

S.O. 21

[Translation]

STATUS OF WOMEN

IMPORTANCE OF POLICY ELABORATION

Mr. Maurice Tremblay (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, the Abella report deals extensively with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. I would like to point out to Hon. Members an important aspect of that issue which the group Recherche Action Lotbinière Inc. brought to light. The results of a survey indicate that 48 per cent of the respondents stated that they have some income from work outside their home, and 80 per cent of those working women are paid less than \$15,000 a year. Seamstresses and baby-sitters are paid between 30 cents and \$1.50 an hour and 51 per cent of them would like to work outside their home if they could.

Consequently, most women in Lotbinière, that is 76 per cent, are not financially independent.

In addition, I would like to point out that 87 per cent of the women are working in service industries which are the most affected by technological changes.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make the House more sensitive to that important issue before policies on the status of women are developed.

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[English]

INDUSTRY

ONTARIO DAIRY INDUSTRY—PLEA FOR BETTER MILK QUOTA

Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, cheese and butter makers in western Ontario have had to lay off workers and close factories, not because of the economy but because they have been unable to get enough milk to meet the demand for their products. Studies done for processors further indicate that this longstanding problem will get worse unless the supply of industrial milk in Ontario is increased.

It is ironic that, although Ontario has 40 per cent of Canada's population, the province is allowed only 31.3 per cent of Canada's production of industrial milk. The Province of Quebec has 48 per cent of the national quota, which is surplus to its needs. Processors there are selling tons of butter and skim milk powder to the federal dairy commission which exports these products, often at prices below cost. A better and more realistic way would be for the Ontario processors to be given an opportunity to buy the surplus quota from Quebec.

Therefore I call upon the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) to use his good offices to look into this longstanding problem and come forth with solutions that would assure the continued viability of the cheese and butter industry of Ontario, which is facing a very difficult time.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

UNLICENSED CABLE TELEVISION OPERATORS—STAY OF PROSECUTIONS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I address my question to the Prime Minister. A report in *The Globe and Mail* of November 27 suggests that the Prime Minister intervened with the Attorney General of Canada in order to have the Attorney General desist from prosecuting unlicensed cable television operators after he had already given the go-ahead to prosecute. The story says that the word came from the Prime Minister's Office.

I want to outline the importance of the question, Sir. I believe the principle has been established, both in this Parliament and at Westminster, that the discretion to prosecute by an Attorney General is an unfettered one and must not be interfered with or influenced by political considerations, even by his Cabinet colleagues. Sir Harold Macmillan stated the principle clearly when he said: "A tradition long supported by all political parties is that the decision whether any citizen should be prosecuted or whether any prosecution should be discontinued should be a matter for the prosecuting authorities to decide on the merits of the case without political or other pressure."

My question is: Did the Prime Minister or his staff direct that the Attorney General of Canada desist from that prosecution?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): No, not directly or indirectly did I ever at any time or in any circumstances intervene with the Attorney General of Canada, who is charged with and fulfils the responsibility of making these determinations by himself. He is a man of honour and conscience, and I think he does it extremely well.

NEWSPAPER REPORT OF CAUCUS PRESSURE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the same report indicates that members of the Conservative caucus put pressure on the Attorney General to desist. Can the Prime Minister affirm or deny the fact that pressure was put upon the Attorney General by members of his caucus?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think my right hon. friend knows of the unquestioned integrity of the Attorney General. I can speak for myself and indicate that at no time, in any way, did I bring such a suggestion to the Hon. Minister. I believe that if the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition were to address the question to the Minister of Justice he would confirm that no other member of the caucus did, as well.