

● (1450)

PUBLIC SERVICE—COMPARISON WITH FRANCOPHONE
AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board has made it quite clear to Members of this House that there is no contract compliance in the federal Government.

Would the Minister rise in his place and respond to the stark contrast between what has happened to women regarding affirmative action in the federal Government and what has happened to francophones in the Public Service? Three years after implementation of the Official Languages Act, francophones were represented in all job categories in the federal Government, at all wage levels, proportionate to their presence in the population and the Public Service. Would the Minister agree today to introduce a similar kind of program related to affirmative action as was brought in under the Official Languages Act?

Hon. Herb Gray (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, our affirmative action program went into place last June.

Miss MacDonald: It went into place in 1975, and you have been dragging your feet ever since.

Mr. Gray: When we look at the program—my hon. friend is way out of touch. It went into place in the federal Government on a limited, pilot project basis, in three Departments. We put in place a program extending across the entire Public Service, last June. When Parliament looks at this issue three years from the end of last June, I predict we will see the kind of progress we have seen with francophones and we will be very proud of the results. I am not sure my hon. friend will be here, but those of us who are—and I think a lot of us will be here—will be very proud of those results.

Miss MacDonald: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

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NATIONAL REVENUE

TAXATION OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, my question was for the Minister of National Revenue, who has flown the coop. He must have thought today was his day off. Therefore, I will ask my question of the Deputy Prime Minister.

I have in my hands an internal report of Revenue Canada, concerning taxable benefits. The Deputy Prime Minister will remember this resulted from the Budget he brought down. This document attempts to analyse how they can wring taxes out of the average working person for such benefits as low rental housing, parking, and daycare provided by employers. The report concludes that the Department must either establish a consistent approach to the taxation of employee benefits,

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or vacate the area entirely. It says the Department should not continue to assess in a random and often unfair manner.

In view of the inequitable application and administration by the Department of National Revenue in its attempt to collect tax on these benefits to employees, is the Government considering withholding the imposition of taxes on these benefits until such time as it can bring forward a rational collection basis?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member will have noted that the Minister of National Revenue was in his seat when Question Period started, and was there for quite some considerable time. The Hon. Member had an opportunity to ask his question. If he wants an answer from me, the answer is no.

TAXATION OF DAYCARE BENEFITS

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that today is International Women's Day, can the Deputy Prime Minister answer on behalf of the Government whether or not it is the Government's policy to continue wringing every cent possible out of those people who are least able to protect themselves, namely, working women, with respect to taxing daycare benefits? Very often these women are the heads of single parent families. Does the mean spiritedness of this Government extend to continuing a policy of taxing these people who are attempting to contribute to society by working and producing an income for their families?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): If the term "mean spirited" can be applied to anything, it can be applied to the question the Hon. Member asked.

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS

INDEPENDENCE OF CANADA COUNCIL AND CANADIAN
BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Communications, who may know there is a report out of Southam News this morning that the Government intends to bring in legislation which would give it the power, through the Financial Administration Act, to erode the traditional independence of federal government cultural agencies such as the Canada Council and the CBC. If this is the case, then that of course violates the long standing principle that we should make sure our cultural and artistic life is separated and distant from political interference and control.

This is a very important matter, so I ask the Minister if the report is true and, if so, will he explain the Government's position to the House?

Hon. Francis Fox (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, he will have to await the