

Oral Questions

al offices across the country have been told to hire private security guards to protect them from peaceful women's demonstrations.

Will the minister explain to the women of Canada why there is enough money in the Secretary of State budget for rent-a-cops but not enough to keep the doors of women's centres open.

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, there is a need to protect the confidentiality and to allow the staff to continue to serve the numerous client groups which recognize how well we have been serving them through the years. On the other hand, we would want it recognized very clearly that while core funding has been discontinued as a consequence of the budget, and we all understand that there were some difficult decisions made, we do have project funding with flexible criteria that are being applied.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Jan Carnogursky, Deputy Prime Minister of the Czecho-Slovak Federative Republic.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I also wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of Mr. Bronius Kuzmickas, Vice-President of the Parliament of Lithuania.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S CENTRES

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (South Shore): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State. It is well known that core funding for women's centres is a provincial responsibility but in some provinces, like my own, the province does not participate. Consequently the budgetary decision to cut core funding for women's centres has left centres such as the Second Storey Centre in Bridgewater in the lurch.

What measures is the minister prepared to take to ensure that women's centres which are providing valuable, important and essential services for Nova Scotians do not have to close their doors?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Mr. Speaker, I indeed have recognized the importance of the women's centres and have also indicated the important role they are playing and will continue to play in our community. The program funding is available and I have encouraged groups to start completing applications which we said we would fast track and even help to complete.

I might say that the Second Story Women's Centre in Bridgewater did complete an application, and submitted it on Tuesday. It was approved yesterday and the cheque will be ready today.

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[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment and concerns the need for an environmental assessment of the construction plans for a coal-fired power station at Point Aconi, Nova Scotia.

The Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans both said no to a similar request for the Oldman River Dam, and the courts told them they were wrong.

This time, will the Minister order a public environmental investigation so that the project can then proceed without damage to the environment and without the chance that it might be stopped half-way, wasting several million dollars?

Will the Minister finally decide to protect the environment?

[English]

Mr. Lee Clark (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the very significant Oldman River dam decision, Environment Canada officials are very closely investigating a number of projects which are under way or have been proposed in recent months. As a result of those preliminary investigations it does appear as if the EARP process might well apply to the Point Aconi project because of possible fishery impact. But it is too soon at this time to give a definitive answer.