

*Oral Questions*

Notwithstanding that, as I indicated, our transfer payments to the provinces have been increased at an annual rate of 5.2 per cent per year since we have been in office or 60 per cent over that period of time.

In terms of transfer payments under the Canada Assistance Plan, those transfer payments have grown at a rate of 8 per cent per year. In the meantime, our over-all federal government expenditures have been sustained at a rate of about 4 per cent.

Clearly we are not fighting the deficit on the backs of the provinces or the municipalities. As a matter of fact, they are getting better treatment than other groups which rely upon federal government revenues. I ask the hon. member to consider that. I think it is very fair.

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**NATIONAL DEFENCE**

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Last week the Minister of National Defence boasted that her policy is the full equality of women in the armed forces. We now know that at least three reports in the last year told the minister that no woman is safe from harassment and that when she complains, she suffers the consequences.

I ask, then, how could the Prime Minister let this go on, knowing that harassers are protected while the victims are punished?

**Hon. Mary Collins (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Environment) and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women):** Mr. Speaker, I think we are all aware that harassment of any kind, sexual harassment or personal harassment, is unacceptable, but I would like to reassure my hon. colleague that the women serving in the Canadian Armed Forces do indeed have policies and programs to ensure that they will be able to serve free of harassment.

Indeed, it has been as a result of the work that was done by the advisory board when I was associate minister to bring some of these issues out into the open that has ensured that DND has been able to review its policies, to upgrade them, to ensure that there is mandatory education throughout the commands, that there will be appropriate procedures in place with independent harassment officers.

All of these initiatives are part of achieving the policy that the chief of the defence staff sent out throughout the Armed Forces last fall of zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, it is leadership at the highest level that is required if women who have already been the victims of complaints of harassment are going to find any relief and if the situation is going to be stopped.

[Translation]

My supplementary is therefore directed to the Prime Minister. It has been five years since the Supreme Court informed the Department of National Defence that there was a serious problem with sexual harassment in the Canadian Forces. Will the Prime Minister instruct his Minister of National Defence to ensure that a person who is found guilty of sexual harassment is relieved of his duties?

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, we have made considerable progress in this very difficult area, thanks in part to the vigorous approach taken by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Granted, in some departments and in some parts of Canada the problem remains.

The Minister of National Defence has taken vigorous and effective measures to deal with the serious problem mentioned by my hon. friend. So far, there have been a number of improvements but, as Prime Minister of this country, I will not be satisfied until the problem of sexual harassment has been rooted out completely, in this department and in our society. Every citizen has an obligation to ensure that this problem is dealt with once and for all, in the interests of society.

[English]

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister knows that when a victim chooses to complain she becomes the immediate adversary of a powerful Canadian forces system, a male system which quickly will organize to humiliate and punish her further.

I ask the Prime Minister to immediately order an independent inquiry into all cases of sexual harassment