

*Oral Questions***STATUS OF WOMEN**

IMPROVEMENT OF CONDITIONS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Andrew Witer (Parkdale-High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State who is responsible for the status of women. This past weekend the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, representing 360 member groups from across Canada, met in Ottawa to discuss the economic integration of women into Canadian society. Job creation, job security, training, and affirmative action were identified as the key issues of concern.

In view of the fact that these issues affecting women were neglected by the previous administration, would the Minister tell us what specific action this Government has taken to address these concerns and to advance the status of women in Canada?

Hon. Walter McLean (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, shortly after the Government took office I had the opportunity to meet with the President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and her executive. The question of the integration of women's issues was fundamental in their representation to me. The Hon. Member will recall that at the First Ministers' Conference in Regina, women's issues were integral to that discussion. In addition, women's representatives were present at the Economic Summit. The Hon. Member will also know, as the Prime Minister has said, that a number of significant appointments have been made at senior levels in government. Those appointments were made by this Government.

● (1450)

Let me also indicate to the Hon. Member, Mr. Speaker, that at this moment the House Leaders are negotiating for the establishment of a joint parliamentary committee on the status of women.

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[Translation]

HUMAN RIGHTSSPOUSES OF ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL SERVING OVERSEAS—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Defence. On April 17, 1985, Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force, guaranteeing full equality to all men and women. All women except wives of Armed Forces personnel serving overseas. The later are considered dependent, the same way as children—they are called "D.W.'s" for "Dependent Wives". This designation follows them everywhere. When they are admitted to a hospital, they have to use as I.D. their husbands' social insurance card, because they have none. They are "D.W.s". Does the Minister intend to give instruction to correct that situation?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, that is a matter which is being addressed by the subcommittee which is studying equality situations arising out of the Charter. But I might just reflect for a moment in general, in response to the Hon. Member, that we are very actively trying to rectify a number of these horrible legacies which were left by the Liberal Party when they were in government.

[Translation]

DEPENDENT WIFE—REQUEST THAT EXPRESSION BE REMOVED
FROM ARMED FORCES ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Lucie Pépin (Outremont): Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister of National Defence could then suggest that Armed Forces personnel should appear before the Committee on Equality of Rights, because they have not yet agreed to do so.

Also, since the Hon. Member is aware of the situation of the wives of Armed Forces personnel, can he now commit himself before the House that the designation "D.W." will be dropped from the Forces' terminology?

[English]

Hon. Erik Nielsen (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, certainly, Mr. Speaker, as I just indicated a moment ago, that kind of terminology was put there by the Party of which the Hon. Member was a member when it was in office. That, and other matters of equality, are being addressed in a very aggressive way before the subcommittee.

I want to clear up a misapprehension that the Hon. Member may have unintentionally left with Hon. Members of the House. There has been no refusal of any of the officials of Defence, or of myself, to appear before either the subcommittee or the main committee studying these matters, and arrangements will be made to address the equality issues in the fullest possible way to the satisfaction of all Hon. Members of the House.

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INDUSTRY

TAKEOVER OF MITEL CORPORATION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex-Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. British Telecom is a regulated monopoly under British Government legislation, effectively controlled by British Cabinet Ministers. The British Government has already used its control to block a joint venture between British Telecom and IBM. Does the Government believe that it is sensible to place Mitel, an important, dynamic, and innovative Canadian private enterprise, under the control of a foreign, state-controlled monopoly?