

Point of Order

of the code, there is no consent if the participation of someone of that age is induced by breach of trust or authority, threat or fear.

• (1500)

I point out to the hon. member that there may well be provisions in the code which would deal with this situation.

Ms. Val Meredith (Surrey—White Rock—South Langley, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the minister's attention another instance where for two years 46-year-old Henry Halm has been in Canada to avoid facing a prison sentence in New York for sexually abusing four young males, aged 15 and 16.

A Canadian judge recently ruled that Canada's laws dealing with the age of consent for sodomy are unconstitutional.

Does the Minister of Justice see this as a case of child exploitation? Is he prepared to change the law for the age of consent to see that this is stopped?

Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the issue in the case referred to by the hon. member is just the opposite. It was alleged in that case that the prohibition of homosexual activity by those who are under 18 years of age is unconstitutional because it is inconsistent with the rule otherwise for heterosexual activity. I believe that case is still before the courts and I will be careful not to comment further.

I am meeting this afternoon with a group called Citizens Against Child Exploitation led by a courageous and energetic woman, Monica Rainey from British Columbia. I am looking forward to that meeting. I have met with her in the past and I always learn from my encounters with her. This very subject is on the agenda. I will express my interest to Ms. Rainey and I will discuss it with her.

I can assure the hon. member that it is something that we will consider very carefully.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Morris Bodnar (Saskatoon—Dundurn, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last fall a group of western MPs consulted with western Canadians on regional development. Important matters were recommended to the minister in charge of western diversification, including export promotion and helping high growth sectors.

What is the Minister of Western Diversification doing to implement the recommendations to help strengthen the economy of western Canada?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon.

member, and especially members of his committee, who made some very important recommendations.

I am pleased to report to the House that as a result of those representations and the guidelines set out in the budget that as of April 1 the Department of Western Economic Diversification has changed its fundamental approach to funding. We are now out of the direct lending or contribution business to individual enterprises. Instead we are now working with financial institutions to set up a network of investment capital pools across western Canada.

I can report that the Royal Bank, as it indicated last week before committee, is now prepared to join with us in setting up a very large investment capital system for the agriculture biotechnology industry. We have several other investment pools ready to be initiated that will provide a whole new system of investment capital for western Canada which will be the spur for real growth and real jobs.

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PRESENCE IN THE GALLERY

The Speaker: I would like to draw members' attention to the presence in the gallery of Mrs. Kleveland, Minister of Cultural Affairs (Culture, Sport and Media) from Norway.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

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POINTS OF ORDER

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS UNDER S. O. 31

Mr. Jack Ramsay (Crowfoot, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, Standing Order No. 18 states in part:

No Member may reflect upon any vote of the House—

Nowhere in my member's statement did I specifically refer to a vote in the House nor was I about to.

By cutting me off halfway through my statement, I ask, with respect, for you to please tell me how my privileges as a member of this House have not been breached.

The Speaker: Order. There are times in the House, when we are making statements and asking and answering questions, in the heat of the debate, sometimes words are used that I interpret as indications of where a member is going.

• (1505)

In the particular case today, as members know, the Speaker does not explain his decision. I would be happy to speak to the hon. member for Crowfoot.

With all respect the hon. member, I would say this. It seemed to me at the time that the member was going in this direction and I thought I heard inference to the vote.