

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Justice my question is for whoever is speaking for her today.

Polls tell us that intolerance in society is dangerously high and this has been inflamed by racist pins, T-shirts and calendars, and by comments such as those made recently by the Deputy Prime Minister which denigrated our Charter of Rights.

When will the Minister of Justice—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the hon. member would not want to pursue that without a lot more evidence, especially on such a delicate question. Would she please complete her question.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I will be glad to provide a quote if the Deputy Prime Minister would like it.

When will the Minister of Justice discuss needed amendments to the Criminal Code to reduce the dangerous expansion of racist and inciteful materials?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think I could probably speak for all members of the House when I say to my hon. friend that the reputation of the Deputy Prime Minister with respect to the protection of individual and human rights is an absolutely outstanding one. I know my hon. friend will want to withdraw any suggestion to the contrary.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hovdebo: Read the article.

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend says: "Read the article." I have read the article. All I can do is tell you, having read it, that it underlines again exactly what I have said about the Deputy Prime Minister. He is an outstanding parliamentarian who has already defended individual and human rights throughout his career.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, where my hon. friend is right is that there are troubling instances of racism and bigotry in Canadian society. There is a tendency in some quarters to display an obvious lack of understanding and charity toward minorities of various kinds. This is most unacceptable in our society. Canada, with its imperfec-

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tions, has always prided itself on some degree of excellence in this area of our national life.

I welcome the point made by my hon. friend. I give her the assurance that the government will be most vigilant, in respect of ridding society of these problems that she raises, by co-operating with all members of the House to make sure that instances of racism are stamped out as quickly as they can be in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PARLIAMENT OF CANADA

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I rose earlier today to make a statement which I think is of particular interest to this House and did not have the opportunity to do so.

I wanted to bring to the attention of the House that it is the one hundredth anniversary of the first woman member of Parliament, Agnes MacPhail, and that later today we will be unveiling a plaque to Agnes MacPhail who worked for farmers and justice in this country.

I would like to say that I am sure this House joins us in commemorating the anniversary of the first member of Parliament in Ottawa, the first MPP in Ontario, and the first woman to the League of Nations.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate the Leader of the New Democratic Party for this very valuable initiative and to commend her again on behalf of all parliamentarians for her own election as leader of her party. That in itself is an important part of Canadian history. I congratulate her for that magnificent achievement.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: My admiration does not extend beyond the issuance of the writs for the next election. Her achievement is already very considerable.

I take advantage of the very important point raised by my hon. friend to point out to the House that I had the honour recently of inviting the Governor General to invite to membership in the Privy Council the Hon. David Croll who turned 90 last week. He was a distinguished member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a member of the Senate since the mid-1950s and has served Canada with great distinction. The Governor