

Oral Questions

Armed Forces when she was the Associate Minister of National Defence.

Our policy is obviously the full equality of women in the Armed Forces. That continues to be our policy and we will work toward that.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. If she is too busy applying for a new job to look after employees in her own department, let me table a letter she received nearly a month ago. This has been followed up by repeated phone calls to her office.

[Translation]

I would like to ask a supplementary question. This letter mentions very serious payroll discrimination against women in her department, the kind of discrimination that costs many women as much as \$15,000 annually.

I wonder why the minister has not taken any action to stop this discrimination.

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, it is Canadian forces policy to ensure that women are equal in the Armed Forces. I have a keen interest in the situation to which the hon. member referred, and I can assure her that I will take appropriate action.

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[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, every day thousands of Canadian women are battered, beaten and raped. One out of every two women who arrives at a shelter with her children is turned away because of lack of space.

This government is spending over \$11 million for a panel on violence against women, almost \$2 million for a telephone survey and more money on research. At the same time it is cutting back on shelters for battered women with its multibillion dollar cap on the Canada Assistance Plan.

Why is this government paying people to tell it what we already know, that violence against women is a problem? Why is this government at the same time cutting and chopping away at the necessary services for battered women and their children?

Hon. Mary Collins (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Environment) and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I am rather surprised at my hon. colleague's question on this account. Surely she recognizes, as I and women across this country do, the importance of developing a national action plan to deal with violence against women. It is a plan which will bring together governments, non-government organizations, communities and women to eliminate violence against women in all its respects throughout this country.

In order to do that it is necessary to provide the appropriate information and develop that plan. I am sure the panel will bring forward that plan over the next few months. However, in doing its work the panel has gone to over 100 communities in this country. It has already initiated the kinds of changes required to deal with the issue of violence against women in their homes and on the streets. The development of the community action program is an important part of it.

Let me remind my hon. colleague as well that part of the \$136 million federal family violence program is indeed going to support additional spaces and shelters and second stage housing programs for women who are victims of violence.

Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby): Mr. Speaker, the reality is absolutely indifferent to that. There have been cuts to the Secretary of State women's program. There is the elimination of the family allowance program. There is the renegeing on the child care in this country and the breaking of pay equity promises. There have been cuts to training for women, cuts to unemployment insurance for women, the elimination of social housing, cuts to the existing child care services and yes, cuts to services and shelters for battered women.

When this is contrasted with this government's commitment of—

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the hon. member perhaps to put the question.