

Oral Questions

[English]

TRAINING

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, last night the Prime Minister admitted he is open to all paths for change to the administration of government. One area in which the provinces have long been seeking jurisdiction is training, which Reformers also have long advocated.

Will the Minister of Human Resources Development follow suit and commit to giving the provinces exclusive control over manpower training?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the commitment the Prime Minister made last night about change is something on which we invited Canadians to join with us a year ago in an honest and forthright way to engage in a look at the social systems and the training systems of Canada.

• (1450)

We have had the largest participation of any initiative of that kind. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians participated and the message was clear. They want change. They want more flexibility. They want more collaboration and they want more decentralization.

I have sat down on several occasions with my provincial counterparts to talk about how we can achieve that collaboration. For example, we offered specifically to all provinces the right to take over responsibility for institutional training, all the training that takes place in the community college system.

We have had very positive responses. Unfortunately the minister of employment in the Government of Quebec refused to have a discussion. He refused to hear our plans for collaboration and would not engage in that important dialogue.

The most important way we can give real voice and real life to the aspirations Canadians expressed over the past year about the change they need is to have a vote of no on Monday and get on with the business with the provinces of making good changes to get people back to work.

Mrs. Jan Brown (Calgary Southeast, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer from the minister of human resources. I will take this one step further, responding to the opening of the door last night by the Prime Minister to change the status quo.

I ask the minister now to commit to a time and a place he will get the provincial ministers together so they can negotiate the decentralization of manpower training.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last two or three months I have held at least eight or nine different meetings with

provincial ministers to the point of discussing how we might come together and get agreement.

In the member's province of Alberta we now have an agreement with the Government of Alberta to set up single delivery systems for young people to help them get back to work, particularly people who have long been out of work. We have in Lethbridge, Red Deer and Edmonton trial projects with the Government of Alberta.

Even in the province of Quebec we have come to an agreement in the city of Alma, the home of the Leader of the Opposition, to have a co-operative joint initiative by the federal and the provincial governments to help unemployed workers in Alma in a co-operative way.

The best way to ensure a speedy timetable of agreement so we can develop a job system relative to the 21st century is a no vote on Monday so we can get back to work as federal and provincial governments and design the best system possible for all Canadians.

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[Translation]

COUNCIL FOR CANADIAN UNITY

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Revenue. The Council for Canadian Unity is very active these days, since its mission is to promote Canadian unity.

How can the minister justify that, when making donations to the council, large Canadian corporations, including Alcan, Proctor and Gamble, Dow Chemical and Maclean Hunter, can obtain receipts for charitable donations and thus lower their tax liability?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, several months ago, I answered a similar question from the Bloc Québécois. Canadian charities are only allowed to deliver receipts if 90 per cent of their activities are not of a political nature. In other words, only a small part of their activities can be of a political nature. The Council for Canadian Unity has been in existence for 29 years, and it may be that these large corporations received tax receipts. We will see if the 10 per cent limit was exceeded.

Mr. Jean Landry (Lotbinière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, how can the minister justify that the council is enjoying the status of a charity, considering that, in order to obtain this status, an organization must help alleviate the problem of poverty, or promote education or religion?

Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is forgetting the other criteria related to that status. Education is one of them. Moreover, the Council for Canadian Unity, which was granted the right to deliver tax receipts, is 29 years old. It was established 29 years ago.