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Second, we should all remember that when the previous Liberal government left office in September 1984, usually a month of maximum employment, the unemployment rate was 11.6 per cent. Now, the unemployment rate is down to 7.7 per cent in mid-winter. What this proves is that whatever the doomsayers and negative niggers might say during Question Period, this government is following the proper economic course for Canadians. Also, any connection between headlines and reality is slim, at best.

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FORESTRY

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, the most severe forest fires to hit Canada this century happened last summer in northern Manitoba. In all, 2.6 million hectares of land burned in Manitoba. Forests, lakes and wildlife population were all devastated. There were 23,000 people evacuated from their homes and communities. At that time, the Prime Minister went on record on television with an offer of generous help from Ottawa. He said Ottawa would help to cover the enormous cost of fighting fires and evacuating people.

I want Canadians to know that now that the bills are coming in, the Prime Minister is backing off. The fires in 1989 cost the people of Manitoba \$72 million. Under normal disaster relief formulas, Ottawa should pay half of that cost, which amounts to over \$36 million. Instead, the Prime Minister is offering to pay only \$17 million.

What happened to the Prime Minister's generosity? Did it vanish when the cameras were turned off? There is no question that Ottawa should pay its fair and generous share of the cost of fighting last summer's fires as promised. The people of Manitoba, after all, are still watching and they will not forget.

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STATUS OF WOMEN

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women is holding its annual symposium today and tomorrow on the theme of Women's Place in the Economy. The President of the council says: "We are at a crisis point.

Women are under siege". The President of the National Employment Network, calls this an anti-woman government on the attack to the feminist movement.

This is a good time to recall the record of this government on issues that keep women poor. A national day care program has been abandoned. Bill C-21 cuts unemployment benefits and hurts women disproportionately. The Minister responsible for the Status of Women refuses to accept an amendment that would have given equal access to training programs for women.

The government, which should be leading the way in enlightened employment and pay policies, instead is perpetuating sexual stereotyping and negative attitudes. It hurts women by withholding pension reforms that are its obligation under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. For months it has left the Court Challenges Program in limbo. After cuts last year to women's programs, the latest blow is the slashing of federal funding to women's centres while hundreds of thousands of women across this country are beaten daily. Women are not deceived by empty rhetoric. They want action.

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[Translation]

SPORTS

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, the sports community is reacting to the "English-only" trend, and Quebec francophones involved in cross-country skiing feel very strongly they have been humiliated.

At a committee meeting, it was decided that from now on, Quebec would withdraw and stay away from all competitions, whatever their size, held in cities that had passed unilingual resolutions.

The city of Sault Ste. Marie, which has given the "English-only" trend new importance, hosted a Canadian championship two years ago. In the present circumstances, the winner, Pierre Harvey, would have been unable to take part.

The Quebec federation wants to remind the Canadian association it has a duty to ensure that Quebec is respected as a province. In future, it will be up to the executive to make sure it selects sites where our rights will not be trampled on.