

to members of the police force in my own community and have read comments made by members of the police in other communities and they indicate that they sincerely want to address the problem. What I said earlier in my remarks I will say again to the Hon. Member. All the protections of our system of justice will apply equally to this amendment to the Criminal Code. The Hon. Member asks if police power could be abused. I suppose it could be abused with respect to every single section of the Criminal Code. There is no doubt about that. If the Hon. Member is asking me whether I believe it will be abused, I can say from my own experience that I do not believe so. The law is specific as to what Parliament is trying to do. I believe it is better worded than many of the sections in the Criminal Code with which the police forces now have to deal. They are sometimes vague and leave too much discretion. But this section is very specific and anyone who is charged, as I have indicated, has all of the protections of our system of justice, and that is a good thing.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order! It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

WELCOME TO NEW PAGES

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before proceeding to Standing Order 22, there is a traditional matter I would like to deal with. You will see in front of you a new group of pages. Perhaps the House would join me in welcoming them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I can assure you from my meetings with them that they are at least as good as the group we had last year, and I think they may turn out to be better. They have as a group successfully passed the recognition test regarding Members more quickly than I did.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

S.O. 22

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 22

[English]

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT

Mr. Len Hopkins (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of utmost importance to all Canadians, that is, those Canadians who are not part of the federal Conservative Government. This summer we witnessed the passage of the American Coast Guard ice breaker *The Polar Sea* through the Northwest Passage. This was undertaken without requesting the permission of the Canadian Government.

We have also seen the Government take credit for something which was largely the result of a Liberal Government's efforts—the North Warning System. We are constructively spending a great deal of money on this new system for North American air defence and surveillance. We have been told it will greatly improve our position in the North and help increase our claim of sovereignty over the disputed Arctic region. However, within months of announcing the new North Warning agreement with the U.S., the Government severely undermined any claims to sovereignty which would have developed from that system.

The silence of the entire Government, including the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) and the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Nielsen), has sent a signal to all interested parties that we are not prepared to defend what we think is ours.

The Prime Minister and his Government have once again proven to all Canadians that this is a spineless Government based on reckless rhetoric on the one hand and totally irresponsible silence on the other.

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FAMILY VIOLENCE

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, the recent conviction of a Member of Parliament highlights once again the grave problem of wife assault. Canadian women expect their elected representatives to treat this matter very seriously and to be positive examples as public figures. They are disappointed that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has not acted on his election promise to provide financial leadership, intervention and co-operation with the provinces. Instead, he has drastically cut transfer payments to the provinces which will curtail services for battered women.

This latest incident symbolizes the seriousness of domestic violence and the responsibility of each MP to speak out against battering, as well as the need for government action. Women in northern communities are at particular risk and have few protections or services, according to recent studies sponsored