

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)):** The Dalai Lama did make his point, Mr. Speaker. He reiterated what the hon. member has just said. His Holiness certainly spoke with compassion, dignity and respect for mankind. He is fully aware of what we are trying to do in this country. I had an opportunity to enlighten him on our new initiatives. We also talked about next December's conference which will provide a forum to debate human rights throughout the world, including Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

**WOMEN'S PROGRAMS**

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. A StatsCanada report released Thursday indicated that between 1988 and 1989 the number of sexual assaults had risen by 6 per cent.

The last budget cuts in funding for women's programs have left women support services spending their time scrounging for funds when they should be fighting violence and counselling victims.

When will the government reinstate crucially needed funds to fight this type of violence?

**Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women):** Mr. Speaker, we certainly share the concern about the rise in sexual assaults against women and children. Every effort must be taken by federal and provincial governments and local organizations.

I would like to say that it was this government that introduced the \$40 million family violence program just a few years ago, \$22 million of which has gone into Project Haven to provide the kind of support and shelters for women who seek safe places when they have become victims of violence.

I visited a number of these projects over the summer and they are providing excellent support. I know we are going to be able to continue our work in this direction.

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Chiefs of Police have reported that violence is

definitely on the increase as a result of forced program cuts caused by funding constraints.

I am well aware of Project Haven, but there are many preliminary programs that have to be put into place prior to Project Haven. Is this not proof enough that the funding should not only be fully reinstated but increased?

**Hon. Perrin Beatty (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, the question raised by the hon. member is a very important one indeed.

I can indicate to the hon. member that the government is currently considering a range of initiatives, dealing particularly with the whole field of family violence involving child sexual abuse. We have the Rix Rogers report before us at the present time.

In addition to that, we are looking at the follow-on with regard to the family violence program. We are absolutely convinced that this is an initiative which is essential in our society. We will take every appropriate measure to do what we can to reduce this sort of violence in Canada.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State.

The minister is aware that representatives of visible minorities, aboriginals, disabled and women's groups met as a national employment equity network this past weekend. We hope the government will provide a public response as soon as possible to its main positive recommendations for action that will improve employment equity in both the public and private sectors.

Since Secretary of State funding was promised and then refused late Friday afternoon—as a result many low-income people are having considerable hardship and must have their expenses covered—will the minister reconsider and provide funds for this important conference of employment equity target groups?

**Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)):** Mr. Speaker, I was made aware of an application by 11 of the groups in the network on Thursday morning.