

Will the Minister of Justice give priority this summer to drafting equal pay legislation? Will he introduce it in the House in the fall so that employers will be required, and there will be enforcement, to raise the wages of underpaid female employees?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member points out, the recommendations of the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission have only recently been received. I can assure the Hon. Member that these recommendations will be carefully considered by myself and by my cabinet colleagues.

Building on the record that we have developed in our Government, as indicated by the President of the Treasury Board, we want to make sure that where possible we will continue this exemplary record, and we will give this matter the most serious consideration.

WAGE GAP AFFECTING WOMEN IN FEDERALLY REGULATED COMPANIES

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Earlier this spring Statistics Canada came out with a report indicating that for the first time in 18 years the wage gap between men and women in Canada had widened rather than narrowed.

At that time I asked questions of the Government as to whether it would do something about it. Now we have the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission pointing out that 300,000 women work for federally regulated companies and that the wage gap is 35 per cent. Is it not time for the Government to give urgent action to the suggestion of the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission and bring in amendments as soon as possible?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I do not think there has been any Government that has been quite as sensitive on the whole question of equality for the women of Canada than this Government. It has been manifested in areas within our own direct jurisdiction. I would remind the Hon. Member that this Government has been responsible for the creation of 850,000 new jobs since we came into office. A very large number of these have been devoted toward the women of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East. A short supplementary, please.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, we also know that 71 per cent of part-time jobs are held by women and that is one reason that the wage gap is widening.

The Chairman of the Canadian Human Rights Commission points out that under the present system for lodging complaints on pay equity, federally regulated companies are

depriving women of \$1.2 billion and this amount is growing all the time. This is an urgent matter. Won't the Minister take action soon as a result of the request by the chairman?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I reiterate the fact that we have worked and demonstrated our commitment with respect to equality. I have given the undertaking in this House to look very carefully at the recommendations and suggestions of the Chairman of the Human Rights Commission. I have been known as "Fast Ray", but to ask me to bring in legislation the day after the chairman brings in his report is asking a bit much.

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ENERGY

PURCHASE OF DOME PETROLEUM—SENATE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver—Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, this has been a fairly quiet Question Period. I hesitate to bring up the matter of public opinion polls, but I would like to put a question to the Prime Minister. He is probably aware that a huge majority of people, according to the public opinion polls, favour a Canadian solution to the problem of the take-over of Dome Petroleum.

Given that yesterday or the other day the Senate Committee on Energy recommended that the federal Government take steps to re-open the bidding for Dome so there can be a Canadian solution, what is the Government of Canada waiting for? Why does it not do just that?

[Translation]

Hon. Marcel Masse (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised at the question of the Hon. Member, and especially at his comments about the Senate. I find such a show of interest surprising coming from him. I had always thought that the New Democratic Party was convinced that the Senate held no views whatsoever and that the Senate was not a valid place to produce such opinions.

Second, the Canadian solution which this Government would prefer, and I wish to emphasize this, Mr. Speaker, would be to ensure that the assets and shares of Dome remain in Canada. In this context, the best solution would be one which would ensure a future for Dome in Canada.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Vancouver—Kingsway. A short supplementary, please.

Mr. Waddell: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister would like a Senate appointment.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!