

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Some day I may get to be heard by Hon. Members.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: It fascinates me that people would yell at me that people should be shouted down. Does the Hon. Member have a question?

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I have a question. I want to ask the Minister of National Defence whether this document entitled *Equality Issues in Federal Law, Canadian Forces Policy on the Employment of Women*, with the seal of the Canadian Forces on the document, dated March 17, 1985, is a document of his Department. I will tell him now that his continual attempts to deny knowledge of the document are wearing thin. I do not believe you, Members do not believe you, Canadian women do not believe you. Nobody in this country believes those answers. Is this your document, yes or no?

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman obviously is not listening. I did not deny the existence of any such document. What I did say, for his benefit, was that I had no knowledge of the contents of the document. Now then, he will—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. With great respect to the Minister and others, it is somehow unfair to complain to me about not being able to be heard when you are asking questions and then to yell continuously when someone is answering. It just is not fair. Has the Minister completed his answer?

Mr. Nielsen: I believe so, Mr. Speaker.

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Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber-Port au Port-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate the Minister believes that he is finished answering the question. Let me say this to the Minister.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tobin: I am asking a question. Be patient. Be polite. Civility. Whether the Minister believes he has answered the question and whether he acknowledges the contents of the report or knows of them, the contents of the report and the archaic attitude expressed in the report are being practised today, discriminating against Canadian women. Will the Minister call in his Chiefs of Staff? Will he apprise himself of the contents of this report? Will he instruct them that, until such time as the Minister gets on with the business of doing his job, to quit the high level of discrimination being practised against

the women of Canada and the kind of patronizing attitude expressed in this report? Burn it.

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, it is wrong for the Hon. Member to attempt to leave the impression that whatever might be in that document that he has read is the policy of the Government. I have said repeatedly today that whatever is in that document is not the policy of the Government. When government policy is formulated, it will be made known in the appropriate way.

With respect to his suggestion that I call in the Chiefs of Staff and consult with them, I intend to do just that and to discuss the matter with the Chief of Staff. There is only one now since the Forces have been unified. Perhaps the Hon. Member has forgotten that, as members of his Party had forgotten about the whole question of women's equality rights when they brought the Charter before this House of Commons and had to be reminded by this Party.

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THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED

REMOVAL OF HANDICAPPED PERSON FROM AIR CANADA AIRCRAFT

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister of Transport is aware that a handicapped person travelling to the Sports Federation for the Handicapped was removed from an Air Canada aircraft on the grounds that the person was unattended, even though she had flown many times unattended. What redress, if any, has been made to that person, and what action is he taking to improve travel arrangements for the handicapped in transportation in general?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, that of course is an issue of ongoing concern to the Department of Transport and, indeed, to the carriers. A number of steps have been taken to deal specifically with the issue which the Hon. Member has raised. I understand that Air Canada has issued an apology to the person in question. I further understand that any reparation to correct this issue will be arranged between the two parties.

ROLE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, some time ago a special advisory committee was set up on transportation of the handicapped. They met in February. They were to meet two more times. I am advised that either the Minister or his officials asked them to cancel the last meeting. One member of that committee said that the committee has not done very much. What, if anything, is this advisory committee doing? Is it being disbanded? Is it going to be allowed to function, or does the Minister have some alternative plan for the transportation of handicapped people in Canada?