

women's representatives, on a July safari to mark the closing of the United Nations' Decade for Women. The cost of first-class airfare, alone, for the ministerial junket will be \$46,420. Does the Minister not believe that these funds would be better directed toward real change for women instead of the parliamentary air bussing of Cabinet Ministers who have shown in the past eight months that they have no interest in changing the status quo for the women of Canada?

Hon. Walter McLean (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows full well that there are two groups going to Nairobi to the conference which will mark the end of the UN Decade for Women. With the support of Government and other sectors, it is estimated that there will be over 30 leaders of national women's organizations at the voluntary forum. The official government delegation has not yet been named. Cabinet has not yet reviewed the matter.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): It's about time the Government learned that the women of Canada do not want a two-tier status.

[Translation]

I would like to ask whether the Government is at least ready to replace the safari holidays for Progressive Conservatives with a women's delegation at the Government level, that is women like those on the National Action Committee, women who are ready to go on with their work upon returning to Canada, rather than simply going on holidays in July as 10 ministers of the Mulroney Cabinet have chosen to do?

Hon. Walter McLean (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is not telling the truth. This is not true. The truth is the Government will appoint a delegation, a widely representative delegation from the Government with officials and also other Canadian representatives.

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[English]

SOCIAL SECURITY

SOCIAL SERVICE SPENDING

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. The Minister will recall that during the election campaign her Party talked about jobs, jobs, and especially jobs for women. In British Columbia cuts in social service spending in the last year have increased the unemployment rate for women by some two percentage points, while at the same time the unemployment rate for men dropped by two points. In light of the result of those cut-backs in social spending, could the Minister assure the House today, in the absence of the Minister of Finance, that no cuts will be made in social service spending in the Budget?

Oral Questions

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I really do not believe that the Hon. Member expects me to tell him, right now, what is in the Budget or what is not in the Budget. I can tell him quite honestly that I do not know what is in the Budget. If I did, it would be a Budget leak. But I will tell him that in the last month some 47,000 women found jobs. That was the biggest month-over-month increase in employment for women in the last five years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: That came about because of the confidence which is being restored in the economy of the country, and because of the kinds of programs which we are introducing.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, the Minister evaded the question. I was asking about women, and I used British Columbia as an example.

In a paper which was presented last fall to an international conference, the Government said:

Government funded jobs that have maintained women's employment levels . . . are likely to disappear as restraint policies take hold.

In light of that, will the Minister abandon any plans to cut social service spending in the Budget? Can she give a commitment to the House, as Minister of Employment, that there will be a target to reduce unemployment for women by 2.5 per cent in the next year? We had a six and five program for inflation. What about a target to cut the unemployment rate for women?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I too was talking about women when I said that 47,000 women who did not have jobs before found jobs last month.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss MacDonald: I also want to tell the Hon. Member that in all the labour market strategies, job programs, and training programs, for the first time women are being brought into the programs on a full and equitable basis. They will receive the same amount of funding and the same considerations. That is something which has not happened before. Previously, women were hived off into separated programs, put into ghettos, and not given the same kind of equality which existed elsewhere.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!