

without any satisfaction from a number of ministers who have stood to respond.

I want to quote from the 1992 report of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In a speech last January, Doug Baldwin, senior vice-president of Imperial Oil Limited estimated that harassment was costing his company close to \$8 million a year in absenteeism, employee turnover and lost productivity. The turnover rate was two to four times higher for women than for men. As Mr. Baldwin pointed out, part of the reason was because we have not yet achieved a work place that is completely harassment-free.

While we may not measure the cost in dollars in the public sector, although often I think we should, nonetheless the same costs are accruing to the federal government which is the largest employer in Canada and therefore we can only assume our costs are substantially higher.

Over a couple of years, the ministers have responded in letters and in this House on this issue by saying we have a policy and this policy is one of no harassment. We know from a report that was released recently by National Defence that in fact over 25 per cent of women in the Armed Forces have been harassed. Most of them did not complain because they felt that they would be blamed, they would be targeted, they would be branded as trouble-makers and they did not think anything would be done in any case.

Presumably the minister has come out with a new plan that is going to fix all this. I am sorry but I do not believe it. The new plan the minister is talking about is exactly what the Associate Minister of National Defence was saying in letters to me more than three years ago, that there was a policy, that it was zero tolerance, that there was education and all kinds of help for victims and so on.

This is exactly the new plan. It has not worked, it is not working and it is not going to work. It is time for ministers to take personal responsibility—in this case the Minister of National Defence—for what goes on in the department because the result when they do not is that those who harass and those in the system who protect the harassers stay in the military. They keep rising to the top. The harassment perpetuates itself while those who complain are branded as trouble makers and are cashiered out of the Armed Forces.

Adjournment Debate

This is unacceptable. It is happening in every department of government. It has to be stopped and it will only stop when ministers take personal responsibility from now on and listen to the voices of women who say: "It is happening; it is serious and it is costing us".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the question raised by the hon. member for Ottawa West on March 8 this year was about pay equity, and I can assure you that the Minister of National Defence is fully committed to the government's initiatives in this respect.

As an employer, the Canadian Forces apply the principle of equal pay for equal work. This principle is an integral part of the Armed Forces employment policy.

The salary scale for members of the military does not differentiate according to sex. All members of the Canadian forces are paid according to their rank. On the civilian side, salaries and working conditions of employees are negotiated by the unions with Treasury Board, on terms that are comparable to those for similar employment in the private sector.

The Government of Canada has already taken steps to put an end to payroll discrimination. As you know, the responsibility for this program lies with the President of the Treasury Board, while the Canadian Human Rights Commission is responsible for monitoring the program.

I can say with confidence that all heads in the Armed Forces and the Department fully support the pay equity policy. In all Canadian forces units, unit heads have been instructed to set an example and treat all members of their team the same, regardless of sex.

All members of the Canadian forces receive instructions and guidelines emphasizing gender equality. As for one particular case that was mentioned some time ago by the hon. member, the initial decision of the commandant of the National Defence Medical Centre to turn down a request to put up an information booth on pay equity for International Women's Day was ill-considered. The decision was revoked and orders to set up a booth were given immediately. The booth was installed in the foyer of the National Defence Medical Centre on March 8, International Women's Day.