

PLIGHT OF WOMEN CUT OFF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
BENEFITS

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): I would like the Minister to tell us what she is recommending with regard to a woman on unemployment insurance benefits who offers to pay for a retraining course on her own and is then cut off unemployment insurance benefits if she does. Such a woman cannot pay for the course and then be left with no income.

I would ask the Minister to consider a woman on unemployment insurance who—

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Miss MacDonald:—offers to work perhaps two days a week as a volunteer but is cut off unemployment insurance benefits when she does. What is happening to such women? Why must they be penalized, with their UI benefits taken away, because they either offer to pay for retraining courses on their own or do voluntary work in the community?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): I repeat, Madam Speaker, that the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands is taking a very piecemeal approach to the fundamental problem concerning women.

• (1420)

I spent an hour with women from the Outreach Program in London, Ontario, on Friday, and they pointed to the real problem of women in our society. The problem is much deeper than the one the Hon. Member has referred to; it is training at the very early level. I was talking to women, and I talk to women regularly. I suggest to the Hon. Member that she sit down and examine what is the true plight of women in our society, and I suggest to her that the women who are attending university cannot even deduct tuition fees from their income tax. These are very real problems which the Hon. Member refuses to address.

Miss MacDonald: You are the Government.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

PURCHASE OF F-18 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT—IMPORTANCE OF
RELATED BENEFITS TO QUEBEC

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. On November 3 last year, in answer to a question I asked the Minister about the F-18 of course he gave me the assurance in this House that the Province of Quebec, a province he knows quite well, would without a doubt obtain 48 per cent of the economic spin-offs. Last Friday, according to a report which the Minister of Supply and Services had ordered, it seems that

Oral Questions

Quebec is getting only 24 per cent of the projected spin-offs. Could the Minister, to reassure those who are worried about this—and they are not on this side alone inform the House today—that he can confirm that 48 per cent of the economic spin-offs will go to the Province of Quebec?

Hon. J. Gilles Lamontagne (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I think the allegations made by the Member for Joliette may be somewhat confusing, where the Hon. Member mentions the figure of 48 per cent, for instance. First of all, I may say that my main responsibility in the matter of the F-18 was to select a plane that would give our pilots the best possible defence in case of an armed conflict. That was my main responsibility as Minister of Defence.

Mr. La Salle: That is not the point.

Mr. Lamontagne: My second—I know that is not the point here, but I felt it was proper to mention what our responsibilities were. Madam Speaker, as the Member for Langelier and being from Quebec, my responsibility was also to see to it that Quebec maintained its position in the aviation industry, which at the time meant 48 per cent of the industry's activity across Canada. The figures projected at the time by the Ministers of Industry, Trade and Commerce and Supply and Services were \$1.573 billion worth of economic spin-offs for Quebec and \$1.296 billion for Ontario. This is where we got the percentages that are in the news today, since the sum of \$1.573 billion represented 48 per cent of the economic spin-offs, for Quebec, and \$1.296 billion represented 41 or 42 per cent of the economic spin-offs, for Ontario. This is what led to the conclusion that because historically, 48 per cent of Canada's aviation industry was concentrated in Quebec, it would be normal to expect the F-18 spin-offs to be apportioned in the same way.

Madam Speaker, I do not think the F-18 battle is lost. I think we can still win the war, that is, ensure that Quebec gets the percentage that reflects its position in Canada's aviation industry, and that is exactly what we intend to do.

REQUEST THAT REPORT BE TABLED

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): I have a supplementary, Madam Speaker. Today, the Minister seems to be unwilling to stand behind a minimum of 48 per cent. He keeps mentioning figures. There is a report that came out in one of the newspapers. First of all, is the Minister willing to make this report public? I think it would be of interest to all concerned. Second, is the Minister now refusing to consider this basic 48 per cent which is important to many Quebecers and many Liberal Members from Quebec? Is the Minister now refusing to give us as Quebecers the assurance that a 48 per cent portion of spin-offs is feasible? That is my question as a Member from Quebec, and I am speaking not only on behalf of many Quebecers but also on behalf of many Liberals on the other side of the House who are afraid to speak up themselves. I think the