

Oral Questions

human resources who completed their work in sometimes somewhat trying circumstances. I want to tell them I appreciate very much the way in which they made a real effort to reflect the views of Canadians.

As far as the specific recommendations are concerned, we will be looking at all the views and recommendations contained in the committee report submitted, both the majority and minority reports. We will be looking at them very carefully as we go about preparing government programs for the reform of our social institutions.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that, during the consultation process, not one of the witnesses told us that a system penalizing young people was needed.

How can the minister justify his government's determination to make young people second class citizens, by forcing them to increase the debt load they accumulate during their studies and by restricting their access to unemployment insurance, even though they often hold unstable jobs?

• (1430)

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I just explained a committee report is not a government policy. It is very important that we clarify the distinction.

On the other hand, I would say that having read the majority report very carefully, I was very impressed by the number of recommendations made concerning the way in which we could begin to target more assistance directly to young people to help them get into the job market.

It seems to me that one of the most important initiatives or directions the committee majority report recommends is that we devote far more resources to things like internship programs, transitions between school and work, helping students get better aid and assistance to go back to school.

Providing positive programming is really the direction we have to go in. That was certainly the spirit in which the majority committee report was expressed.

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GOVERNOR GENERAL

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, today the Reform candidate for Ottawa—Vanier said that the soon to be appointed Governor General should be required to

pay his fair share of taxes. I and I am sure every other Canadian wholeheartedly agree. Now that the Queen pays income tax, why should her representative in Canada not pay?

My question is for the Prime Minister. Will he send a positive signal to Canadian taxpayers by asking the new Governor General to voluntarily pay income taxes like the rest of us?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the Governor General has voluntarily returned his pension to the crown. He was not obliged to do that. There was no obligation at all, yet he accepted to do that.

This legislation has been in existence for a long time. Perhaps we might have to review it and adjust the circumstances to that reality, but this is the way governors general have been treated in Canada since 1867.

We will look into that and see if we can do something. At the same time we have to treat this Governor General the same way we treated the governors general in the past.

Miss Deborah Grey (Beaver River, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, of course the Queen set the precedent in 1993 when she offered voluntarily to pay income taxes.

Things are different now from what they were in 1867. With today's harsh economic climate when Canadians are being forced to make do with less from sea to sea, a \$95,000 salary tax free plus benefits does seem a little steep.

The government has talked a lot in the last few weeks about making the taxation system fairer. Why not start at the top with the Governor General? Equal means equal.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not necessary to tell the House that the Governor General on his private income, if he has other income, is paying his taxes. It is exactly what the Queen has offered to do in England if I am well informed. She is paying taxes on her private income, not on her public income.

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[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in its policy statement on foreign affairs and international trade tabled today, the government expresses its firm intention to diversify our trade relations with Asia since, in its opinion, Canadian trade is too focused on the U.S. market.

Nowhere in its statement does this government describe the U.S. as a strategic market for Canadian exporters. It sounds like an updated version of the famous third option favoured by the Liberals in the 1970s.