

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has asked a serious question. Although it is on short notice I will try to present her and the House with some information I just received.

I have in my hand a booklet entitled "Symbols of Canada", published by the Department of Canadian Heritage. On page 5, under the heading "Armorial Bearings", which I understand is another term for coat of arms, it states:

Adopted: By proclamation of King George V on November 21, 1921. On the advice of the Prime Minister of Canada, Her Majesty the Queen approved, on July 12, 1994, that the Royal Arms of Canada be augmented of a ribbon with the motto of the Order of Canada, desiderantes meliorem patriam—

—they desire a better country.

I hope my hon. friend also desires a better country.

**Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, of course I absolutely do want to see all of us build a better Canada, a better future. However, the issue here concerns the embargo until yesterday, December 4, 1995, and that part of my question was not addressed.

• (1500)

If the House of Commons represents a place for all Canadians to come and debate through our membership, I would like to know why we did not have a broad debate in the House of Commons to discuss this very basic simple issue.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I understand it—I will be corrected if I am wrong—this booklet I have was distributed to all members of Parliament and to the public. It was distributed some time ago. It is hardly a secret.

As far as I am aware, while there has been a debate and vote in the House on the Canadian flag and a debate and vote in the House on our national anthem, the matter of the armorial bearings of Canada has been something for decision of Her Majesty the Queen of Canada and not for the House of Commons. I see nothing to criticize the government over the actions of Her Majesty the Queen.

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**CUSTOMS**

**Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

Seniors have come into my office complaining about the long line-ups at customs as they return home for the holidays. By the time they reach customs they are quite tired from their flights. Can the minister tell the House what he is doing to ensure that

seniors and other travellers can move through customs without having to stand in long line-ups?

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that Canada Customs is fully prepared to provide extra services at the border during this holiday season. There is an increase in traffic at this time. A large proportion of the 110 million people who come into Canada come at that time.

Our job is to provide, through extra shifts, part-time workers, and some student customs officers, the best possible service at this time. In addition, this year we will also have at our busiest airports special client service representatives to assist those who may be in trouble.

I think we should recognize that the customs service of Canada is probably the best in the world. They work very hard and long hours during the holiday season protecting this country against illegal weapons, drugs, and other such things. I hope the House will recognize the important work they do, particularly at this time of year.

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**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The last government walked away from the unemployment insurance fund and this government has done nothing to bring itself closer. Would the minister tell us why he thinks he has the moral authority to take another \$1 billion out of the pockets of unemployed Canadians on top of the \$7 billion he took out last year to use to pay down the deficit, which those people made no contribution in creating?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have been through this territory several times, but I would be quite happy to try to repeat it for the understanding of the hon. member.

First, the proposed changes are designed specifically to help create jobs in this country. A large part of that amount goes to re-employment measures, which will enable people to get back to work. The remaining portion goes to help establish a fund to stabilize the premiums.

The hon. member was in this House during the 1990s. He knew what happened when the previous government had to raise the premiums by 95 cents over a period of two years. It threw the market into total havoc. It drove down the economy. It put an extra burden on workers. It destroyed jobs.