

Adjournment Debate

All these questions are unanswered. Could the minister answer them directly tonight, without referring me to *Hansard* this time?

[English]

Ms. Albina Guarnieri (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Canadian Heritage I am pleased to respond to the question raised by the member for Rimouski—Témiscouata on the appointment of the new president of the CBC.

[Translation]

As the minister said, the selection process for the new president of the CBC was very transparent. On November 13, 1993, a call for candidacies was printed in *The Canada Gazette*, and all interested candidates had the opportunity to apply for the position. Also, many people were consulted on this issue.

The CBC needed someone with experience who knew the nuts and bolts of this institution and was ready to go into action immediately. Mr. Manera is such a person. He has been working for the corporation since 1985, holding the positions of senior vice-president, Resources and Administration, and more recently, acting president.

The appointment of the new president comes with a series of measures the government has undertaken to allow the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to assume its own destiny, one of the commitments the Liberals included in the red book.

[English]

The appointment of Mr. Manera and the series of measures announced will assist the CBC in reinforcing its role as public broadcaster and as a national institution serving the Canadian public.

[Translation]

Of all our cultural institutions, the CBC is undoubtedly the one which plays the most significant role in defining our national identity.

The broadcasting industry is undergoing massive changes, and it was imperative that we appoint a president capable of dealing with the financial problems of the Corporation and of reasserting loud and clear the role of the CBC as a public broadcaster serving the Canadian public. That is exactly what we have done, and an announcement on this issue was made this morning.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Gaston Leroux (Richmond—Wolfe): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, the minister of Human Resources Development ended his answer to my question on a potential Unemployment Insurance costs increase by inviting the Official Opposition to co-operate with him in a thorough examination of social pro-

grammes, and thus study the question of government's social expenditures as a whole.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the minister of Human Resources Development that we should also take a look at the evolution of certain of our social policies, and I am particularly referring to the lack of a family oriented policy in Canada, since 1994 year is the International Year of the Family.

With the emergence of a certain form of neoliberalism in the eighties, a new view of family responsibility has come to the fore; it has now become an individual responsibility, thus freeing society from a seemingly embarrassing load.

• (1825)

Federal social policies are often based on a concept of the family where the husband is the only wage earner. Thus, we have a married exemption in our tax system. In our old age security plan, the wife's benefits are cut in half when her husband dies, but if the wife dies, her husband keeps all his benefits.

As a result of complex changes in the tax system and the deindexation of family and child benefits, a Senate committee says that, from 1986 to 1991, the federal government grabbed \$3.5 billion out of the family and child benefits program. A Quebec family with two children and an income of \$70,000 a year pays as much tax as a childless family with the same income.

Thus, a couple who chooses to invest in a pension plan will have generous tax deductions, but if it prefers to invest in the future of the Quebec nation by having children, it has to fend for itself without any help from Revenue Canada.

This lack of family oriented policies at the federal level carries tragic consequences. In 1991, the number of children depending on food banks in Quebec and Canada was estimated at 700,000. One year later, it was 900,000. Many teachers throughout our school system complain that they are now social workers because of a sharp deterioration in family life and because of the number of children they look after.

The following case shows the great inconsistency of federal family-oriented policies. In Toronto, a young mother, owner of a small business with nine employees, had to be on her job in her business two days only after having a baby. That person contributes to plans insuring a significant percentage of her employees' salaries when they are on maternity leave, but nothing in the social policies of the federal government provides for maternity leave for that small business owner. Such a situation is unacceptable.

The establishment of a universal day care program, maternity leave and special leave granted to mothers to provide care to a sick child are but a few of the issues that have to be debated in initiating a true reform of social programs, and especially the establishment of family oriented policy.