

Oral Questions

assure us that he will address the concerns of 1.2 million low income Canadian tenants who are in urgent need of affordable and adequate housing?

[English]

Hon. David Dingwall (Minister of Public Works and Government Services and Minister for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency): Mr. Speaker, the only assurance I can give the hon. member is one of honesty.

The honest assessment of the housing situation is such that we will have to work within the fiscal means of the Government of Canada, just like in the province of Quebec, just like in the province of Ontario, and just like in the province of British Columbia. All governments are wrestling with the issues of social housing.

We are working co-operatively in the federation to try to find additional moneys in co-operation with the Minister of Finance in order to address some of those serious issues which not only affect residents in the province of Quebec, but right across this country.

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TOBACCO

Mr. Rey D. Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The key to a successful anti-smoking education campaign will be a blueprint developed by the government in partnership with the health community.

What steps will the minister take to ensure that a nation-wide network of health volunteers, professionals and organizations are actively utilized in the design, implementation and monitoring of such a campaign? What new regulatory framework does the minister envision to give the Government of Canada greater control over cigarette manufacturers and thereby safeguard the health of Canadians at all times?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we tabled a four point plan to combat smuggling. Part of that was a very extensive program to counter smoking especially among young people or populations at risk.

One of the things that happened immediately on the day we announced this four point plan was the proclamation of the act which prohibits the sale of tobacco to young people. This week we have been circulating regulations in order that all vendors and all places where vending machines are in place are advised of the requirements of the act.

We will continue to work diligently at preparing the kind of legislation and regulations that will go a long way in preventing young people from taking up this habit which is terribly bad for their health.

TAXATION

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue.

As the minister knows, international companies with subsidiaries in Canada establish prices for transferring goods and services between them. This is known as transfer pricing. Although the finance department is attempting to clarify the rules for establishing these prices there is still the question of tax fairness as profits can be internally adjusted.

This government says it is concerned about increasing its revenues. In order to create more equity in the tax system would the minister commit to investigating tax losses from transfer pricing and report to the House his plan to access that lost revenue?

• (1440)

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. Aspects of tax revenue and what we receive are under constant and careful monitoring by my department and of course by officials of the Department of Finance.

I would like to inform the hon. member that we are pleased she has come forward in this House to point out there may be tax inequities which my colleague the Minister of Finance will address next week in the budget.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. By issuing a press release on January 7 urging Canadian taxpayers and companies to encourage compatible transfer pricing methods, the government recognizes there is a problem.

Will the minister commit to developing legislation for transfer pricing to ensure these corporations pay their fair share of taxes?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, her party and all other parties in the House can be assured that is an objective, to ensure there is fairness not only in this particular area of taxation but in others.

I will give a little more information on this. There are differing theories of how to tax international corporations and at what point. We do have some differences with the Americans in this regard. It is a matter not only for my department and the Department of Finance to work on, but also for other colleagues to deal with the Americans and other countries to make sure we establish a system which is not only fair from a national point of view but is also workable in international economic affairs.