

ly studying whether our existing laws are adequate to deal with problems such as those that arise under the Internet.

● (1455)

We will be consulting officials of the Department of Justice. I expect their recommendations will guide us in making determinations on what additional legislative action, if any, is required.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Benoît Sauvageau (Terrebonne, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment.

On December 14, in reply to a question about some land in Vancouver belonging to the Squamish band which the federal government has been leasing, the minister said the following: "I made arrangements to inform the band that future payments after this fiscal year should cease and desist".

Will the minister confirm that the lease payments which already cost Canadian taxpayers \$26 million have in fact "ceased and desisted", as she promised us on December 14, since officials from her own department say the opposite is true?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** I can assure the hon. member that, when I answered that question, we had informed the band in question that, after the end of the calendar year, we would not pay them one penny more. And our position on this issue is firm.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### THE BUDGET

**Mr. Herb Grubel (Capilano—Howe Sound, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, accountants in Canada are in an uproar. The budget proposes to make all professional income statements due at the end of December rather than throughout the year. Accounting costs will skyrocket because of the need for overtime and extra staff at year end. These extra costs will be passed on to the professionals.

Had the Minister of Finance consulted with accountants and professionals on this matter?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last year we had consulted with many Canadians on all of the issues that were in the budget.

#### Oral Questions

The hon. member undoubtedly knows that provided professionals the opportunity to defer, for one full year, income otherwise taxable. It gave them a substantial advantage over other Canadians.

Given the government's commitment to making sure that the taxation system is fair and that all Canadians pay their fair share, we closed that loophole.

**The Speaker:** Now to single questions. The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### STAY IN SCHOOL PROGRAM

**Hon. Jean J. Charest (Sherbrooke, PC):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development or for anyone who would be willing to give me an answer. It concerns the Stay in School job program which was introduced five years ago for the benefit of young people still in school. Its goal is to directly discourage young people from dropping out of school. Groups which are interested in this issue and which try to encourage young people heard recently that the program would be discontinued.

I would like to hear from the government itself whether it is true that the program will be dropped.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Human Resources Development has just left the House. He will return in a few minutes, and could perhaps answer the hon. member at three o'clock or the next time he is in the House.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### MEDICARE

**Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister, who yesterday was in Saskatchewan talking about medicare.

At the same time in Saskatchewan, members of the medicare community who had been involved in the fight to implement it over 30 years ago, including former Premier Allan Blakeney, were sounding warning bells for Canadians. Mr. Blakeney in particular said that by eliminating specific funding to the provinces in favour of reduced block transfers with few strings attached will result in a patchwork medical insurance system with different standards in different provinces.

How can the government continue to claim it is defending the principles of medicare when four of the sculptures of medicare are telling us these reforms are going to lead to a patchwork?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if these four sculptures, as he called them, had waited