

Oral Questions

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, contrary to being a sham, the program we announced was multi-faceted in its approach. It attempted to reach out to Canadians in a wide variety of fora. We certainly look forward to the report of the committee.

As the hon. member has said many times, we also have to try other ways and means of tapping into the opinions of Canadians. As a result, my department and various provinces across the country sponsored fora at which a large number of Canadians could come and express their views, be heard, have a dialogue and get into a serious debate.

I find it incredible that a democratically elected member of the House would object to Canadians having an honest debate about their future.

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Mr. Speaker, for Canadians to have an honest debate on what is coming, the minister should put it on the table.

Does he not admit that he intends to use this new so-called regular income program as a first step to introduce a guaranteed minimum income program throughout Canada and then to force the hand of reluctant provinces?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member may speculate all she wants but the fact is that we are being very serious and sincere about soliciting the views of a large number of Canadians.

One of the aspects we take very seriously is working with the provincial governments where we can develop a series of pilot projects, new models, and new techniques we can test out during this period of re-examination to determine what works well. In this day and age where there is such complexity in the job market, in the social service network, we should be trying out a variety of methods and a variety of models to see what works best.

As the hon. member knows, I am quite prepared to share all the information with members, to bring it together in an action plan we hope will be brought forward to the Canadian public within approximately six or eight weeks so we can then have the second stage of debate.

I find it incredible and really not very understandable why the hon. member would object to the government's reaching out to all parts of Canada, to all Canadians, to find out what works best.

HEALTH

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the health minister.

On Monday we heard that Dr. Doug Kennedy was going to Toronto to get us some information on blood samples from the Red Cross. A progress report, please.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, Dr. Kennedy did go to Toronto. They are in the process of examining the samples.

I believe the Red Cross has put out a report and we concur with that report at this time.

Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod): Mr. Speaker, I really wanted a progress report that would give us some idea of what the report was.

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, right now the Red Cross is in the process of examining how it can test all the samples. That is about as much as I can report at this time.

I will be very happy to give members a more complete report as soon as I have one.

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● (1440)

[Translation]

PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Témiscouata): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who was clearly nervous, again contradicted himself in comments on the controversial Ginn Publishing transaction. He stated that since the election, no offers had been made by Canadian publishers, and also, that his decision had not been influenced by the possibility of a lawsuit.

My question is directed to the Minister of Canadian Heritage. How can the minister justify his latest about-face on the Ginn Publishing transaction, because after having said that he authorized this transaction because of the risk of being sued, yesterday, he said candidly to the reporter for the *Toronto Star*, and I read the article, that his decision was in no way affected by the risk of a lawsuit?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the applause is in anticipation of my answer. I never changed my mind, and I never changed my position. The comments I allegedly made outside the House referred to the period which followed the transaction, not to the period prior to the transaction. Anyone who has followed this debate will understand what I mean.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.