

Oral Questions

[English]

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

ENTRY TO INSURANCE BUSINESS—GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Gordon Taylor (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Hon. Minister of State for Finance. Insurance people and consumers in general across the nation are worried and disturbed over the continual and continuous suggestion that banks be permitted to sell insurance. Is the Government planning to proceed with this ridiculous plan?

Hon. Tom Hockin (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his inquiry. The insurance companies have been making strenuous representations to me, representations just as strenuous as the one made by the Hon. Member. I have heard their concerns and, as the Hon. Member knows, our policy will be announced in a very few weeks.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCEREDUCTION OF MANDATORY WEEKLY NUMBER OF HOURS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

Both the Wallace Commission report on part time employment and the Forget report which was tabled yesterday recommended that the number be reduced of weekly hours required for men and women working part-time to obtain unemployment insurance entitlement.

Considering that 72 per cent of part time employees are women and that equality in the labour force is one of the priorities of this Conservative Government, could the Minister tell us whether he accepts these recommendations and whether he is going to implement them now?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. friend knows just how much I have been aware, both as Secretary of State and Minister of Employment, of the need to enhance the role of women on the labour market.

I think, therefore, that the gist of the recommendation is interesting. But you ask whether I am going to implement it right away? Obviously, the answer is no.

Within the discussion framework which we have established from the start, how do we approach a recommendation such as this? I suggest that the issue of both the status of women and women on the labour force will have to be one of the priorities, if not the top priority, within the recommendations we are going to make about the unemployment insurance issue.

WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear the Minister say women and employment will be one of the priority recommendations. Indeed, I should like to remind the Minister that women contribute to the unemployment insurance account \$39 million more than they collect from it.

I should like to hear the Minister reiterate that, indeed, one of the main recommendations in his report next May will deal with women and employment.

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Absolutely, Mr. Speaker and my hon. friend will kindly admit something. That over the past two years, the Conservative Government has managed to increase the rate of participation for women, for instance in the Jobs Strategy Program, from 35 per cent to 49 per cent. The results are there.

I certainly agree to do just that. Given that women in the labour force is a priority in the matter of unemployment insurance, the Hon. Member will certainly admit that the situation is much easier for a Government which has such a good record regarding women's issues.

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[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONSPRESENCE IN GALLERY OF ATTORNEYS GENERAL OF NOVA
SCOTIA, QUEBEC, ONTARIO, AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of Hon. Members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Ronald Giffen, Attorney General of Nova Scotia;

[Translation]

Hon. Herbert Marx, Quebec Attorney General and Minister of Justice;

[English]

the Hon. Ian Scott, Attorney General and Solicitor General of Ontario; and the Hon. Brian Smith, Attorney General of British Columbia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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CANADA POST CORPORATION

SUPERMAILBOX KEYS

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Post Office. The Government has given us superboxes which are supposed