

Oral Questions

When will we hear from the government about the future of the Convention Centre and its plans?

Hon. Jake Epp (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, possibly I could help the hon. member.

He will know that a number of us have had meetings regarding the Winnipeg Convention Centre. I find it interesting that in his question, he made reference that the Liberals were there to help. Yet, the Convention Centre did not receive any money.

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• (1440)

DISABLED PERSONS

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State responsible for the disabled in this National Access Awareness Week.

With recent figures showing that approximately 60 per cent of disabled people are now unemployed in Canada, I want to ask the minister what new and immediate initiatives can disabled people expect from the government as a result of last week's announcements to help overcome the obvious discrimination against employing the disabled in Canada?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague opposite will well know the concern of the government for disabled people. We mentioned that very specifically in the Speech from the Throne.

This week is concerned about increasing awareness. It is the fourth year we have had a National Access Awareness Week. We are in the process of preparing a comprehensive plan for the disabled to ensure that they have greater access to employment, housing, transportation, recreation and education. Those are the themes that we are putting forward this week.

We will have a comprehensive program, to be announced very shortly.

Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

Will these new government initiatives contain anything to have employers appreciate the tremendous resources and talents which are wasted by their refusal to bring disabled people into Canada's work force?

I wonder if the minister could be just a little more specific as to what he has in this comprehensive plan that will gain for the disabled greater access to recreation facilities, to training, to housing, and all those other things which the rest of Canadians take for granted and are largely out of reach for most of the disabled people in Canada.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Secretary of State of Canada): Generally I can respond in the affirmative. Just for the record, I would like to state that in Canada 13.6 per cent of our population is disabled. We have 3.3 million Canadians suffering a disability, physical or mental. It is incumbent upon government to increase the access for those people to the very issues that I mentioned a few minutes ago.

The program will address that and it will also address it by dealing with increasing partnerships in this country, partnerships with other levels of government and also partnerships with industry. That will be front and foremost in the package of proposals that we are going to put forward.

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EXTRADITION

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

A British Columbia man charged with 36 counts of sexual assault on boys and girls was held in the Philippines pending the arrival of extradition papers from Canada. The papers had to arrive within 45 days. With one week remaining, they were sent by third-class mail, a slow boat to Manila. They did not arrive on time and Martin Bakker was released.

No one, including Interpol and the Canadian embassy, knows the whereabouts of this man.

I want to ask the minister what she has done to ensure that this kind of outrageous incompetence, with such tragic consequences, will not be repeated.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am very interested that the hon. member knows that the package is on a slow boat to Manila because if that is the case, she is the only one who knows the whereabouts of the package. Nobody else does.

I have indicated that I find the situation very disturbing and horrifying. It is a mistake that was made. We are not sure where. I have asked my department for a full investigation as to how it could have happened. I might add that when the second batch of papers were sent to