

Point of Order

• (1500)

I ask the minister: Who is this company? How much privatization is going on in the Canada Employment Centres? And why is this going on without any consultation with the union?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is very simple. Jobs Canada as an organization has established a coast to coast job bank, which takes application forms from prospective employers and résumés from prospective employees. It provides a nationwide service to enable job seekers to find the best possible jobs.

What we are testing out on a pilot project basis in three locations across the country is how we can take advantage of that vast network of job applications and openings at Jobs Canada and build them into our own job bank so we can substantially expand the job offerings for people who come to the CECs. It is simply one way of using new technology and developing a partnership with a private sector firm to help get Canadians better, higher paying jobs.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): I ask the minister: Why was this done apparently without any consultation with the union in Manitoba? Will he undertake to consult with the union and hear its concerns on this matter?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes I will.

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[Translation]

POINT OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Michel Gauthier (Roberval, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the purpose of my point of order is to correct *Hansard* to bring it in line with reality.

During question period, the Minister of Labour no doubt misunderstood what the hon. member for Saint-Hubert said and attributed words to her that she never spoke. She never described the Prime Minister as the "prime minister of English Canada". She did say, and I have her text in front of me: "Are we to understand that the premiers of English Canada—" This was therefore not a reference to the Prime Minister of Canada, which led to a correction and to applause from our friends across the way. Sorry, but this was not the case.

The Speaker: This is perhaps a point of clarification, but it is not a point of order.

[English]

Colleagues, I do not see any other points to be raised at this time.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I would like to make a statement regarding the point of order raised last week by the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona. I would also like at this time to thank the hon. member for Kindersley—Lloydminster and the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader for their contributions to the discussion.

On October 18 the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona rose to question the admissibility of the auditor general's report tabled in the House on October 5. The report, which was sent to the public accounts committee for examination, contained what in the opinion of the member were "politically biased statements".

• (1505)

The hon. member contended that the auditor general had "overstepped the legal and customary boundaries of his duties as a servant of the House". He requested that I rule the tabling of the auditor general's report out of order, ask that the auditor general submit an amended report, and refer the terms of reference for auditor generals' reports to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

[Translation]

The auditor general's importance to Parliament is indisputable. This House relies on the auditor general to help it ensure that taxpayers' dollars are spent for the purposes approved by Parliament and to assist it in holding the government to account for its actions. Under the terms of the Auditor General Act, the auditor general is empowered to report to Parliament. Under the provisions of Standing Order 108(3)(d), these reports are then deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

[English]

With all respect, my colleagues, any ruling that is made here in this House affects all hon. members. If any business is to be conducted other than the hearing of my decision, I respectfully ask that it be done outside.

The hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona has long taken an interest in the form and content of auditor generals' reports. I recall that he made a member's statement in the House on this very subject on November 23, 1994. It is clear that his view of the appropriate role of the auditor general is not necessarily shared by the auditor general.