

Oral Questions

● (1430)

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**PLIGHT OF WORKERS EXHAUSTING BENEFITS**

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It has to do with an individual who is 56 years of age. He has worked for 33 years for Kimberley-Clark at Kapuskasing. He was laid off last year when the plant was closed. This individual is not entitled to any pension. His UIC runs out in a little less than three weeks. His savings have gone supporting his family while he has been on UIC for the past year. The case is not unique, Mr. Speaker. It is the same situation you will find for more than 300,000 Canadians today.

While welfare is the only option left in three weeks' time, has the Minister of Finance anything to tell the more than 300,000 people in a similar situation as to what they can expect in future action from this Government as quickly as possible?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we are trying to create jobs as much as we can. Second, we have training programs, retraining programs for workers young and old. These programs at the present time have been allocated more funds than at any time in the past and are available to Canadian citizens. There are Manpower centres in this country to which people can address themselves and where they can discuss with officials ways whereby they could receive additional training which would allow them to take jobs which would become available in the labour market, and make themselves more competent and able to fill the needs that open in the labour market.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, through you I want to inform the Minister of Finance that this individual has three children who are all attempting to develop their education in one form or another. This individual has tried on many many occasions to find access to retraining programs. They simply do not exist for him. He is not qualified for most programs, and the programs for which he does qualify are offered 2,000 miles away.

REQUEST FOR MINISTER'S ADVICE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance. Regarding the individual in Kapuskasing, what advice would the Minister have if the individual had access to a retraining program as to what he should train for? In terms of the direction which this country is taking, what advice would the Minister of Finance have for this individual?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, obviously this is not an answer that I can give, not knowing the individual, not knowing his past experience, not knowing the opportunities there would be for training, and not knowing the opportunities available in the area where he lives. My friend says the opportunity for job training is 2,000 miles away. I am very surprised and, frankly, I do not believe that statement. I

just cannot accept such a statement as representing the realities. If my friend wants to send the Minister of employment and Immigration the specifics about this individual, I am sure the Minister will ask his officials to examine the case and see whether anything can be done in that regard. Again, I just do not believe that facts are as stated by my friend.

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LABOUR**SUCCESSOR TO ILAP PROGRAM**

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question is for the Minister of Labour. He was informed of this case in some detail just before Christmas. He responded two months later saying that he and his colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, were developing a successor to ILAP, which would build on the lessons learned from the program and that it was a high priority for both of them. This came as welcome news four months after the first letter of inquiry, Mr. Speaker. Having waited not in excess of four months, and knowing that it is a high priority, can the Minister tell us where the successor to ILAP stands? How soon will an announcement be made?

[Translation]

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, this document is now being considered by Cabinet and a decision should be reached at an early date.

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[English]

LAW REFORM**DELEGATES INVITED TO PEOPLE'S LAW CONFERENCE**

Mr. John A. MacDougall (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. The second annual People's Law Conference is taking place today and tomorrow. The Justice Minister will know that at the first such conference last May, in addition to many distinguished members of the Bench and Bar and other organizations with a legitimate interest in law reform, a spot check of the delegate list revealed that over 40 Liberal candidates, relatives of Liberal MPs, and members of the executives of Liberal organizations, were also invited by the Minister at public expense to attend that conference. What explanation does this Minister have for their presence? And how can he justify using his position and public money to build up a campaign organization for his run at the Liberal leadership?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, the participants in the first People's Law Conference, as with respect to those in the second People's Law Conference, were chosen on the basis of their participation in communities. We wrote at that time to all Members of Parliament asking them for proposals to invite people. Most people, members of all Parties, were accepted. If my hon. friend finds there were a