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## HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Post-Secondary Education—Consultative Process

Question by:

The Honourable Claudette Tardif

Thursday, October 19, 2006

## THE SENATE

Thursday, October 19, 2006

### HUMAN RESOURCES AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

[Translation]

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION— CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

[Translation]

**Hon. Claudette Tardif:** Honourable senators, on August 16, 2006, a Web site informed the Canadian public that Human Resources and Social Development Canada was conducting consultations concerning the federal government's role in post-secondary education. Unfortunately, the Web site that announced the consultations was not the department's. Rather, it was a blog belonging to Paul Wells, a Maclean's columnist.

[English]

As Mr. Wells stated:

It's insane to have a secret public consultation.

The deadline for submissions was September 8, but few had been informed that the consultation process had even begun. Furthermore, the HRSDC web page did not outline the parameters as to who could respond nor provide discussion documents on the issue to guide feedback.

My question for the minister is this: Given the importance of post-secondary education, why was the consultation process not extended, better explained and more widely publicized to university associations and institutions, as well as to Canadians?

[English]

**Hon. Marjory LeBreton (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I do not read of blogs and thus did not read the one written by Paul Wells. The honourable senator asks a very good question, and I will endeavour to find out because I do not have an answer for her at the moment.

**Senator Tardif:** I thank the minister. I look forward to the response because I know that in many other instances consultation has not been done. I think of the abolition of the Court Challenges Program in which, once again, there was no consultation with the communities that were impacted.

**Senator LeBreton:** As the honourable senator knows, I was part of the process in looking for savings this summer. We consulted many people during that process. Obviously, some people who felt they should have been consulted believed they were not. We were involved in a long consultation.

With respect to the particular question raised by the honourable senator, I would not think it wise to post the notice and not give an opportunity to respond. The honourable senator is quite right.

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