

Oral Questions

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): You don't have to answer if you don't want to.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The \$22.50 stands because as the oil prices—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I do want to answer, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I know you do, but this is becoming long.

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[Translation]

EQUALITY RIGHTS

PROMISE OF PROGRAM CONCERNING CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. A year ago the Government promised that a so-called contract compliance program would be implemented by last fall. Now the Minister of Justice has just made the same promise. What criteria, what policies, what specific measures does the Government have in mind? Or will this be an annual promise, without any action?

[English]

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the issue of contract compliance and the implementation go hand in hand with the passage of Bill C-62. I urge members of the Opposition to co-operate with the Government to ensure that that legislation passes quickly so that we will be able to implement contract compliance at the same time.

Mr. Broadbent: It's not in the Bill.

● (1430)

REQUEST THAT BILL BE AMENDED

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, contract compliance is not now in Bill C-62. The groups and organizations concerned have asked that this be done. Will the Minister put contract compliance in the Bill, and with real teeth?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the Hon. Member does not understand the process. The question of compliance is under contract which itself has the force of law. She should understand that contracts have the force of law. What she should also understand is that the principles of employment equity apply to businesses coming under federal jurisdiction as well as those which do business with the federal Government. The two go hand in hand. We want to introduce implementation at one and the same time. Therefore we are anxious to get the Bill through the House.

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is satisfied with the report *Toward Equality*, why did he not have the courage to direct the Minister of Justice to amend the Human Rights Act to guarantee that discrimination against women in the Armed Forces and on the basis of sexual orientation be truly prohibited rather than giving us the double-speak we got this morning? Did he not hear the cries for equal opportunity?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Madam Speaker—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): That is equality.

Mr. Crosbie: You can see I have no prejudice, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Copps: That's right, baby.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the Hon. Member is this. Her Party was in power for 20 years. Twenty years! What steps did they take in all that time to do anything about the status of women in the Armed Forces?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: We have now announced the Government's policy that all trades and occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces be open to women. At the present time it is only 65 per cent. There is just one caveat. The policy is to be pursued in a manner consistent with the requirement of the Armed Forces to be operationally effective in the interests of national security. That, of course, has to be observed, and this is a giant step forward for the women of Canada.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, it is too bad the Minister did not understand the implications of Section 15 of the Constitution which we brought home. However, why has he ignored the need to bring in legislative change and, instead, left the whole matter to the courts? We just spent millions of dollars hearing over 1,000 Canadians testify that they need protection through a change in the law. Why can the Minister not understand what this group is requesting?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member continues the confusion she has exhibited ever since eleven o'clock this morning. We have done the exact opposite. She was a member of the committee to whose report we are responding. We have agreed in principle with 46 of the recommendations. We partially agreed with 15. We disagreed with only 10. We deferred 14 because they are under study in other areas or because of the financial shambles left to us we do not have the financial resources with which to act. We have agreed with 61 of the 85 recommendations, and never before has such a