

Oral Questions

It gives me the opportunity to indicate very clearly that the government supports PS 2000 and wants to proceed with debate and referral as soon as possible, which should be early when the session reconvenes.

Mr. Speaker: There will be two more questions.

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RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister who yesterday signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I would like to commend the Prime Minister for doing that and for his leadership in organizing the convention.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): I would like to point out a couple of points in the convention and ask for the Prime Minister's comments.

The convention commits Canada to encourage the production and dissemination of children's books and yet we have the GST on books. The convention also commits Canada to make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means and yet the government has cut funding for the provinces for higher education.

I wonder if the Prime Minister could indicate when the government intends to change its policies so that it can ensure that it will be in conformity with the UN convention.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his important question and I thank him for his comments about the importance of the event that took place yesterday on behalf of all of the children of Canada.

Of all the obligations we have, few are more important than those to our children. I appreciate very much the non-partisan support we have received from the NDP on this very important issue.

Funding has been increased to the provinces, not decreased. My hon. friend raises an interesting and good question with regard to the GST. We have indicated in the past that it is going to be looked at in the light of the experience of the first year.

Also, undertaking the obligations in the signature ceremony yesterday, the document indicates that every nation including Canada must present a report which displays the weaknesses of our situation *vis-à-vis* children, spell them out clearly at given times so that they can be corrected.

That is the priority that we seek to apply to the problems of children. I am delighted to know that I can count on the support of my hon. friend and I am sure of most if not all members of the House in this very noble endeavour.

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[*Translation*]

MANPOWER TRAINING

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Yesterday, André Bourbeau, the Quebec minister, announced a complete reform of manpower policies and structures. This implies Quebec repatriating all powers in that area. Such a proposal goes to show the consensus that can be found in Quebec on this issue. Both labour and management are in support of a reform. I ask the minister this: Does he intend to open negotiations with his provincial counterpart to meet the needs identified by the Quebec government in this area?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will no doubt be happy to hear that, as recently as November 21, 1991, I signed an interim agreement on manpower training programs with my provincial counterpart. In the meantime, constitutional talks are under way and I am sure that, in the end, the tools required to tackle the labour market successfully will be available to Quebec workers as well as to all other Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker: I have several notices of points of order and some of privilege.

I am trying to follow them in the proper order. The first is the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I think this is on a continued matter.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, I do intend to raise a point of privilege. However, members on the government side are co-operating in attempting to deal with the issue I