

Adjournment Debate

munity assistance programs as such are useless if workers and their communities are not helped to find real jobs.

My question was: How can the minister reconcile that? There was no consultation, and that is really too bad.

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that extensive consultation took place in the development of the TAGS program, including the fishermen, food and allied workers associated with the sectoral councils.

The people in our region are really looking for hope and opportunity. It is for this reason that this government has engaged in what I consider a rational and reasonable approach to reshaping the economy of that particular region.

Under TAGS there are at least a dozen adjustment measures that individual participants can use to help themselves adjust to their circumstances.

Throughout the consultation process it was made clear that active participation of the fishermen and plant workers affected by the groundfish crisis would be a requirement for ongoing income support. However, what we heard from the fishermen and the plant workers is that they wanted opportunities such as training from literacy to university levels. We have opportunities with the participation in green projects involving working and learning activities within their communities. No matter which option is chosen, however, participants will be required to take an active role in helping themselves.

The intent to require participants to be actively involved in their adjustment was clear from the start. In effect, each person applying for the benefits of TAGS commits to this process by signing the application form.

The concern raised by the hon. member for Mercier did not relate to the principle of expecting participants to actively take part in the program. Rather the question related to the administrative means used to ensure that participants continue to actively pursue their adjustments while receiving income support.

On May 6, 1994 a special representative of the Minister of Human Resources Development met with officials of the organization. These discussions provided a satisfactory resolution to the concerns raised for all participants. There will not be an administrative social contract which individual participants will be required to sign. The signed application form will suffice.

• (1855)

EMPLOYMENT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, on May 25 I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development to take the \$1 million, indeed over a million dollars, that his department plans to spend on promoting and advertisements in relation to the social policy review and redirect it to those young Canadians

who are living in poverty, those young families that are clearly in need now.

The minister's response did not address the real issue and that is what will this government do to help those most in need?

There is a crisis in our country, a crisis of poverty that is undermining the fabric of our society and, alas, that is increasing. Those Canadians most in need of assistance from this government are young people, young families and women.

On May 25, the same day that I posed this question to the minister, a report entitled *The Outsiders* was released. It was very disturbing. It indicated that the rising divorce rate has led to further complications among young families as one in four metro Toronto families is headed by a single parent. The report also notes that single parent families have the lowest levels of social assistance. Even among those single parents who work poverty rates are twice as high as those of two parent families with a single earner. I want to ask what the government will do to help these single parent families.

Recently a report from the United Nations development program gives Canada high marks for education. It says that Canada is the number one place to live, and we are all proud of that. However, when human development by the United Nations is measured separately for males and females Canada drops from first spot to ninth spot largely because of the wide income disparity. The report indicates that the adjusted real income rate for Canadian women is 51.5 per cent of that for men.

I want to ask this government will it leave people behind? There is the over \$1 million proposed to be spent on advertising; more recently, \$55 million to be spent on advertising dedicated to help Canadians to stop smoking. While we would like to see Canadians stop smoking the proof is very fragile in terms of what that advertising budget will do.

This government was elected on the faith that it would create jobs for Canadians. It has created jobs for Canadians, in particular those Canadians who are in the advertising industry.

The infrastructure program is a good program but is largely directed to jobs for men.

I want to ask the member responding for the minister what this government is prepared to do besides advertising, creating jobs for advertisers. What is it prepared to do for those young families living in poverty, the single women who are raising families, a large majority living in poverty? Why not act? Why just advertise?

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her intervention and I look forward to answering her question.

There are too many people living in poverty today, far too many people with the proper skills in Canada to make us competitive, far too many young people facing the problems and challenges associated with transition from school to work, the 1.2 million children who live in poverty in Canada.