

Oral Questions

very important in developing the appropriate response. That response will be made in due course.

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[Translation]

WOMEN

INQUIRY IF GROUPS SUBSIDIZED LAST YEAR WILL RECEIVE
SAME AID THIS YEAR

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State and concerns women's groups who have yet to receive their subsidies this year. Can the Minister give the House the assurance that those groups that were subsidized last year and which still meet program requirements will at least receive the same measure of financial support they did last year?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, we can give the Hon. Member the assurance that the Department of the Secretary of State analyzes requests from women's groups, as it is supposed to do, and when these groups meet the criteria, as the Hon. Member pointed out, we will of course provide them with support, on the basis of the funds allocated to the Department of the Secretary of State.

[English]

SIZE OF FUNDING

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister put to rest fears that there will be drastic cut-backs throughout the program? All the women's groups will be affected by this. They have received only 40 per cent of their funds this year. We have not heard answers yet about how much money is in the program for the groups that are doing such an important job in the voluntary sector.

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, when the Hon. Member mentions radical cuts, this can of course be interpreted in many ways. We have nearly completed the Department's budget assessment process, and as I said before, I think that the funding these groups will receive will depend on our finances. However, if we look at women's groups in general in this country, I do not think there will be any what could be called radical cuts. There may be some adjustments, but I repeat, these will not be what you refer to as radical cuts.

• (1150)

[English]

HOUSING

RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM—
REQUEST FOR ADVANCE FUNDING FOR NOVA SCOTIA
COMPANIES

Mr. Gerald Comeau (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing. A great number of RRAP delivery agencies in Nova Scotia are private sector firms. We should all be proud of the superb job they are doing. These groups are experiencing difficulties now because of delays in RRAP funding. Would the Minister consider advance payment, in order to assist these companies in providing the necessary services in which they are engaged?

Hon. Bill McKnight (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for an important question. I recognize the service private sector delivery groups provide to people in Canada. I also recognize that private sector delivery agents are paid on a fee-for-service basis.

I would certainly take into consideration any application from those private sector delivery groups which are in financial difficulty to provide some advance assistance until such time as their fee-for-service provisions under RRAP catch up with their financial demands. I thank the Hon. Member for the question. If any private sector delivery agents can provide that information, we will assess it.

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[Translation]

TRADE

REQUEST FOR GREATER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND
FRANCOPHONES ON FREE TRADE NEGOTIATING TEAM

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister and concerns the glaring lack of Francophones and women on the free trade negotiating team.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to its initial and unacceptable mistake, the Government is dragging its feet shamefully in this matter. This was clear yesterday from the answer given by the Deputy Prime Minister to my colleague from Hamilton East. He merely recycled a nine-day old answer given previously by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, which was not explicit and merely recognized the deficiency.

I would therefore like to ask the Prime Minister whether he could remove any doubts as to the Government's intentions in this matter. Could he tell the House today how many Francophones and many women have been added to the negotiating team and what their responsibilities are?