

Oral Questions

Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell Canadians if legislation to limit the work week is currently under consideration by this government?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, in the month of February the Minister for Human Resources Development launched an analysis of the whole issue of how we work.

In fact not only limitations on overtime, but job sharing, flexible work hours and different ways of working are challenges that we have to face to meet the needs of the real workforce.

I happen to know in my own constituency at the steel company there are many people who would like to be called back to work, but unfortunately overtime sometimes prevents that. That is one of the things that the minister's panel is looking at but there is certainly no legislation proposed at this time.

Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, the minister's statement of yesterday implies that hard working people are the cause of unemployment.

Using the minister's logic, if the Deputy Prime Minister herself worked overtime she would be contributing to unemployment.

Will the Deputy Prime Minister not agree that her minister's logic and her own logic are flawed and do not address the real problem in this country, that high taxes are forcing people to work longer hours and high deficits and debt are causing unemployment?

Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I think what the Minister of Human Resources Development is recognizing is what many Canadians are recognizing and that is the workforce is changing drastically.

• (1445)

In the old days we could expect to work specific hours of the week but that does not always work in every particular occupation. What he is suggesting is something we should all be looking at. Is there a possibility for us to be examining flex time? Is it possible for us to look at job sharing so that for example women who may have home responsibilities could comfortably combine those with paid work outside the home?

These are all creative ideas that the minister is examining. I wish the member would open his heart and examine some of those positive solutions with us.

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN MUSEUM OF NATURE

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Despite the fact that we tried everything possible and imaginable to bring the minister to shed some light on the management of the Canadian Museum of Nature, he still refuses to hold a public inquiry. Yet, some troubling points remain and since the minister wants to know the facts, does he not think that the internal inquiry report should be made public and will he put pressure on the museum's board to make it release the conclusions of the report?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, this is an internal report commissioned by the management of the museum which has an arms-length relationship with the government. This does not mean that I do not care about what goes on there, and I will see how we could provide more information to our colleagues opposite.

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, should I remind this House that the present director of financial services, who started at the beginning of 1994, was previously employed by the company hired by the board to prepare a report on the museum. Does the minister not think that this is a rather strange coincidence? Why does he not suspend immediately and without pay the director of the Canadian Museum of Nature until we know the conclusions of the inquiry presently conducted by the Auditor General's Office?

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, the doubts raised by the hon. member regarding the management of this museum and its inquiry are precisely the reason why I will be relying on the job being done by the Auditor General's Office.

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[*English*]

NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD

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

In 1972 Valmond Lebouthillier received a life sentence for second degree murder. During 19 years of incarceration he had a history of violence and unco-operative behaviour but he was still given full parole in September 1991. In June 1992 he exposed himself to women, but a suspension warrant was cancelled. Two months later he stabbed and sexually assaulted a woman.

Despite a number of internal inquiries critical of the board's decision, one of the board members involved in this decision