Manicouagan.

[Translation]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, not only is the no side unable to agree on the country that it would offer to Quebecers, but federal ministers, including the Prime Minister, make contradictory statements regarding the right of veto and the notion of distinct society.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs recognizes the right of veto, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs only sees it as a general principle, while the Prime Minister says that the decision does not rest with him, but with the other provinces.

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs even admits that he has trouble interpreting the text written by the no side in the brochure. This is quite something.

The fact is that Daniel Johnson and the Prime Minister only agree on one thing: make all those who seek changes in Quebec pay dearly. This is their common goal. As for the rest, they only propose to wait until 1997, when the constitutional tango will start all over again.

* * *

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Mauril Bélanger (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the closer we get to October 30, the more difficult it becomes for the separatists to hide their true intentions.

First, the Bloc Québécois leader was forced to define the meaning of a yes vote when he met with the editorial team of *La Presse*. He said: "To vote yes is to ensure that Quebec becomes inexorably sovereign, regardless of whether or not there is a partnership".

Yesterday, in Rivière-du-Loup, the Bloc leader was very clear when he said: "Let us not forget that the mandate sought by Mr. Parizeau's government and by sovereignists is a mandate to achieve Quebec's sovereignty, following which they will try to negotiate a partnership agreement".

The project of the PQ and its associates seeks only one purpose: to separate Quebec from Canada and make it a foreign country.

Quebecers have always been opposed to separation and, on October 30, they will once again say no to that project.

* * *

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa—Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc leader seems to be having increasing difficulty in keeping secrets.