

Oral Questions

I want to join all members of this House in extending my condolences to all those who mourn their loss today.

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NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY WEEK

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask all Canadians to help improve highway safety, especially during national highway safety week.

The week's theme is: "Courtesy is—". We should realize how important attitudes are when driving, since they have a direct impact on the safety of road users, including ourselves and our passengers.

Eighty-five per cent of highway accidents are due to human error, speeding, neglecting to yield and reckless driving.

If drivers were courteous and acted responsibly, most collisions could probably be avoided.

I invite you all to support the efforts of the Canada Safety Council during national highway safety week.

You can help make our highways safer.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, we are all in mourning after the tragedy in Montreal but Canadian women bear a double burden, the burden of sorrow and the burden of terror.

Wednesday night's catastrophe was just the extreme of the continuum of violence against women that Canadians face every day.

Will the Prime Minister respond to the overwhelming atmosphere in this country and agree to the appointment of a joint House and Senate committee to seek solutions to the all-pervasive problem of violence against women in Canada?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, all of us are searching our hearts for a way in which we can deal with the

tragedy that has befallen the young women this week, and particularly their families.

In terms of what our government's role must be, it must continue to be to try to reduce violence within our society through a number of ways. First, as the hon. member knows, a year ago we introduced the largest addition of funding for family violence which is a very fundamental factor in many of these cases. Over the coming months there will be more options developed in terms of how we deal with this issue with which we are all trying to come to grips.

Let me say as well that it is much broader than this, and I want to use an example. This morning on *Canada AM* some of the journalists covering this very tragic event did so with great sensitivity. They then went on to review a movie which was supposed to be a comedy which deals with the violence between husbands and wives. It is so pervasive to try and accept that this is a normal part of our society, and our government intends to play its role in dealing with this issue.

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, intending to play a role is fine but concrete action would be better.

[Translation]

My question is again directed to the Prime Minister.

Yesterday, a number of representatives of various women's groups got in touch with me, from various parts of Canada, to talk about the events in Montreal.

Does the Prime Minister intend to consult with these groups immediately, in order to take advantage of their expertise and help wipe out violence against women?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I went to the University of Montreal, at the École Polytechnique, where I met a number of students, both men and women, as well as members of the board, to offer the sincere condolences of all members of this House.

I also spoke to some of the women students about the nature of the problem just raised by the hon. member.

Today's questions concern one of the most serious problems in our society. We are using any number of means to try to wipe out violence, while in many other ways we are encouraging violence. Increasingly, this violence is directed against family members but especially against women, in a society that calls itself civilized.