

Oral Questions

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, that claim is outrageous. The government brought forward a \$40 million program to help women in that difficult situation which I described as a crime against humanity. There are specific programs and those programs are not affected by this budget.

Let us not forget that there are a lot of other program areas that particularly help women. Almost \$1 million of the new funding for multiculturalism has been applied to immigrant women and visible minority women. Funding for the disabled persons program has been increased this year again. Sixty-two per cent of the disabled people in the country are women. It is another way in which we are helping. The Aboriginal Women's Program will receive the same amount of money as last year, a very important amount of money, over \$2 million. Within the existing program of the Department of the Secretary of State, there are significant funds still available which will be helpful in promoting equality and social justice.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. Eurasian milfoil, an aquatic weed species, has infested many of the lakes in the interior of British Columbia. This rapidly-growing weed has choked off many of the recreational areas. It is also seriously affecting the tourism potential throughout the Okanagan and Shuswap lakes basins.

Is the minister prepared at this time to initiate a federal program to help eradicate this nuisance weed which now threatens to invade many of our salmon-bearing streams and rivers?

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, we are concerned with this specific situation. I am awaiting a report to learn more about the solutions that can be found and who would be responsible for those solutions.

Mr. Lyle Dean MacWilliam (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, the minister should know that both the provincial and regional governments have in fact been fighting this battle—a losing battle, I might add—for some time. Does the minister know that his ministry's 1988 federal water policy actually commits the govern-

ment to promote co-operative federal-provincial endeavours to protect and enhance the quality of our water resources on issues such as this?

Can he explain in light of this policy why the government has not at this point provided financial assistance in British Columbia's fight against Eurasian milfoil infestation?

• (1450)

Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, everyone in Canada knows that we are in the process of setting up an environmental plan for the next five years for Canada.

This week I will have the pleasure and honour to release the consultation documents wherein the main parameters of the plan will be unveiled. There will be a very intensive consultative process in the next few weeks, during which all of Canada will be visited by ministers and people from all levels of government.

In the fall there will be a set of solutions in the plan which will address the main issues of environment. I trust my colleague will be satisfied with what we have proposed.

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[Translation]

TEXTILE INDUSTRY

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. The textile industry, the clothing industry and the Quebec government spokesman condemned the conclusions of the report of the Canadian International Trade Tribunal on textile tariffs, which advise reducing customs tariffs and overlook the fact that the industry is governed by the regulations of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement under Article XIX of GATT and also by a free trade agreement with the United States. Could the minister give them the assurance that he will give them enough time to present their views and recommendations before the government decides whether to implement these proposals?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the tribunal has already met 500 companies and several associations representing the textile and clothing industry. It has also visited about 40 companies to try and understand the problems facing these two industries. The tribunal's report was sent to me only a few days ago,