

Mr. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for her questions. Her knowledge and interest in this subject are well known to all Canadians. We appreciate her continuing interest.

In the matter of the response to the UN in relation to the plan of action, we have been consulting. As the Hon. Member knows, our response in part requires a federal-provincial response. Our delegation, in reporting at Nairobi, will include provincial representatives. This Government, in terms of its appointments and of our own response, as was indicated, has already moved up to 24 per cent. We hope within the short-term target range to have that number increase to 30 per cent of women in government.

In relation to the important matter of sex stereotyping and communication and the importance of regulatory agencies and the CBC, I have intervened personally on that matter with the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) and with the President of the CBC internally since becoming Minister. We will continue to watch that, despite the necessities of the deficit, in any alterations that must be made within the CBC, for example, women are not in any way disproportionately affected, as they may well be since sometimes they are in the most vulnerable situations.

I thank the Hon. Member for raising the question of women's representation at the United Nations. When I met with the Under-secretary General in New York some months ago, I raised with him the specific matter. As the Hon. Member knows, within our world there are varying attitudes toward equality for women. He indicated to me that he was appreciative of the position Canada has taken historically and continues to take and that it is a priority for the administration. I have also spoken with our ambassador, Mr. Lewis, about that matter. When I was in Vienna for the preparatory meetings before Nairobi, I stated that this is a matter of particular importance to Canada. Therefore, I thank the Hon. Member for her sensitivity to that issue in the larger window.

On the question of the Abella report, the question of mandatory implications was discussed at the time. There were a number of comments at the time when the Government made its response. Generally there was a very favourable response. My attitude is that while I understand that perspective, as Judge Abella says, there has not been movement in the last 10 years. What is now being signalled is a three-year time frame after which, if there is not that type of movement, the Government will have to go back to the drawing board in a relatively short time and address the particular concern that was raised over the weekend.

Ms. Jewett: Mr. Speaker, concerning the Nairobi conference, the Minister will recall that at the Copenhagen conference there was a delegation of about 14 people. Both he and I were on that delegation. About half the delegation consisted of members of the Conservative and New Democratic Parties, either provincial or federal parliamentarians. Only about half were government people. Since we were the beneficiaries of this enlightened policy, actually he and I even found occasion to congratulate the Government of the day. I understand that

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this time the delegation will consist of between 35 and 40 people. I am speaking now only of the official delegation, not the NGOs which, as the Minister knows, do their own thing. Will the Minister follow that precedent and ensure that close to half of the official delegation, including both members of the Parliament of Canada and of the provincial legislatures, be made up not just of government people, but of members of other political Parties?

Mr. McLean: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for her representation. As I mentioned in Question Period, decisions regarding the make-up of the official delegation have not yet been discussed at Cabinet. Therefore, speculation about the size of the delegation is merely that, speculation. Given the cost involved and also the availability of accommodation, it is likely that the number will be smaller rather than larger. As the opposition critic, I appreciated the opportunity to be in Copenhagen. I will be encouraging my colleagues to see the wisdom of that situation. Although this is clearly a government responsibility, there is a precedent which warrants looking at.

● (1550)

The make-up of the official delegation, as Hon. Members will know, will be the same as the make-up of a delegation to any major United Nations conference. It requires those who are officially appointed by their Governments, either federal or provincial, as well as officials who bring with them expertise. Therefore, the make-up will include people with knowledge of the UN system and particularly the knowledge of women in development and health as well as other areas. We are now discussing the appropriate make-up of that delegation.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period provided for questions and comments has now expired. The Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pépin).

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I wish to support the motion before the House today, a motion that censures the Government's action with respect to the economic status of women. Mr. Speaker, I beg to disagree with the Minister who spoke previously. The economic inequality of Canadian women has not diminished since September 4, and it is because the requisite legislation and regulations have not been adopted.

The Progressive Conservative Government's record on women's issues is nothing to write home about. Let us go back to last summer. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister made a formal commitment to deal with the problems facing women on the labour market. Speaking in deep and solemn tones, which he likes to do to show how seriously he means what he says, the Prime Minister told women who interviewed him that the status of women was a priority both for him and for the Progressive Conservative Party. Mr. Speaker, I think that from now on we will do well to be wary of the Prime Minister when his voice drops a few octaves and