

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

SINGLE FEMALE HEADS OF FAMILIES—GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO ASSIST

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): Last week, Mr. Speaker, the National Council on Welfare stated in their annual report that the situation of elderly Canadians had improved considerably, whereas the condition of single women and heads of families was lagging far behind. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for the status of women.

Since six out of ten single-parent families headed by women are poor and make up the only group in our society whose poverty has worsened since 1981, I should like to know what our Government is doing or intends to do to improve the condition of women in our society?

[English]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for her question. This is an issue that this Government takes very seriously. It is a problem that has been very serious in our society for some time, and it can only be dealt with on a variety of fronts. That is why we have taken action in some of the areas like employment equity. That is why we have taken action in terms of the Pension Benefits Standards Act. That is why we appointed the Parliamentary Task Force on Child Care. The only way we are really going to get at this very serious problem for low-income women is to ensure that there is equality of opportunity throughout the system. That means a whole range of policies and programs.

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AGRICULTURE

POSSIBILITY OF TARIFF ON UNITED STATES CORN IMPORTS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. In his absence, maybe Frank will choose to reply.

Can the Minister confirm that the delay by Revenue Canada in rendering a decision from September 30 to November 14 in the case of a tariff on U.S. corn was no accident, and that this delay was caused by a desperate and futile attempt to please the Americans on the softwood lumber issue?

Finally, can we get the information from this Government as to why the interests of Canadian farmers have been sacrificed again to please the Americans?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I would like to caution my friend opposite that he should not misinterpret an administrative process. If he studied the situation, he knows that on May 12 the Ontario corn producers filed what was found to be a properly documented complaint, which is now being looked after by the

Oral Questions

Deputy Minister of Customs and Excise exactly in the way that is set out under the Special Import Measures Act.

[Translation]

CONSEQUENCES OF DECISION CONCERNING CORN PRODUCERS

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Does the Minister know that, in this case, a delay concerning the countervailing tariff at this time of the year, harvest time, means that he might just as well say no to farmers right now, because by November 14 the decision will be meaningless since all imports will already—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Would the Hon. Member ask his question, please.

Mr. Boudria: Does the Minister realize that the delay will cost Canadian corn producers \$150 million, and that the delay until November 14 amounts to a refusal this year? What does he intend to do to expedite this matter?

[English]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, once more I want to point out to my colleague opposite that these procedures are set down very clearly. There is a purpose for the deliberations that take place. There is a lot of material to be studied. These matters have to be carefully weighed. There will be a decision made in due course.

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HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

PROTECTION OF WORKERS UNDER FEDERAL JURISDICTION

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Labour what protection he plans to give federal employees in the workplace from hazardous substances, now that we have the decision from Friday by the Federal Court of Appeal? Is he satisfied with the present situation, namely, that hazardous substances are acceptable in the federal workplace as long as they are introduced by other employees and not by management? Isn't this hair-splitting and not protection?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, our Department, of course, is following that situation very carefully. We are obviously subject to court decisions that are being made. We will continue to monitor the situation and will do what has to be done in due course.

CANADA LABOUR CODE AMENDMENTS

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same Minister: Will he tell us if the new Canada Labour Code with