

Oral Questions

will see their interest in staying in Canada to defend milk producers. There is no doubt about that in my mind.

[*English*]

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FORESTRY

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Forestry.

About a year ago the forestry subcommittee submitted a report to this House in which it recommended a framework to attain the vision of sustainable development in Canada in concert with provincial jurisdiction for forest management.

In its response the government accepted the concept of a Canada forest accord as a beginning to achieve sustainable development in our forests throughout this nation.

I would like to ask the minister if the Canada forest accord will be signed at the forthcoming National Forestry Congress to be held here March 1.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, as my friend has said, we are organizing a National Forestry Congress early in March under the auspices of the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. This congress was preceded by the most extensive public consultation process possible; five regional conferences, the green plan, and of course the committee's report.

I am currently working with my provincial colleagues on the text of an accord, which hopefully all of us could sign, together with special interest groups that have a stake in forestry.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Last week the chairperson of the finance committee called for a 25 per cent reduction in UI benefits. Given that unemployed Canadians already suffer a 40 per cent reduction in income, and considering that a shorter

benefit period will reduce the possibility of unemployed Canadians having access to training, I ask the minister to reject the cruel and ruthless comments made by his colleague last week.

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, certainly I will not entertain a debate during Question Period on the merits of the UI program. But I do not want to leave untouched a statement that UI recipients will receive less money for training.

If the hon. member would care to look at the record, he will find that in 1992, instead of spending \$600 million to train UI recipients, we will spend three times more, \$1.8 billion.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Mr. Speaker, perhaps some training might be in order for the minister.

Many unemployed Canadians do not have access to training because their benefits run out before they are introduced to a program. Many unemployed Canadians do not have access to the training programs because of the severance pay restrictions. These people have a right to training.

Is the minister prepared to ensure that the situation is corrected and provide training opportunities for those unemployed Canadians?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): If the hon. member and the socialist party are concerned about training for Canadians, they should stand up, apologize to the unemployed people and support the principle of activating passive money under UI which they oppose every step of the way.

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[*Translation*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs and it concerns the Canadian hostage this government has been ignoring for seven years.

In October, the minister told this House they were doing everything they could to find the hostage, Henriette Haddad. She said they had conducted, and I quote: "exhaustive inquiries". She backtracked on that 10 days ago in this House.