

Oral Questions

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question is yes. The answer to the second part is no.

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[Translation]

ACTION PLAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, after being told last Friday that Quebec's refusal to take part in the federal-provincial conference on social programs reform was one of the main reasons that had prompted the Minister of Human Resources Development to cancel the conference, the minister went ahead and announced his own youth program.

Does the minister recognize that his six-point strategy is the work of civil servants working in isolation here, in Ottawa, without regard for provincial areas of responsibility, the consensus in Quebec on the matter and the waste of public money due to extensive duplication at present?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member said is incorrect. A meeting was held about a month ago, at which time we discussed all of these youth initiatives with the provincial ministers. A consultation process was also established at that time. So, what the hon. member is saying is wrong and I ask him to apologize.

● (1435)

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, before introducing several new youth programs, would the minister not agree to say that Quebec already administers several programs in that particular area, including the Volunteer Youth Action Program? Did the minister make a point, before taking such actions, of calculating the exact cost of the overlap he is creating with his new program?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, there are over 400,000 young people in this country without employment.

It would seem to me that any effort, whether it is by local governments, provincial governments or the federal government to help those people should be welcomed, not attacked.

We have talked to the provinces. We have worked out ways in which we would work in co-operation to make sure there is no overlap. The program we produced on Friday is a national program that affects Canadians from one part of the country to

the other. It allows young people to travel from one part of the country to the other to see what a great country we really have.

That is why it is so different from programs offered exclusively by provinces. It is a national program with national objectives with a national perspective in mind.

If the hon. member was not representing the kind of party and ideology that he is, he would be one of the first to applaud our attempts to work with the provinces to help young people.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister in his concern for public safety must be aware that there are approximately 1,000 criminals facing deportation currently free on the streets of Toronto. Not only that but there are another 400 prisoners about to be released who have deportation warrants pending against them.

People in Toronto and across the country are upset and concerned about safety in their streets. What is the Prime Minister going to do to ensure that these criminals are deported immediately upon their release from prison?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, first of all the reports are incorrect.

There are not 400 prisoners currently. There are 200. They are in the prisons and in the jails at this time serving out their sentences. At the end of the service of their sentences due process and the immigration department will ensure that they are returned to their countries of origin.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

One of the reasons for this backlog in deportations is the shortage of deportation officers. I understand there are about 24,000 deportation orders across the country that are unable to be acted upon.

Can the Prime Minister or the parliamentary secretary for immigration explain why the immigration minister is not reducing government red tape but instead is laying off a third of the front line deportation officers in Toronto?

Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I again assure the hon. member that the immigration department is following the law of the land and following due process, that the number of people to be deported will be handled by the minister and by the department in due course and the hon. member should not worry.