

Oral Questions

ourselves to reducing expenditures and doing away with or reducing some programs, it was difficult for the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to offer several programs since in fact we have only two major ones. We decided to do away with the advisory council to the minister on development policies because over the last three years it has made a tremendous number of suggestions to us so that we probably have more work cut out for us for the next two or three years than we can possibly do in order to implement their proposals. Besides, after a good many discussions with the members of the council, I agreed that their services having really been of considerable help, it would therefore be a good idea to set up, in the very near future, a system of consultations to be put in place over coming months or in the next few years.

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● (1430)

[English]

NATIONAL UNITY

MINISTER'S REMARKS ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH QUEBEC

Miss Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. It concerns an article in the current issue of *Reader's Digest* written by Ron Lebel, where the minister is quoted as saying:

Four-fifths of the Parti Québécois program can be implemented within the federal system and the remaining fifth can be negotiated.

In order to be precise, I ask the minister specifically if the first article in the Parti Québécois program, that is, to "obtain political sovereignty for Quebec by democratic means and to propose to Canada a mutually advantageous economic association," is part of the four-fifths that the minister states can be implemented, or is it part of the one-fifth that he feels can be negotiated?

Mr. Speaker: The minister, I am sure, is anxious to answer the question. However, it seems to me that the question is not directed to him in his capacity as Minister of Justice but, rather, in some political responsibility.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question may be for him in his capacity as a member of the House of Commons, or in his geographic capacity, but questions in the House of Commons would have to relate to his responsibility as Minister of Justice.

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, my question was asked in the context of constitutional change.

Mr. Clark: For which he is responsible.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I have not read the particular article. However, I can say to the hon. lady that the Minister of Justice, this government and this party have always had a consistent constitutional policy in this

[Mr. Lessard.]

regard and we have not attempted to make any flip-flop like the hon lady's party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Answer the question.

Mr. Lalonde: The answer to the question is very clear, simple and categorical, that this party, this government and myself will not negotiate sovereignty association—period.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Since the article was in the context of the minister stating that federalism is much more flexible than the Quebec government claims, with regard to the four-fifths and one-fifth statement that he made, could he say whether or not the proposal in the Parti Québécois platform, in its program to start proceedings immediately to accede to independence by proposing a law asking Ottawa to return to Quebec all the powers except those delegated to common organisms, is among the things the minister considers to be four-fifths implemented in the system of federalism, or is it in the one-fifth that he is prepared to negotiate?

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, this government has stated again its position quite clearly. We have only two conditions in the renewal of the Canadian federation: one, that it be made within the federal system; two, that there be a charter of rights guaranteeing individual rights.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lalonde: This government has no illusion, contrary to some members on the other side, that sovereignty association is some kind of renewed federalism, as the well-known hon. member from the other side has stated.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Sit down.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I gather these fellows are clamouring to get into my fund-raising dinners. It is too bad nobody will go to theirs.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: We are well acquainted with the Minister of Justice's and the government's claim that they are always misquoted when they get into trouble. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce did that when he was quoted as saying that housing was a luxury according to the Liberal party.

Let me come back to the Minister of Justice. He is now saying that he did not say what he said.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!