

*Oral Questions***MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE**

As to whether or not Canada will take part in the rapid reaction force, again that will be the Prime Minister's decision. He will announce that in due course.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence.

As the minister mentioned, the heads of state at the G-7 Summit will be discussing the situation in Bosnia. However, yesterday in Washington, French President Jacques Chirac expressed his regret at the length of time it was taking to set up the rapid reaction force in Bosnia. Here, on the other hand, we still do not know whether Canada will be part of the force or not.

Would the Minister of National Defence tell us whether or not Canada will participate directly in the establishment of the rapid reaction force as France and Great Britain have proposed?

**Hon. David Michael Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already answered that question.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Jacob (Charlesbourg, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think either the minister or the Prime Minister have ever answered this question. They have said they will discuss the matter at the G-7 summit, and again we have the same response.

How can the government not commit to participating in the rapid reaction force—because we have still not had an answer—and thus abdicate its responsibility to further protect the safety of the peacekeepers in Bosnia at a time when many members of the large contingent of Canadian peacekeepers are in very precarious situations?

[English]

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government is certainly not abdicating its responsibilities.

We have taken measures in the last number of months to ensure that our forces take all necessary precautions, as I described in reply to the earlier question, especially increased fortifications at our base in Visoko, especially increased protection for our troops, and a number of other things that will help them do their duties.

The question of the rapid reaction force was an initiative that we support. It is an initiative that will largely be manned by British and French forces. Certainly it is the desire of the NATO allies that Canada participate. We want to make sure before we give our concurrence that we are fully satisfied with the way the force will be deployed. Those answers will be coming shortly.

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the government House leader said that he did not accept the premise of our questions about the heritage minister's violation of the federal code of ethics. We are not dealing with assumptions, conjectures and speculation here. We are dealing with the facts.

It is a fact that the heritage minister targeted departmental clients for political donations. It is a fact that everyone who attended that dinner received a government contract or appointment. It is a fact that the minister blatantly broke section 23 of the government's own code of conduct.

What does it take for the Prime Minister to remove a minister guilty of unethical behaviour? A criminal conviction?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental flaw in the hon. member's question because on the public face of information available it is not based on fact. There is no information I am aware of to say that the minister personally invited people to the dinner but rather that he simply attended the dinner. It is quite proper for ministers and members of all parties to attend fundraising dinners. It is part of the normal political process in the country and I am informed that the donations were properly recorded.

• (1425)

I can ask the hon. member a question. Why is she asking questions that do not appear to be based on facts?

**Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear the minister attended and he is personally responsible for the contracts that go out under his signature.

The government's excuses and its carefully crafted damage control lines are certainly wearing thin. The heritage minister was clearly in the wrong. The government is making matters worse by refusing to release the full list of all the people who were invited to the minister's dinner, the full list of those who actually sent contributions, and the full list of donors who have received heritage contracts or appointments, not just giving donations. Trying to bury this information in Elections Canada documents will not make it go away.

I have a supplementary question. If the government does not have anything to hide, why is it hiding behind these ludicrous answers? When will it make all the list public?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear from public information that this dinner was not organized by the government and the invitations were not sent by the minister or the government. These are not materials within the control of the government, except to the extent that they are