

*Adjournment Debate*

The Minister was really on the spot then. How do you determine who is to be charged, and who will make that judgment? Bell Canada will not be a collection agency for the Government of Canada, collecting money for telephone calls, using some kind of a means test. Obviously the employees in the weather office cannot question every caller. If they did it would take time, and even then how could they verify the information. What is a legitimate call? Will they check the social insurance number of every caller to determine whether he is a fisherman, farmer of someone travelling on the highway? How can that be verified?

In announcing these ill-advised cuts the Minister reversed some of her decisions. For example, she reversed the decision on the study of the effect of toxic substances on Herring-gull eggs. That and various other programs in that area will now be continued. I do not want the Minister to reverse this decision the way she reversed that decision. She re-instituted a one person year to carry out the program of all of these people who were cut in the Canadian Wildlife Service. Let the Minister try and deny that. She cannot.

The Minister made a statement to the media today that she would phase in the program on the herring-gull eggs on April 1. That is rather confusing because the cuts were not supposed to take effect until April 1. I do not want the Minister to state here today that she is going to reverse the decision to charge people for telephoning the weather office in the way she made the reversals on the other cuts that she announced. That does not mean anything.

I want the Minister to explain how she will carry out this policy of charging Canadians for phoning the local weather office. How will the interpretation process of whether health and safety is involved be handled? I feel quite confident that she will stand and say they are really not going to charge for that, or that everybody who phones the weather office will be charged, thereby going back on the statement she made in the House during Question Period. It has to be one way or the other. It cannot be as she stated publicly in this House because that is unworkable. I am very interested to hear what the Minister has to say, and I am very pleased that she attends the late show. I look forward to her retracting that charge on the Canadian public.

● (1815)

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my obliging colleague for giving me this opportunity to outline in this House the measures we will be taking to get the funds that will help us complement our weather services. You have noticed that my colleague, who had very kind remarks for me before Christmas, has been all smiles when asking his question, even though his tone of voice was outrageously shocked. I remember only the smile.

Mr. Speaker, weather information provided to the general public and to special user groups such as farmers and fishermen is already available through the media, and especially the

electronic press, that is radio, TV and cable television. Maritime weather forecasts for instance, including warnings, are available through the Canadian Coast Guard's marine bands which continuously broadcast them. Thus are categorized the various user groups.

Environment Canada has established radio stations which broadcast weather information 24 hours a day over a special frequency from the 13 most important centres in this country. In the four Atlantic Provinces, provincial governments cooperate financially with us in making this service available to a greater number of users through automatic answering service. This is to reassure my colleague and suggest to him that general weather information is available, through one or the other of those means, to the vast majority of Canadians.

But there are also people who sometimes want additional information, for instance statistics on past weather conditions, weather conditions in other areas of the country or abroad, more specific details on forecasts, or who simply find it more convenient to get such information over the telephone. Because of their limited or specialized scope, such services should not be paid by all Canadians, because they are now paid for out of public funds. People requesting such additional services from now on will have to pay a small fee to get them. This is only fair in my view. For the first year starting in 1985, we expect to collect \$1.3 million in this way.

A task force has been set up within the Department to decide on program conditions and determine the services the Government will continue to provide to the media for distribution to the public, as has been done during the past 100 years. Special attention will be paid to maintaining the quality of the weather information services and the implementation of a system of fees that will be realistic, efficient and compensatory.

STATUS OF WOMEN—GOVERNMENT POSITION. (B) ELECTION  
CAMPAIGN STATEMENT

**Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East):** Mr. Speaker, if we are to believe the Minister of Environment (Mrs. Blais-Grenier), the government's financial burden has hit Canada's environment the hardest. How incredible!

Mr. Speaker, I think I will go on to another issue and a question which I raised with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) almost two months ago. Hon. Members and Canadians generally are well aware of the promises made by our Prime Minister during the historic debate on women's issue which was seen by TV viewers in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, in fact all Canadian saw it. In the course of that debate with the three party leaders, our Prime Minister made some promises to Canadian women, promises which indeed had to do with the question of equal pay for equal work, and yet this Government, which has now been in office for about five months, has not done anything for Canadian women—all we