

Oral Questions

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we hope they will continue to sponsor all of these good works. It is absolutely not our intention to ask tobacco companies to stop supporting these events. It is, however, very definitely our intention to ensure that they do not use these events to advertise, since, after all, 40,000 Canadians die every year from smoking.

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

Since the minister has just announced she will come down hard on funding for major cultural events, what does the Minister of Canadian Heritage intend to do to ensure the survival and financial well-being of these events?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we said no such thing.

I am very surprised, however, to see the health critic defending the tobacco companies so vigorously. Now I have seen everything.

It is time you got a new health critic.

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• (1445)

LASER WEAPON SYSTEMS

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

A new weapon will soon surface on the battlefield: the antipersonnel laser. These portable lasers have a scanning capability thanks to an invisible light beam with a range of several kilometres; they can irreversibly damage people's retinas and even cause blindness.

What is the Government of Canada's position on the use of laser weapon systems?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform this House that Canada has never produced or even used these laser weapons. Canada and other countries addressed this issue as part of the UN discussions on the use of conventional arms in order to provide clarification and ban the use of laser weapons. I can assure this House that Canada supports the measures being taken to prevent the use of these weapons.

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[English]

RIGHTS OF GRANDPARENTS

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

In light of the fact that the justice committee did not ratify Bill C-232 on December 7 and thereby did not support grandparents'

right to ask the court for continuous access to their grandchildren, would the Prime Minister explain what he intends to do to support and strengthen families in Canada?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the principle of the government to foster family life and to preserve family values. It is for that reason the justice committee decided it was not the responsibility of the federal government to support the private members' bill she brought forward. Not that there were not a lot of good ideas in what she was trying to do, but it is primarily a provincial responsibility.

Mrs. Daphne Jennings (Mission—Coquitlam, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I must disagree, although I thank the parliamentary secretary for his answer.

I would really like an answer from the Prime Minister. Does he realize that a child's right of access to his or her family has been recognized in the convention of the child of the United Nations in 1989 and accepted by Canada in 1991? Legislation similar to this is in place now in Great Britain, the United States and Quebec.

What will the Prime Minister tell Canadian grandchildren who face yet another Christmas without their grandparents?

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is well aware of the role of the United Nations in child care and the government's support of that role.

It is also well aware of the important need for child care. That is why the Minister of Human Resources Development brought in a multi-million dollar child care program today.

In the interest of fostering relationships with the grandparents and their grandchildren, the Minister of Justice has undertaken to look at the subject matter the hon. member brought forward to see if something can be done which would meet some of the objectives she has mentioned in the House and before committee.

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[Translation]

SATELLITE DISHES

Mr. Réjean Lefebvre (Champlain, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry.

Thousands of consumers in Quebec and Canada are angry because their expensive satellite dishes that receive TV signals have now become obsolete as a result of inadequate regulations and technological changes.

Since the minister helplessly watched the development of an unregulated market without informing consumers of the risks involved in buying these satellite dishes, what steps will he take today to address this problem?