

Oral Questions

has imposed a 3 per cent tax on student loans and a 7 per cent GST on their books.

If the minister were serious about improving our education system, will he make a commitment today to remove those unfair taxes on students?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to know how the hon. member would answer, what she would say, if the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade and myself announced on behalf of the government that in the next 10 years we are going to invest \$400 billion into education. What would she say?

Ms. Catherine Callbeck (Malpeque): Mr. Speaker, first of all I would ask them to remove those taxes.

This government has not increased student loan allowances since 1984. Tuition fees have increased dramatically because of this government's underfunding. Will the minister admit that it is impossible to achieve these educational standards that are talked about in this report if this government continues its destructive policies, making it difficult for students to afford post-secondary education?

Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, if that is going to be the contribution of the Liberal Party to the learning challenge of Canadians, so be it.

But let me tell the hon. member and members of this House that Canada is spending at a rate only surpassed by two industrialized countries in the world. The question we have to ask ourselves is that it is not so much the money we threw at the problem the way the Liberals did; it is the results. We are slipping and Canadians are concerned and preoccupied. We should find ways of trying to keep up with the challenge.

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NUCLEAR VESSELS

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. British Columbians are outraged that the cabinet considered, let alone approved, U.S. nuclear submarine rights to Dixon Entrance without first publicly assessing the risks to Canadians.

Since as recently as last month the minister's own department advised the contingency plans for a nuclear submarine accident in Dixon Entrance provide only some assurance, will the minister do what cabinet has approved for him to do, which is to respond to the public concern in British Columbia and appoint an independent panel today to review in public the risks that cabinet have been advised of to date only in private?

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to clarify a point that the member brought up yesterday. He alluded to the fact that there had been a decision by the court in Kemano on which he draws a parallel for this event.

I respectfully submit that that parallel is not correct in this area. In the case of Kemano, there was an exemption of an environmental assessment review process and the court found differently. That court decision is still before the courts in appeal.

But I would also like to remind the member that the case we are dealing with now is a lot more similar to the Naskapi Montagnais case where in the case of the low-level flying in Labrador the government had proceeded by Order in Council. It had been challenged also and had gone before the courts, and the court had found that the government had proceeded correctly.

A big difference, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): My supplementary question is for the same minister, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday the Secretary of State for External Affairs tried to leave the impression with Canadians that the U.S. nuclear submarine fleet is safe, contrary to the facts, because since 1983 the U.S. nuclear submarine fleet has suffered at least 12 groundings, 50 collisions, 113 fires, 14 on board explosions and 31 on board crew suicides.

Will the minister stop making excuses like he just did about why he has found a loophole and why he is not doing what he is supposed to do and stand up for Canada and stand up for British Columbians and do what he can do legislatively, that is to appoint an independent review panel today to look into the risks that are facing my constituents, British Columbians? Stand up for Canadians for once.

Hon. Jean J. Charest (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, let me add for the benefit of the hon. member that, first, an environmental assessment has