

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. René Laurin (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since the President of the Treasury Board is now aware of the fact, could he explain why the government is preparing to spend \$137 million on a new compensation system without taking the elementary precaution of doing a cost-benefit analysis?

[English]

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, anything that we invest taxpayers' dollars in we do so carefully. We do so understanding what the return is. We use new technologies all the time.

In the use of those new technologies we are quite clear that there will be a recovery, there will be a pay back to the system that will help reduce the cost of government, help us to meet the 3 per cent of GDP target in three years and to make sure we have affordable and effective programs that are responsive to the needs of Canadians.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Brent St. Denis (Algoma, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

Northern Ontario workers have suffered great job losses during the recent recession. In Elliot Lake, which is in my riding of Algoma, nearly 4,000 miners have lost their jobs since 1990. Many of these are older workers and many are losing hope.

What measures is the minister taking to address the particular and pressing needs of all laid off workers in northern Ontario and Canada, especially older displaced workers?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member knows that the plight faced by many older workers when they face a major dislocation in their industry or a downturn in the economy is one of the primary objectives that we have put forward as part of the social reform process.

The great economic tragedies suffered by the people of Elliot Lake gives us an opportunity to look at the impact. For that reason one initiative my department is taking under its innovations program is to provide \$2 million to Laurentian University and the people of Elliot Lake to look specifically at the impact on the miners who have lost their work, their families and how a community can begin to recreate itself. This is an example of how we can do innovative thinking about the development of new approaches for people who are no longer able to earn a livelihood through traditional means.

PENITENTIARIES

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, there have been seven escapes in the six months since the Bath Institute was upgraded to a medium security prison.

Can the Solicitor General explain why Correctional Services Canada is putting the public at risk by treating this institution as a medium security facility?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Solicitor General, who is attending an international meeting of Solicitors General, I would like to say that he welcomed the auditor's report.

The recommendations in the auditor's report will help the Solicitor General with the work that was already started when he took office last year. We are implementing those recommendations that are in place and we will continue to do so.

● (1445)

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the Auditor General's report does indicate there is a need for a better classification system of inmates for the protection of the public and that greater attention needs to be paid to the supervision of high risk offenders placed in the community.

Would the minister not agree that corrections' current classification system and the supervision given to these high risk offenders is as leaky as the security at Bath and needs a major overhaul, not just tinkering?

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Correctional Service of Canada has already initiated action on a number of recommendations. For example a senior official has been appointed to assume responsibility for managing improvements to practices for supervising offenders in the community.

Let me quote the Auditor General in chapter 18.29. I remind my colleague that the Auditor General stated: "The service is continuously revising its process of risk identification and management and it is improving the fundamentals of how it assesses risk. It is changing and improving the way it manages based on that risk".

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*[Translation]***RAILWAY TRANSPORTATION**

Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.