

Oral Questions

finding the chance to make a good living for themselves and their families.

The cruel and insensitive remarks by the hon. member are not acceptable because we will be giving, as the hon. member will see next week, a real chance or a real platform for those people to find once again real hope that the country cares about their plight.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Yesterday, the ultrafederalist Quebec Minister of International Affairs, Cultural Communities and Immigration, Mr. John Ciaccia, made the following statement: "COFIs teach immigrants to cope with problems of daily life. They are told how schools and institutions work in Quebec. They are given tips on food and housing."

• (1140)

Is the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, whom the Quebec government has called to order along with his colleague, the Minister of Human Resources Development, prepared to mind his own business from now on and to apologize to the Quebec government?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, no Government of Quebec official has called me to order. Quite the contrary. I spoke to the Quebec minister responsible for immigration and he said very clearly what I told the member yesterday on the floor of the House of Commons.

First, he says that Quebec has nurtured a settlement process that clearly is at the top of the list after a 20-25 year agreement with the federal government.

Second, he has no problem that the committee overseeing the Canada-Quebec accord regularly meets with federal and provincial officials to discuss what there is for public debate.

Third, he confirms to me that there is no incompatibility with promoting strong, exciting patriotism and love of Canada and one's fierce loyalty to one's province or region. One either lives in a province in a country or one lives in a country and in a province.

Quebec has jurisdiction over independent immigration that comes to Quebec, but as far as I know Quebec is still in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Osvaldo Nunez (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, now the minister is backpedalling. Does he not realize that his clumsy action calls into question Quebec's jurisdiction for integrating its immigrants into the French community?

[English]

Hon. Sergio Marchi (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think clumsiness is in the eye of the beholder. Quite frankly the hon. member is trying to make an issue of a non-issue. No one is calling the Quebec government or the province of Quebec into question on its resettlement and settlement programs.

I told the hon. member in committee two days ago. I told the hon. member yesterday. I repeat for him again that my government and I believe Quebec has done a yeoman's job and service on settlement.

Second, the hon. member intentionally confuses what I said on the settlement issue with citizenship materials to try to standardize citizenship materials from one coast to the other. That is citizenship, settlement is immigration, and the member knows it.

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OLD AGE SECURITY

Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development.

The government recently announced the preparation of a broad discussion paper on Canada's programs for seniors. The minister clearly stated that the objective was to define a set of efficient and compassionate programs to meet our future needs.

Could the minister clarify whether this means that the review of seniors' programs is part of social security reform? Could the minister give his assurance that old age security pensions will be protected?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly give the hon. member that assurance.

Nobody in the government has ever said in any way, shape or form that we would be making changes to the fundamental protection of seniors through the OAS. The social review that we presently have under way is primarily designed to deal with questions of employability and with questions of security for families and children. That is our real commitment.

The Minister of Finance indicated in the budget that we would be preparing a paper on the long term issues and implications of what happens to a society that is aging and what that means for some of the long term security benefits 20 to 30 years ahead. We