

*Oral Questions*

• (1445)

*[Translation]*

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** I wish to ask a supplementary question. Does the minister realize that his reform making family income a condition of eligibility for unemployment insurance will penalize mainly women, reducing them to unacceptable financial dependence on their husbands?

*[English]*

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to look more carefully at the technical paper that was presented. I think it does explain.

First, it points out that under the proposal for a two tier system, 70 per cent of those who receive unemployment insurance would not be affected in any kind of way, but those who receive basic insurance would have the same formula attached. It is only those who are basically using unemployment insurance every year.

This is an important difference. What is really happening and has happened is that 40 per cent of UI users are frequent users. That means it is no longer an insurance program. It has become an income benefit program. Perhaps it is very much needed, perhaps it is very much necessary, but it is no longer based on the fundamental insurance principle. It has become an income benefit program. As the hon. member would know, every income benefit program has some test applied to ensure that those who are very wealthy, those who have a lot of money, do not use the system as it is not supposed to be used.

That is simply the proposal to which we are asking Canadians to respond. I will welcome the hon. member's response to that question.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**Mr. Martin Cauchon (Outremont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. All kinds of false rumours are circulating about social program reform and about the green book which, by the way, is a discussion paper. Some say that the federal government wants to cut up to \$2.3 billion in contributions to post-secondary education. Some even claim that the federal government wants to centralize student loan programs.

Can the Minister of Human Resources Development set the record straight on this?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly true that false rumours are circulating, particularly in publications by the members opposite, about the changes we will make to the post-secondary education system.

First of all, we do not want to cut federal assistance; we want to invest it. As I said earlier, if the status quo was maintained, \$61 billion would be spent on education. But, if the federal proposals are adopted, the combination of transfers, taxes and loans would produce \$70 billion for this period, or an additional \$10 billion for the education fund in Canada.

\* \* \*

*[English]***PRIVATE MEDICAL CLINICS**

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the health minister has challenged Alberta private medical clinics to a showdown at high noon. Alberta's health minister has given me the authority to refute these allegations. Where would the minister suggest we have this debate?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue. I have expressed my concern on numerous occasions. There is no quick solution as the Reform Party would have us believe.

I have been systematically working over this past year to address some of the very serious issues to ensure that Canadians get the kind of care they need when they need it and that we do not create a system that benefits the healthy and wealthy at the expense of the sick and the average Canadian.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I suggest we have this discussion outside in the lobby today. Too busy? Let's do it on "Newsworld". Not ready? Let us debate this in the minister's office with all her bureaucrats—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

• (1450)

**The Speaker:** It is a good thing we left our guns at the door today. The hon. member for Macleod, his question please.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** The straightforward question is this: Is this health minister afraid to debate me on the issue of private medical clinics?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have been talking about health in this House for a year. I am certainly not afraid to talk about health to anyone in our country.

I know exactly where the members of the Reform Party are coming from. It is not the policy of this government, nor is it the policy of this minister.