

Oral Questions

[Translation]

SITUATION OF YOUTH—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In the realisation that the situation is critical, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Youth, Senator Jacques Hébert, having observed the astonishing inertia of the Government, started a hunger strike today, and the Deputy Prime Minister will know that he is prepared to discuss the matter with the Government and would like to see the Government produce some new initiatives.

Could the Deputy Prime Minister inform the House whether his Government intends to announce any major initiatives very shortly, as the Prime Minister promised some time ago?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, when the Government has announcements to make it will make them in the traditional fashion, at an appropriate time, and in an appropriate place. In the meantime I would suggest, with great respect, that the Hon. Senator could be spending that time reading Part III of the Estimates in order to acquaint himself with the millions of dollars being spent on youth.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKE MAJOR INITIATIVES IMMEDIATELY

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I think the cynical laughter of our friends opposite with respect to the youth situation is entirely inappropriate. I hope the Deputy Prime Minister will be able to inform the House whether the Government intends to announce very shortly, as promised by the Minister of State (Youth) and the Prime Minister himself, a number of major new initiatives that will benefit the youth of this country. His own Government promised to make these announcements. Is it going to do so very shortly?

● (1420)

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): It is the same question, and the answer is the same. I should like to add that the hon. gentleman himself should spend some time reading Part III of the Estimates and inquire where \$700 million is going from CEIC toward direct youth employment-related programs.

[Translation]

MINISTER OF STATE (YOUTH)

RECRUITMENT OF YOUNG CONSERVATIVES—MINISTER'S LETTER

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Youth). Has the Minister of State (Youth) managed to remember the name of the person whom she sent a letter mentioning the use of taxpayers' money to recruit young people for the Conservative Party?

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): Mr. Speaker, I said Friday that a mistake was made in the way the letter was phrased. It was never the intention of this Minister or this Department or the Government to use public funds for partisan purposes. Like any minister or government, I think we all want to do as much as possible for as many young Canadians as possible, and if it has a beneficial impact, I will be delighted. I repeat it was never anyone's intention to use public funds for partisan purposes.

[English]

RECIPIENTS OF MINISTER'S LETTER—FUNDING OF YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor-Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat the question. Has the Minister of State for Youth remembered to whom she sent the letter, and perhaps she could tell us also whether there was a response to her allegation that \$100 million was cut from youth programs, and whether there has been any correction of that error in policy to which she called attention and about which she expressed concern?

Hon. Andrée Champagne (Minister of State (Youth)): The one thing that is being changed is that some money has been reprofiled, and in this Budget we have as much as \$11.732 billion being spent on young people in Canada. This is what is being done. That \$100 million was reprofiled and it was added to reach that total, which now comes to \$11.732 billion this year for young people.

* * *

STATISTICS CANADA

APPOINTMENT OF CENSUS COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for Statistics Canada. For the third time in five days Canadians have learned of blatant political patronage and abuse of power by the Government. Can the Minister of Supply and Services tell this House why he bowed to pressure from his caucus colleagues and appointed unqualified Tories, who failed a test with result as low as 9 per cent, to be appointed census commissioners for Statistics Canada for the 1986 census?