

When will this government take a stand for fairness?

Mr. Lee Richardson (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member is also aware, because the question has been previously answered in the House, that in 1988 the former Minister of Transport came to an agreement with the airline industry regarding the protection of current employees' wages and fringe benefits for rehired employees.

Transport officials are currently looking at the awarding of the new contract to ensure that the previous commitments are respected.

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[Translation]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. When granting student loans for post-secondary education, the government still uses data that were collected in 1984, in other words, data that are already seven years old. This practice or policy, if you prefer, is preventing thousand of students from receiving millions of dollars in financial assistance. Why is the government still using this obsolete information? Why does it continue to give students this kind of insensitive treatment which prevents them from pursuing an education that will prepare them for good jobs later on?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Madam Speaker, the government could not agree more that a thorough review of the student loans system is necessary. I have said so many times in the House, and I have said so to the hon. member. The program was started 27 years ago and has not been changed since then. However, I can inform the hon. member today that we are very close to tabling a completely revised version of the student loans system that will meet the primary objective of the program, which is to help students in need to finish their education and become full-fledged Canadian citizens.

[English]

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Oral Questions

The minister will know that the Assembly of First Nations met in Ottawa this week and it has completed a report entitled *Tradition and Education: Towards a Vision of Our Future* which includes a declaration of First Nations jurisdiction over education.

As well, in 1990, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development contracted with Mr. Jim McPherson, Dean of Osgoode Hall, to research jurisdictional issues in native education.

Is the minister aware of the contents of the first report, and is the minister prepared to tell this House when he will table this second report, this study which he has had since September of this year?

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Madam Speaker, I am not aware of the content of the report or the recommendations that might result therefrom. When my officials have completed the analysis of the report I will be happy to review it and bring it forward at the appropriate time.

I should say that the federal government is fully committed to devolving education responsibility to First Nations. In fact, we have an impressive track record of turning over to First Nations leadership both at the primary and secondary levels, as well as at the post-secondary level the responsibility for education administration.

• (1200)

I signed an agreement with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs on an innovative five-year program of education research. We now have a situation where 87 per cent of the post-secondary funding available to aboriginal students is administered by Indian administrative organizations. Most schools are Indian administered and the priorities are set by native leadership.

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MANITOBA ECONOMY

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

The minister is aware that the Manitoba economic indicators are all negative. They are all in decline. For example, in investment, Manitoba ranks eight out of ten; in retail trade it ranks eight out of ten; in housing starts Manitoba ranks ten out of ten; in building permits Manitoba ranks eight out of ten; and in manufacturing shipments Manitoba ranks ten out of ten.