

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**HUMAN RIGHTS**

## GRANT PROMISED TO "ACTION-TRAVAIL" GROUP

**Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. In November, the Minister announced a \$50,000 grant to "Action-Travail", a group that is supporting women who want jobs with the Canadian National. But the said group has not yet received that money. Can the Minister tell us now when his Department will dish out that money so that those women may take their case to the Human Rights Commission?

[English]

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I recall making that commitment. If they have not received the money already, they certainly will do so. The mighty arm of the law will come to their assistance.

## CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS' APPEAL

**Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear that a cheque will be written out this afternoon and forwarded immediately.

Would the Minister comment on the peculiar way this has been arranged? On the one hand, taxpayers are paying the Human Rights Commission to deal with equal pay and insist on an affirmative action plan at Canadian National. On the other hand, the taxpayers are paying both Canadian National to appeal that decision and the women concerned to continue the case against the appeal. Would it not be better for the Government simply to order Canadian National to institute a realistic plan of action and get on with the matter of hiring women in sizable numbers in Crown corporations?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid the Hon. Member does not seem to understand, and I would have thought she would have, how the Human Rights Commission works. If it thinks there is a reasonable complaint that should be examined, the Commission establishes a human rights tribunal and the tribunal makes a decision. Canadian National is receiving no money from the taxpayers to undertake its appeal. It is a Crown corporation which generates sufficient funds to operate, and it does so independently of government. It is financing its own appeal.

However, the Government, because of its sympathy for the position of the women involved, and because there are important points of law to be determined in this matter, is assisting them to finance their appeal. I think every Member of this House should applaud our action in that regard.

**PUBLIC SERVICE**

## DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS REORGANIZATION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and deals with human resources management. The Minister knows of a purported reorganization of the Economic Development Directorate of his Ministry into what is to be known as a new Economic and Commercial Analysis Directorate. He also knows from reports of the staffing associations that certain staffing procedures have not been observed in this regrouping, indeed some have been judged to be illegal and have been appealed to the Public Service Commission. Will the Minister bring the House up to date on this reorganization and assure us that it is a real reorganization, not a phony one to favour some preferred friends?

**Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, the question is appropriate because there has been a complaint. As Hon. Members know, there is a procedure, and it is being followed. I want to assure the Hon. Member that the reorganization to which he refers is being done on the basis of increasing the competence and delivery of services and programs by the Department.

My hon. friend invites me to make a comment which I do not think is appropriate for me to make at this moment because the matter is in a, if not judicial process, a quasi-judicial process, and I will of course abide by the outcome of that process.

## MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, having worked with the Minister, and knowing him to be a fair man and one who respects the law, will he personally intervene in this case if an employee of his is judged to have been laid off irregularly?

**Hon. John A. Fraser (Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Speaker, I think it is my responsibility as Minister to guard with diligence the welfare and working conditions of employees within my Department. I will do that. I am quite prepared to meet with the Hon. Member and discuss the matter further, but I think it will become clear that we do not have a question here of anyone being laid off in the sense of losing their employment in the Department.

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**ENERGY**

## FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL NEGOTIATIONS

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy. The energy negotiations between the Conservative federal Government and the Conservative Governments of the producing provinces have bogged down for the second time. The Prime Minister