

Oral Questions

project at Pearson International Airport, making it the kind of crown jewel of our air system it should be.

Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I have never questioned the right of the government to cancel the Pearson contract. With that right goes an obligation to the Canadian taxpayer to show the need for the action, the cost of the action and where the government will get the money for an alternative.

Using the government's own figures, cancellation will cost a minimum of \$500 million if the rule of law is followed and the crown construction option will cost another billion.

Where will the government get this \$1.5 billion not in the Liberal's latest budget?

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has come directly to the point with his supplementary question.

There is no question that if we continue the process that some are on at this point, as the hon. member says, it could cost Canadian taxpayers \$500 million without a nail being driven or an inch of asphalt being laid.

The point is the Government of Canada has made known its position. We are prepared to pay up to \$30 million for reasonable out of pocket expenses to compensate those people who were involved in the process, many of them third party not directly involved in the process that led to the granting of that final contract.

The difficulty with the Reform Party is as usual it wants its cake and wants to eat it too. That is not the way it works in the real world.

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ILLITERACY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Today the book by Ben Wicks, "Born to Read", was launched on Parliament Hill, reminding us all of how important and how serious the problem of illiteracy is Canada. However, it is not evident by the actions of the government that it takes this seriously.

There are some seven million people in Canada who have difficulty or extreme difficulty reading. Because national literacy groups are still on year to year funding and not core funding it is very difficult to plan.

Will the Prime Minister comment on this important day and commit to allowing literacy groups to have long term funding, not on a year to year basis to solve this problem?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, education is more a problem for provincial governments but we have national programs to help.

There was a specific problem coming from the federal government for that program which is financed on a yearly basis. Everybody knows the government is facing some difficult budgetary problems. I will look into the matter and see what can be done.

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Prime Minister will agree that having seven million citizens who have difficulty or extreme difficulty in the every day tasks of literacy is hindering this country's economic and social development.

Will he commit to long term funding and a serious commitment by the government to attacking the issue of illiteracy?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of the work we have given to the Minister of Human Resources Development in the reform of unemployment insurance and social programs is for him to review this in the next months to come. There will be an element to make sure that all Canadian citizens can benefit from our policy so that training and gaining abilities in learning is key to finding jobs in our society.

It will be part of the discussions we will have in the House when the reform of the social programs and transfer programs to the provinces will be discussed. The hon. leader of the NDP will have a chance to comment at that time.

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EDUCATION

Mr. Harold Culbert (Carleton—Charlotte, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

As of this week, many college and university students will be returning to their homes throughout Carleton—Charlotte to begin their search for needed summer employment so they may obtain the necessary funds to return to school this fall.

What actions are being taken by the government to address this important employment opportunity for the youth of our communities?

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in keeping with the red book commitment, young people are a priority for the government. We have taken measures to give them opportunities to learn some very valuable skills.

I am happy to announce, as I did three weeks ago in the city of Vaughan, that the overall budget for youth employment and services has been increased by \$43 million even during this fiscal restraining time. This speaks volumes for the type of commitment that we as a government have toward our young people.