

Oral Questions

I can assure my colleague that my provincial ministers responsible for the status of women and I, at our meeting at Lake Louise, issued a declaration against violence on women. We are now in the process of developing a national strategy, a strategy that will take into account the need for prevention, for education, and for support to women and women's organizations to assist women who are victims of abuse.

I think all 10 provinces, the two territories, and the federal government have made that commitment. We will ensure that we follow through on it.

Ms. Blondin: Mr. Speaker, I really wish we had heard from the Prime Minister. The women of Canada would have liked to have heard from the Prime Minister.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Ms. Blondin: That would have expressed a real commitment from this government.

* * *

JUSTICE

Ms. Ethel Blondin (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians have come to know that in northern Canada there have been sentences frequently given for offences against women that have been too light. I ask the Minister of Justice, without prejudice and with fairness: Will she commit to a full review in the Northwest Territories of gender bias in the court system?

Hon. Kim Campbell (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to address that question because, as the hon. member may know, it has been raised a number of other times in this House.

There is a number of projects under way to address that problem, projects that have been initiated by the Canadian Judicial Centre, with support from the Government of Canada. In the spring of 1991 there will be a national conference on women and the justice system. One of the issues that it will address will be the question of women as they are treated in the courts. That will be an opportunity for us to bring together the results of a great deal of ongoing research.

One of the most important things about the conference is that members of the judiciary will be participating. It is important that these problems not simply be brought to the attention of the public, but that those who actually administer the law and sit in judgment understand and have their outlooks changed. I am deeply committed to that process and to encouraging it.

* * *

[*Translation*]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian people find dramatic the cuts affecting the mandate of the CBC. It is so bad, hacking away like that at the CBC, that Jean Dufresne, of the *Journal de Montréal*, called it a political crime today. So, here is my question to the Prime Minister: Is he prepared to put at least a moratorium on the cuts at the CBC and to set up an inquiry on the new role announced for the CBC yesterday by its president, Mr. Veilleux.

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, neither the CBC nor the government were happy to make such a major decision, but we felt it had to be done for the various reasons given yesterday. We could also come up with quotes from other people who approve of the government's move and think it was wise and called for under the circumstances.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the problem with the government is its vision and its sight, and it is not on Canada.

My question concerns the remarks made by the CBC president, who stated just a few hours ago that he had been in constant contact with the ministers and this government, that they were fully informed. Therefore, they knew the CBC had had cuts of up to 15 per cent in their budgets in real terms over the last five years.

Will the Prime Minister admit today that it is the cuts of his government that caused this dreadful shutdown at the CBC and such misery to so many people?