

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to assist the hon. member in giving him information that he clearly does not possess.

Last Monday I announced a major employment enhancement program that will affect the Atlantic region, Quebec and other provinces. In Quebec alone we will be adding an additional \$28 million which will be used for people who are facing difficulty getting employment, those who are having trouble getting full weeks, offering a number of options and choices in training and new employment.

It demonstrates once again for the hon. member and his colleagues that this is a government that is very sensitive to the concerns of all working people, particularly those in the resource industries. That is why we made the announcement we did.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Bernier (Gaspé): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Human Resources Development did not understand the question. Does the minister admit that he acted without taking into account the constraints imposed by his colleague, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and will he recognize that the plight of lobster fishermen reflects the spirit of his reform, which is to eliminate the unemployed instead of eliminating unemployment?

[English]

Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that we on this side are trying to understand the proposition of the member opposite.

Is the member saying that if a section of the fishery lasts 24 weeks, the qualifying period for unemployment insurance ought to be 24 weeks; if another section lasts 12 weeks, the qualifying period ought to be 12 weeks; however, if another section lasts only two or three weeks, the qualifying period should be two or three weeks; in the case of 40,000 people displaced because of resource loss, the qualifying period ought to be zero weeks?

If that is the position of the Bloc Québécois, it should come forward and say it cleanly and clearly. Let me tell those members, it is foolish.

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JOSÉ MENDOZA

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, last year a government official advised Tasha Peirson to stay a sexual assault charge against José Mendoza in exchange for his deportation.

It was the government's policies that then allowed Mendoza back into the country and reapply for refugee status. It is the government that is paying for the process that Mr. Mendoza is using to stay in Canada. Yesterday it was a government official who admitted that the immigration department was responsible for his escape.

I ask the Prime Minister, since it is the federal government that has been responsible for the mishandling of this case from start to finish, what responsibility will the government now assume for the safety and shattered lives of Mr. Mendoza's victims?

● (1425)

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who is out of the country on official business, I would like to tell the leader of the Reform Party that the minister gave a detailed answer to the question yesterday.

Let me repeat for the benefit of the Reform Party and the House that the Federal Court made a decision in this case and the minister concurred with that decision. As the hon. member knows, the minister did everything possible under the law to protect the public in this case. Furthermore—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Gagliano: Mr. Speaker, the Reform Party is not interested in trying to find out the truth and the answer.

We cannot discredit the whole immigration system for one case like the Reform Party is doing. There is a Canada-wide arrest warrant for the individual in question. Once he is apprehended, we will be proceeding in due course.

The Speaker: Colleagues, I would appeal to you for short questions and short answers.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, this is not just one case. It is typical of many cases and the issue deserves an answer from the Prime Minister.

The federal government has spent over a quarter of a million dollars supporting the so-called right of Mr. Mendoza to drag out his stay in Canada. Now the privacy commissioner has launched a taxpayer funded inquiry to determine whether Mr. Mendoza's right to privacy has been infringed upon by immigration officials, the media and the member for Fraser Valley West.

I ask the Prime Minister, compared with the hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on Mr. Mendoza's behalf, how much is being spent to repair the lives of Mr. Mendoza's victims.

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat the answer the minister gave yesterday and the answer I just gave. There is a