

Oral Questions

At the same time we met with the provincial finance ministers and told them we would not decrease the payments for a two year moratorium. It is the first time that has been done in a long time. They are used to the previous government simply cutting at will.

• (1425)

Then we said to the provinces that together, co-operatively, we would begin to reform the social programs that Canadians wanted reformed so that we could deliver the services more effectively and at less cost.

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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Canadians are now beginning to see some of the details of the government's legislative program and their initial reaction is disappointment, not enthusiasm.

For example, when Canadians examine the human resources project announced last week to help unemployed youth, they find that 70 per cent of the funds are not for job creation at all and that most of the program is simply a rehash of old programs and Liberal ideas from the 1960s and 1970s.

Does the government not have any bold new ideas for assisting young people, and if it does, what are they?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we have a program to assist young people.

Perhaps the hon. member does not agree with the idea that the federal government should spend money to help people, especially young people, but now I hear him say that we should spend money.

I am very happy he might find better ways but I am delighted for the nation to hear the leader of the Reform Party tell us to spend more money on young people. I take notice of that.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about allocating money that is ready to be spent. The Prime Minister's reply simply illustrates my point that there is nothing new or creative or bold being said.

Real Reformers have been calling for a portion of federal educational transfers to be paid directly to young people through education and training vouchers and for immediate revamping of the students loan program to make repayments income-contingent.

These are bold and new ideas for encouraging youth preparation for the new economy. Could the Prime Minister tell us why

new ideas like these are not an integral part of the government's thinking or announcements on this subject.

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is exactly what the Minister of Human Resources Development is doing at this time. He is talking with the provincial governments about it and he is exploring a lot of these ideas. Some provinces think we are moving too fast.

The hon. leader of the Reform Party would move without talking to the provinces.

We want to make some changes. We would like to have a better system. We know that it would be preferable not to do it unilaterally so we are having discussions at this time. There was supposed to be a meeting yesterday. The provinces were not ready. We have postponed the meeting in order to give them more time.

We think it is the right thing to do. All the premiers are asking us to consult with them and it is something the hon. leader's own father used to ask of the federal government; that before moving we should consult with the provinces. We are consulting with them. We will see what they have to say and will advise the House.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest): Mr. Speaker, I think we are living in the past. The government's lack of new and bold ideas is not only evident in this field but in agriculture, the approach to the fishery and most seriously in the defence of federalism itself.

So far the government's only response to the threat of Quebec sovereignty is to promise a few more handouts like the headquarters of the Commission for Environmental Co-operation being put in Montreal. This is a tired, old-fashioned approach to winning support from Quebec voters by promising to pave roads and build buildings.

I ask again, does the government have some bold new ideas for Quebecers and all Canadians, in particular with respect to the revitalization of federalism?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think that the hon. member knows the policy of this government.

The best way to convince the people of Quebec to remain in Canada is to have a good administration in Ottawa and have members of Parliament who show tolerance and not play on the prejudices of people.

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• (1430)

[Translation]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The situation in Bosnia has seriously deteriorated. The UN has lost all control