

Oral Questions

employees' premiums, thus creating thousands of jobs? He should cut the rhetoric and take action.

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the accounting procedure used by the government is the one that is suggested and on which the Auditor General himself insists. We are simply following his directives.

Second, about the government's ability to reduce UI premiums, the Minister of Human Resources Development, the Minister of Industry and myself all agree that it must be done.

• (1450)

That said, what the business community wants, really, is stable premiums. As soon as we have a surplus, as soon as we are really confident that we can reduce premiums, we will certainly do so.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Peter Adams (Peterborough, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General.

A convicted pedophile who had served his full sentence came to Peterborough recently in a blaze of publicity. This was a shock for the entire community, for those concerned about children and for those who try to help former offenders.

The judicial and penal system has failed in this case. Can the parliamentary secretary inform us of the steps being taken to protect our children from dangerous offenders and improve the penal system?

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, there is presently a federal-provincial-territorial task force on the study of high risk offenders. This report will be brought to our attention early in the new year.

I should add that last week the Solicitor General also announced the creation of the Canadian police information centre which will screen out various individuals who wish to work with youth organizations across Canada. We will be sure that no sexual abusers are allowed to work with children.

I would conclude by saying that the announcement made by the minister is a follow up to our red book commitment to help prevent sexual abusers taking part in various organizations,

volunteer organizations such as Big Sisters, Big Brothers, Scouts and whatnot.

I reassure the hon. member that it is our commitment to make sure we protect children.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal.

Documents obtained through access to information reveal that the government has promised civil servants that it would honour the workforce adjustment policy which says in essence that civil servants cannot be laid off. Yet the minister has promised to cut \$5 billion in government programs.

Attrition alone will not save \$5 billion, so how does the minister propose to honour the workforce adjustment policy and his commitment to reduce the size of the public service at the same time?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are currently in discussions and negotiations with the bargaining agents for the public service employees with respect to the workforce adjustment directive.

Understanding the points that are made by the hon. member, matters are under discussion at the present time and will subsequently be reported as the negotiations are completed.

Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley East, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

The Auditor General's report says that the purpose of the workforce adjustment directive, which is preserving jobs, stands directly contrary to the government's purpose of reducing the size of the public service. If the minister is not able to renegotiate the terms of the workforce directive with the unions, is he prepared to bring in legislation to change that directive?

Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have made it quite clear in the government that we would negotiate with the bargaining agents. It is a matter that is subject to collective bargaining as it is part of the agreements with our unions and we will negotiate with them.

There is no doubt that there is going to be an impact from the program review in terms of the public service employment levels. Those are matters that we will negotiate with the unions and subsequently when they have been dealt with we will report them to Parliament.