

Oral Questions

March 18, the Minister announced that the Government was going to make changes to the Canada Student Loans Act. These changes would finally provide guaranteed loans to needy part-time students, implement an interest relief plan for unemployed graduates, and increase weekly student loan limits from \$56.25 to \$100. At that time the Minister said he hoped to introduce legislation shortly for quick passage. When will this legislation be presented to the House?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Serge Joyal (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. The legislation is now ready. We have already discussed it with the ten provincial Ministers of Education, who indicated their agreement in a telegram sent to me in April, a copy of which was sent to all Hon. Members. I have told the Government House Leader and my colleagues opposite that we are now ready to proceed, and I understand that the Government House Leader is now discussing the matter with the other leaders to determine when this legislation should be introduced so that we may dispose of it before the House adjourns at the end of June.

[*English*]

NECESSITY TO DEAL EXPEDITIOUSLY WITH AMENDING
LEGISLATION

Mr. Walter McLean (Waterloo): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Government House Leader. The Secretary of State indicated that the groundwork has been completed for the legislation to amend the Canada Student Loans Act, and the Minister also indicated the urgency the Provinces give to this legislation in terms of planning for the Fall. Also, a number of student bodies across the country are concerned because students wish to make plans, and need the increased capacity for funding for the Fall.

When will we have this legislation before the House, in light of the commitment of the Secretary of State that the amendments will be tabled at the first opportunity and the House seems prepared to receive the amendments and to deal with them speedily?

Hon. Yvon Pinard (President of the Privy Council): Madam Speaker, I had a House Leaders' meeting earlier today. On the one hand the House Leader of the NDP told me that he was very receptive to that kind of Bill and that it would receive very quick passage if it were introduced. In so far as the House Leader of the Conservative Party was concerned, he also had a very positive reaction but needed to consult. That is normal. I suppose that is what he will be doing very shortly. If I have two answers that would make it possible for that kind of legislation to be dealt with in the maximum of one day, I will very seriously consider dealing with the Bill before the end of June.

STATUS OF WOMEN

WAGE PARITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. The federal Government should be sure that its own house is in order before the Minister claims to be leading on equal pay for work of equal value. Last year the wage gap in the federal Public Service increased by 12 per cent and federal employees had to launch their own personal complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Obviously the system itself must be changed.

What federal Government resources have been assigned to review job and pay classifications so that equal pay for work of equal value is a reality for all women public servants, and not just a paper promise?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): Madam Speaker, indeed it is not a paper promise. If the Hon. Member were to review some of the most recent settlements, she would know that the federal Government has put its money where its mouth is. In fact the last settlement was something like \$17 million. I would suggest to the Hon. Member that that is not a paper promise; it is big money.

Also I would suggest to her that this sort of legislation to which I refer must take place in all Provinces, if we are to see that wage gap reduced. At the federal level, I would point out that that wage gap is far less than what it is for average wages of women across the country. That is where we must make the change.

Mrs. Mitchell: I think the Minister has missed the point. It is a systemic change that is needed.

DELAY IN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION DECISIONS

Mrs. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question on the same issue is directed to the Minister of Justice. When equal pay complaints are lodged with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, months, and sometimes years, pass before women are compensated. A complaint on behalf of 7,400 Bell Canada telephone operators was filed in June, 1981, and is still in progress. Will the Minister of Justice agree that the understaffing and under-budgeting of the Canadian Human Rights Commission are responsible for this hold-up and that justice delayed is justice denied? What will he do to change this?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, I will take notice of the question. The Minister of Justice was talking to a colleague in the House just behind the Hon. Member, so he will give an answer later.