

Oral Questions

is not good in the Canadian forces, he is not doing anything to help the morale by suggesting that Canadian forces are not capable of doing what their government asks of them.

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[Translation]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In the brochure distributed to every Quebec household by the director general of elections, the no committee says that the Quebec government must have full power in the fields which fall under its jurisdiction.

Will the Prime Minister admit that, far from putting an end to the federal spending power in fields of provincial jurisdiction, Bill C-96, which deals with manpower training and education, is an even greater interference in these sectors?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, I want to make sure that the Canadian constitution is complied with. Sometimes, there are sectors in which our respective jurisdictions have a bearing on one another. The spending power has been in our constitution since 1867 and, at this point in time, we cannot really abuse it, since we have little money.

• (1440)

Mrs. Pauline Picard (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how does the Prime Minister intend to convince Quebecers of the virtues of administrative arrangements when even his federalist ally, Daniel Johnson, and his labour minister have rejected the administrative agreement on labour, calling it a cheap arrangement?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has it wrong. It was the present minister of employment, Madam Harel. When I wrote to the ministry offering specifically to transfer institutional training to the province of Quebec, as with other provinces, we received absolutely no response. It would be very useful for the hon. member to check her facts.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, a landmark agreement on harmonizing environmental issues is floundering.

The minister has blamed the provinces, especially Alberta. According to a recent CCME publication, she knows the federal government walked out, not the provinces, contrary to what she said.

Will the minister now admit she stalled this process and apologize to the provinces?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the difference between the member for Beaver River and me is I was at the meeting.

I did not pinch a transcript and then claim it was something else. In front of at least 10 witnesses I offered to publish 10 of the 11 indexes to the public the day after that meeting. The offer was turned down by Mr. Ty Lund.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, regardless of who did what, we need to get on with this.

This needs to move forward, not backward. Let us not cast aspersions and blame. Let us move forward. This process is being totally held up. On August 25 all the premiers with the exception of the Quebec premier urged the Prime Minister to tell the Minister of the Environment to meet with her counterparts and get on with this draft agreement.

Next Monday the minister will meet with these counterparts again in Whitehorse. Will she stay at the meeting and will she commit to producing a draft agreement and get on with it?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am perfectly prepared to restate the commitment I made in Haines Junction. I hope the minister of the environment for Alberta will be open enough to begin the public discussion. The federal government asked very early in this process for public participation. That was turned down by the province of Alberta.

It is also interesting that the member for Beaver River said all the provinces with the exception of Quebec. She will know very well there was a formal letter written by the province of Quebec asking the CCME not to take action on that initiative at that meeting, a letter which conveniently her minister, Mr. Lund, chooses to ignore.

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[Translation]

REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the same document distributed by the director general of elections, the no side says that we must continue to reduce duplication.

Does the Prime Minister recognize that his government's decision to establish the human resources investment fund