

Oral Questions

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the government is quite aware of the report to which my hon. friend refers.

In fact I met as well with the minister of justice of Manitoba to discuss the federal report. At the present time the recommendations in the report are being studied by the RCMP. I can assure my hon. friend that this is not a matter where we are delaying in any way.

We want to provide a thoughtful and thorough response to this very important inquiry.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister, the Solicitor General.

It is hard to believe that after three months and 150 recommendations on one of the most serious criminal issues and one of the most serious social issues in this country the minister cannot find one recommendation to start with.

When will this government begin to deal with these very serious problems?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I think the various efforts by the government to deal with this very serious problem have been alluded to today in previous answers.

I can assure my friend that the 150 recommendations are to be taken seriously. We are not in a mood to delay on this important issue. They are being taken seriously. The government will provide a response when the matter is brought forward.

We can only respond to the recommendations that are ours. It is a report made in the purview of the minister of justice of the province of Manitoba. Naturally we want to take instruction from that report and react to as many recommendations as we can.

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MEDICARE

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister of health.

The federal government's response on Thursday to the recommendations of the report of the standing committee on health has been disappointing, particularly at a time when Canadians are looking for strong reasons to remain as part of a federal Canada.

• (1450)

Could the minister tell the House why his government supports the recommendations of the Liberal and Conservative committee members for the wholesale renegotiation of medicare at a time when Canadians are saying very clearly that they want national medicare with national standards and they do not want Bill C-20 and the continued federal cutbacks to financing of medicare?

Some hon. members: Order, order.

Mr. Speaker: I listened to the whole question because I did not want to intervene too quickly, but I think that question goes right into the workings of the committee and I think it is out of order.

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THE CONSTITUTION

Mr. David Bjornson (Selkirk—Red River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Back since September in my community we have had a group of volunteers, 20-odd people who have been meeting, discussing and holding public forums on constitutional proposals.

In the last while the work plan of the joint House and Senate parliamentary committee has changed and there has been a creation of constitutional conferences.

I am wondering if the minister could tell the House the status of these constitutional conferences and what reflection it will have on the small community based committees.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Privy Council and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to indicate today that there will be five constitutional conferences on consecutive weekends in cities across Canada starting on January 17 in Halifax, sponsored by a number of independent institutes in the country: the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, the Canada West Foundation, the C. D. Howe Institute, the Institute for Research into Public Policy and the Niagara Institute.

Those conferences will call together experts plus, through a process worked out with the institutes, an effective representation of the general public. That will allow us to continue the process of building consensus on improvements for the proposals brought forward and tabled by the Prime Minister in September.