

*Oral Questions***CROWN CORPORATIONS**

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that the question at stake is every bit as important as a matter of principle as is the strike at Eaton's. That is why I am directing my question to the Prime Minister.

The question I now have goes beyond Air Canada's current strike, and has application to every other Crown corporation and government agency. Considering that the Government announced with great fanfare on International Women's Day its policy of equity for Crown corporations, and considering the Abella commission said that converting full-time jobs into part-time jobs was the opposite of equity, can the Prime Minister assure the House that he will instruct not only Air Canada but all other agencies of the Crown that we are not going to get increased numbers of part-time jobs for women at the expense of full-time jobs for women?

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party made reference to the employment equity plans that were mentioned on March 8. Those employment equity plans will rely on the data that will be forthcoming from the Crown corporations in question, from the companies in the federal sector that are mentioned, and so on. With regard to Crown corporations, employment equity will take effect as of September of this year. For the first time we will have the data necessary in order to see whether the very matters the Hon. Member raises are in fact taking place. That is why we are so pleased that we are moving in this field and we will for the first time do something to protect jobs.

ABELLA REPORT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, the way the Government is moving is backwards, not forward. It is taking its advice from Eaton's instead of from the Catholic Bishops. It should be listening to the Bishops for a change.

My question is for the part-time feminist or the election time feminist, the Prime Minister, and involves a basic question of equity. Does he agree with Judge Abella when Judge Abella pointed out that when you convert full-time jobs to part-time jobs, instead of advancing the cause of women you take women backwards? If he agrees with that, will he stand up and say he agrees with it and state that he will make sure that Air Canada reverses its bargaining position, and will make sure that no other agency of the Crown does what Air Canada is trying to do?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP seems to think that he has a monopoly on any kind of virtue floating around. His remarks about part-time commitments to equality for women are deeply unfair, and he knows it. He is looking at a Government which has appointed a record number of women to senior Cabinet offices, a Government that responded promptly and

equitably to the Abella report, which introduced progressive divorce legislation, and which increased handsomely the number of appointments of women to senior roles in the public service.

● (1430)

We made a genuine commitment to enhancing the rights of women across the nation, and we shall do so, notwithstanding the snarky remarks of the Leader of the NDP, who is a part-time politician in this regard.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL INDUSTRIAL EXPANSIONCONDITIONS IMPOSED ON EVENTUAL ACQUISITION OF MITEL—
GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. In 1980, the Government of which he was a member at the time awarded Mitel a grant of several million dollars for expansion projects. The decision to award the grant was conditional on following requirements being met: purchase of Canadian capital equipment, production in Canada of 75 per cent of the company's micro-electronic products, and finally, a priority option for the Canadian Government to purchase shares of the company. Could the Minister give the House the assurance that the conditions imposed on Mitel by his Government at the time will also be imposed on the future buyer of the company?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I already answered that question. I believe it was the lead question put by a member of the Official Opposition. We are well aware of the undertakings that were given by Mitel at the time to which the Hon. Member is referring and we intend, of course, to make sure that those conditions are met and honoured.

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT'S APPARENTLY CONTRADICTIONARY ATTITUDE

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. Considering that the Minister has already endorsed the British take-over, I think he is making it very difficult for FIRA to do its job.

How can the Minister say that they want to set conditions for potential buyers, when he seems to consider the acquisition and take-over as a foregone conclusion and has already given the company his blessing?

[English]

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member obviously underestimates the gravity of the situation with respect to Mitel.