

to have in place a social safety net which will provide for those people who are most in need.

Mr. David Walker (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Minister of Labour.

As the minister knows, one of the major contributors to poverty in Canada is the low minimum wage. If a single mother with one child in my constituency in Winnipeg worked for the federal government at \$4 an hour minimum wage, she would have to work 87.5 hours a week just to reach the poverty level as defined by the government.

The minister has not changed the rate of minimum wage for the federal government since 1986. What is the government waiting for? When will we hear about a new minimum wage for the poor of Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Labour and Minister of State (Transport)): Mr. Speaker, the question of the federal minimum wage has been a focus for concern for quite some time, but we must remember that the number of Canadians effected by federal minimum wage regulations is between 1 and 1.5 per cent. We are considering the circumstances under which the minimum wage, which now applies almost exclusively to part-time employees, might have the effect of eliminating those positions instead of improving the situation of Canadians, thus making matters worse instead of better.

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GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of State (Agriculture). The GATT talks in the Uruguay Round are deadlocked. The Europeans don't seem to want to budge from their position on farm subsidies, and the Americans' strategy to isolate the EEC was not successful. My question is this: Considering what is at stake in these negotiations for the economy of this country, and especially agriculture in Quebec and in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, does Canada intend to take the necessary steps to again try and break this deadlock?

Hon. Pierre Blais (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture)): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is aware of the fact

that the Canadian government made every effort last week to have a favourable conclusion to the Uruguay Round. Negotiations are continuing. They have not stopped. They will continue in January and February.

I would like to point out that Canadian farm producers from all parts of the country, west, centre and east, have remained united behind the Canadian position. Furthermore, the Premiers and Ministers of Agriculture and International Trade of all the provinces have remained solidly behind the Canadian position, and I believe this should help us while we are waiting for future developments in early January and February, when further progress can be made. Mr. Speaker, all this is thanks to the fact that this government has always consulted with farm producers and Agriculture ministers in this country. That is how we govern and that is how we will continue to govern.

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[English]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Hon. William Rompkey (Labrador): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs. The minister will know that one way to break out of the poverty cycle is through improved education. In spite of that, the minister and his department are withholding funds for post-secondary education for the Inuit communities of northern Labrador.

My question very simply is: Why? Why now, when unemployment is on the rise? Why now, when education could be a passport to a new future? Why is the minister withholding funds under a legally binding agreement with the Inuit of Labrador that would help those Labrador Inuit young people?

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Thomas Siddon (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised this question. I want to assure him that the government is not withholding funds. In fact, we are committed and I am delighted to say the enrolment in our post-secondary program is exceeding all expectations. This is a piece of very good news across Canada. Aboriginal young people are going on to university and seeking higher education. Our funding proposals for the coming year were not adequate to deal with the demand. At the same time, we had to have the enrolment reports