

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Question.

Ms. Catterall: Visible minorities are negligible in the blue collar categories.

An Hon. Member: It sounds like a speech to me.

Ms. Catterall: It is cruel and deceitful to encourage people to apply for jobs—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member will put her question.

Ms. Catterall: How does the Minister explain that in 1988, 12 per cent of all applicants to the Public Service were hired, but only 3.3 per cent of visible minority applicants were hired? What concrete steps will the Minister take immediately to end discrimination in hiring against visible minorities and native Canadians?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): This Government is deeply committed to equity in employment practices. I think we have shown that, and I think the numbers have shown that. I am willing to make the commitment that we will not let up on our effort to ensure that all target populations, and I think the Hon. Member has mentioned most of the populations within the Public Service, will be well treated and well represented. The policies have been put in place to do just that.

* * *

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LEBANON—PLIGHT OF REFUGEES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. In response to my question yesterday when I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs what this Government is doing to help the thousands of Lebanese refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries, he said:

I don't mean to shed the responsibility of Canada on to others.

But, Mr. Speaker, if he does nothing, he is shedding this Government's responsibility.

I ask the Prime Minister again, what is the Government doing to help those refugees who are no longer in Lebanon?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said yesterday that he has been in close touch with the situation in Lebanon, and we are doing what we can to assist. In response to the special appeal of the International Committee of the Red Cross, we are providing \$500,000 to Lebanon. At the United Nations our own mission is consulting with the five permanent members of the Security Council to see what might be done from the vantage point of the Security Council. We would be prepared to support any proposal for a meeting of the Security Council in Lebanon if it appeared that this would be helpful. As the Secretary of State of External Affairs said yesterday, we are doing what we can to assist in this situation.

PROVISION OF CANADIAN CONSULAR SERVICES

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): That is an excellent example, Mr. Speaker, of how this Government is not doing enough for the refugees in Lebanon. My supplementary is to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. Since the fighting flared up in Lebanon last month, although thousands have fled, thousands more are trapped in the City of Beirut with no food, water or electricity. The bombing and shelling continue. What is the Prime Minister doing to provide consular services that are more accessible to the people in Lebanon? He knows he cannot ask them to travel to Damascus. Will he take the suggestions made by my colleagues from Essex—Kent and Montreal—St. Denis and open a temporary office in Cyprus and ensure safe transportation and protection for Lebanese refugees wishing to emigrate to Canada?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that the Hon. Member know that within our country we took the action on April 6 of not removing people to Lebanon. I want him to keep that in mind because I have asked my officials under our own programs to look at anything that we can extend by way of our services to these refugees in question. Also, I should point out that private agencies could help with this, and we would solicit their support in assisting refugees in Lebanon.