

Oral Questions

Why do we have a law that requires the authorities to release offenders that they know are likely to re-offend? Offenders who are likely to kill a Melanie Carpenter or a Pamela Cameron.

Over the past four months two young Surrey women have been murdered, two deaths that were preventable. We must act now before there is another.

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Jean Augustine (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month. Canadians across this great country are coming together to celebrate the rich and spirited heritage of black people.

Blacks have been contributing to Canadian society from as early as 1603 when Samuel de Champlain sailed up the St. Lawrence with his interpreter Matthieu Dacosta, a black man from the Azores who had already established links with the aboriginal people and knew their languages and customs.

Black soldiers helped defend Upper Canada against invading Americans in the war of 1812. The first Canadian sailor to receive the Victoria Cross was Mr. William Hall, a black man. The first woman to publish a newspaper in Canada, in 1853, Mary Ann Shadd was a black woman.

Blacks, both French and English worked to build Canada. They built railroads, they worked on the trains, they were inventors, farmers and scholars. They were elected representatives.

I ask all hon. colleagues to join with me, not only to recognize Black History Month but to develop a stronger understanding of the experiences and contributions of black Canadians.

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LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PETER KENWARD

Mr. Leonard Hopkins (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Kenward, commander of the Canadian Airborne Regiment at Petawawa has been awarded the Order of Military Merit for his work as an outstanding soldier and officer.

This career infantry officer took over command of the Airborne Regiment in September 1993 and has done an excellent job in bringing good discipline, the usual high degree of training and dedication to the regiment.

For his outstanding and upbeat achievements, Colonel Kenward will receive the Order of Military Merit from the Governor General of Canada, particularly for his achievements in bringing the Canadian Airborne Regiment up to first class standards.

The incidents by a mere handful of the regiment that the mass media of this country has used to tear an outstanding Canadian military regiment apart occurred before Colonel Kenward took command.

We and all present members of the airborne congratulate him and thank him for his fine leadership and other qualities as an excellent officer, soldier and Canadian.

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NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year will be a crucial one in the history of Canada, presenting us with formidable challenges, not just in the economic and social areas but about the very unity of our country.

Certain things have set Canada apart. The principles of equity and fairness have translated into programs that reflect our values as Canadians. Equalization payments to those provinces and territories that are less privileged established the principles of regional fairness.

Being a Canadian and the right of citizenship is not based on where you live and whether you are rich or poor. Yet instead of maintaining these principles, the federal government is clearly contemplating destroying the very fabric that binds us together as a nation by turning over health and social programs to provinces and territories without national direction and standards.

I challenge the Prime Minister to show all Canadians that the federal government will stand in the national interest, not simply promote regional disparities.

The Speaker: Colleagues, welcome back to the House of Commons and welcome to 1985.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

SOCIAL PROGRAM REFORM

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the social program reform scheduled for last September has already been postponed once. Now, after more than a month of consultations, the government is further postponing this reform it had promised to implement in the upcoming budget. It is well known that cabinet and the Liberal caucus are seriously divided on this issue.

● (1420)

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Since the Prime Minister maintains that social program reform is still on the agenda, can the Minister, who is unable to sell his reform plan to cabinet, and the Minister of Finance in