

Oral Questions

• (1200)

ACTION TO ENSURE EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Labour. What steps is he taking to correct the situation that came to light recently in a departmental publication in which it was indicated that three million women in Canada are getting less than equal pay notwithstanding federal and provincial law to this effect? What steps is he taking within his jurisdiction, to correct that unjust situation?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member is aware that we passed a bill providing for equal pay for men and women at the federal level. It is a good bill, and we are taking action to see that it is implemented for the benefit of all those employees who come under federal jurisdiction. If some of the provinces would pass similar, strong legislation, this would have a noticeable impact on a great many more employees, most of whom come under provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Hees: That bill is a snow job. It has no teeth.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for St. John's East has the floor.

Mr. McGrath: Is the minister prepared to meet with his provincial counterparts to achieve the situation he has described in his answer whereby women will be treated equitably and justly all across the country, and will he discuss with his provincial counterparts some standard code across the country?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Ministers of Labour from the provinces will be coming to a meeting in Ottawa some time in the latter part of March or early April, and this undoubtedly will be one of the subject matters to be discussed.

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[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

FEED GRAIN—REVIEW OF POLICY

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

As he met last Monday with the president of the Union des producteurs agricoles du Québec, can he give the House the assurance that changes will be made soon in the feed grain policy and if so, can he assure us that they will reflect the representations of Eastern producers?

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, we did meet last Monday and there will indeed be a number of other meetings in the course of putting into effect the statement in the Speech from the Throne that prior to the beginning of the next crop year we will have measures in place to ensure fair and equitable pricing of feed grains

[Mr. Munro (Hamilton East).]

across the country, always, of course, allowing for inevitable costs of moving and storage. Therefore, the representations of the producers in the province of Quebec are being taken into consideration, as are the representations from other producer groups across the country.

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CAPE BRETON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ALLEGATION THAT CORPORATION ACTED ILLEGALLY IN EARLY RETIREMENT OF MINERS

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister. Is the Prime Minister aware that for eight months the Cape Breton Development Corporation acted illegally in putting miners on the street because of age without the required approval of the Treasury Board, and is he aware that the corporation is continuing to retire people before the normal age of 65 despite a Federal Court ruling which removed that power from the government because the government was acting beyond its jurisdiction?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member has an allegation of illegality against the government or any of its agencies, I think he should address the question to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This gives me the opportunity to call the Prime Minister's attention to the fact that on many occasions I have asked the Minister of Justice to look into this matter. I have also written to the Minister of Justice. I have received no answers in the House or to my letters. It is time that the government and the leader of the government took the responsibility of seeing that the statement made yesterday in the House of Commons by the Minister of National Revenue, to the effect that the Department of National Revenue "is obliged to apply the law as parliament passes it, not as we would like it," is put into effect. If the Minister of National Revenue is going to remain an honest man, the government and the Prime Minister had better do something about this.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a further point of order?

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Yes, Mr. Speaker. My point of order arises from the fact—it will not be recorded in *Hansard*—that the Minister of National Revenue seems to see something in this to laugh about. I point out to him that his integrity is in question on this subject, and I repeat that if he is going to remain an honest man he should do something about this situation.