

Oral Questions

Could the Prime Minister explain this contradiction between his own comments and the comments of the ethics counsellor?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we seek advice. The ruling is the decision of the Prime Minister and this Prime Minister makes decisions. He was not called upon to rule. He has no right to rule. I have the right to rule and I made a decision.

Mr. Preston Manning (Calgary Southwest, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this whole affair from the letter writing to the Prime Minister's comments is either an example of gross stupidity or unethical conduct, or both.

• (1425)

The Speaker: We are getting very close to language that is not acceptable. I wonder if I could ask the hon. leader of the Reform Party to rephrase his question.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, this whole affair is either an example of a grave error in judgment or unethical conduct, or both.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for changing his wording on the first part. I would invite him to do the same on the second part.

Mr. Manning: Mr. Speaker, this whole affair is either an example of a gross error in judgment or in conduct unbecoming to a minister or a Prime Minister, or both. It has also made a mockery of the office of the ethics counsellor.

Will the Prime Minister allow the ethics counsellor to report directly to Parliament on the conduct of the Prime Minister's own office in this affair?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am responsible to the people of Canada.

I appreciate the frustration of the leader of the Reform Party. He and his party are out fishing and catching no fish. That is their problem. However I do not want to get mad.

When the member for Beaver River yesterday made an accusation in relation to me she forgot to tell the nation in the accusation she made in the House today that the judge apologized to me and the *Globe and Mail* apologized to me. Not only that, the *Globe and Mail* paid me money because they had made an error.

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[Translation]

CARREFOUR JEUNESSE-EMPLOI

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. On Monday, we were stunned to learn that a young man who is

unemployed was threatened with losing his UI benefits because he intends to participate in the job-search program set up by Carrefour Jeunesse-Emploi. This is an agency whose federal contribution was just cut and which has now been taken over by the Quebec government and the city of Gatineau.

How can the minister justify such blackmail on the part of his civil servants when young jobless people want to use the services provided by Carrefour Jeunesse-Emploi to improve their lot?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a judgment by employment counsellors as to the advice they give to clients of our employment centres as to the services that can be provided.

In this particular case, the employment counsellor referred the young man in question to the project La Relance. It has an almost 75 per cent success rate in ensuring that employment is gained under these circumstances.

We believe very strongly that we have to ensure there is discussion and decision making at the local level. Therefore that kind of authority is given to local employment counsellors. I am sure when they make a judgment that a reference to the group Carrefour Jeunesse-Emploi is appropriate and helpful they will make references to that group as well.

• (1430)

It is a little strange that a member of Parliament in this case is second guessing the judgment of an employment counsellor when he was not there. He does not know the case and he does not know the individual. It is up to the employment counsellor who is dealing with the case individually to make the best judgment that can be made.

[Translation]

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Mr. Speaker, does the minister recognize that this deplorable situation demonstrates once again the scope of the current mess in manpower training, with federal and provincial civil servants wrestling with each other, at the expense of the unemployed?

[English]

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure exactly what question the hon. member has.

I would like to point out to him that in the case of the Carrefour Jeunesse the federal government provides an annual contribution of \$550,000 which compares with the \$100,000 from the province of Quebec. It would seem to me that we are doing our proper job in contributing to help the unemployed in