

Oral Questions

Culture from Sweden, and I am delighted to see that they are visiting Canada during this international communications year.

The copyright question is clearly an issue that today has international ramifications. It is a matter of concern to many countries, which have started a thorough review of their copyright legislation because of the enormous technological advances that are endangering the author's copyright. The same is true in Canada, and not long ago, I had a chance to discuss this matter quite thoroughly with my colleague, the new Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and we shall very shortly be submitting a joint position on this question to our Cabinet colleagues.

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[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

REQUEST FOR COVERAGE OF PART-TIME WORKERS

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Commission of Inquiry into part-time work has recently confirmed that part-time jobs are increasing as full-time jobs are being phased out and disappearing. Seventy-two per cent of these part-time workers are women, many raising their children in poverty. They earn low wages, receive few benefits, and lack job security. Many do not even have unemployment insurance. Since the Minister apparently cannot provide full-time jobs, will he at least amend the unemployment insurance regulations to cover part-time workers, as the Commission recommends?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I have not read the report in its entirety but I have looked at a summary of it. I am conscious of the recommendations that have been made to us. I am taking them under advisement and looking at them very seriously.

In some instances there may be some simplifications and exaggerations in the report of the present situation. I am extremely concerned about the possible use of part-time employees by employers in a way which does not provide the kind of basic protection that people employed in Canadian society should have.

We will be examining the report with some considerable care to see if we can act upon recommendations that it makes.

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CANADA LABOUR CODE

APPLICATION TO PART-TIME WORKERS

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Labour my supplementary question is directed to his Parliamentary Secretary. Last spring the previous Minister of Labour refused to answer my

question on the necessity to change the Canada Labour Code as it applies to part-time workers until the Commission on part-time work had reported. Will the Minister now amend the Labour Code to extend protection to all part-time workers under federal jurisdiction? As well, will he remove restrictions that deny part-time work to workers in the Government and which denies them the right to unionize?

[Translation]

Mr. Antonio Yanakis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, as the Hon. Member is aware, the Commission's report was published on Wednesday, September 7 of this year. The Minister has received the report but would like to postpone any specific comments on the Commission's conclusions and its recommendations until he has had a chance to examine the report in greater detail. We know that the Commission identified a number of major problems concerning part-time workers, the most important one being the absence of statutory definitions and also of provisions relating to pension and social benefits. The Minister will therefore proceed to examine these points in detail.

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[English]

NATIONAL ENERGY PROGRAM

SUBSIDIZATION OF FUEL USED BY AEROFLOT PLANES

Miss Pat Carney (Vancouver Centre): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Under the National Energy Program's oil import compensation program, Canadian taxpayers have been subsidizing Russian passenger planes which land at Mirabel and buy fuel from Petro-Canada for the return flight to Moscow. Can the Minister tell us whether Canadian taxpayers will continue to subsidize these Russian planes after the 60-day embargo on Aeroflot flights is lifted, considering the fact that ten Canadians were among the 269 innocent people shot out of the skies by the Russians?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I will look into the question. Of course, there are no Russian planes coming to Canada for the next 60 days. What the Hon. Member is asking after that is to keep discriminating or treating the Russians in another fashion than the other airlines, forever. I do not know if it will be six months or forever. It is a question we must look into. However, the embargo is for 60 days and there will be no Russian planes coming into Canada, so the problem is not material at this time.

Miss Carney: I would suggest that a country which shoots commercial aircraft out of the sky possibly could be subjected to special treatment.