

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Such a motion can be presented only with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: No!

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ALLEGATION UNITED STATES PAID CANADIAN TO PRACTISE
GERM WARFARE AGAINST CUBAN AGRICULTURE—MOTION
UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity under the terms of Standing Order 43. In the light of a story, just released, to the effect that a Canadian technician said he was paid \$5,000 by American Intelligence in 1962 to use germ warfare against turkeys in Cuba, I should like to move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles):

That the government be asked to investigate reports that U.S. Intelligence has paid a Canadian agricultural technician to practise germ warfare against Cuban agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: Such a presentation can be made only with unanimous consent. Is there such consent?

Some hon. Members: No!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): That will get you the turkey vote.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

MEASURES TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN WHO
ARE HEADS OF FAMILIES

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister or for the minister responsible for the status of women, or anyone who is acting for either—perhaps it is the hon. member for St. Boniface, the minister responsible for Lord knows what. My question relates to the fact that unemployment statistics released last week indicate there is a particular crisis facing Canadian women who are out of work and looking for work. It relates also to statistics indicating that 9 per cent of families in Canada are one parent families and that 78 per cent of those are headed by women. In light of this serious crisis for Canadian women and for the families that many of them have, can the Acting Prime Minister tell the House whether the budget at the end of the month, or any other legislative initiative this year, is going to bring to this House of Commons specific programs to encourage jobs for women who are heads of families?

[Mr. Symes.]

● (1410)

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will be presenting his budget next week and it is not possible for me to forecast what the contents of that budget will be.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

REASON FOR SMALL NUMBER OF WOMEN IN EXECUTIVE
POSITIONS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): We understand forecasting to the government is associated with Communist ideology or some other foreign intrusion.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Perhaps even the weather.

Mr. Clark: Or perhaps the weather. I should like to ask the Acting Prime Minister about a matter that may be within his competence. Since the number of women employed at the executive level of the Canadian public service increased, from 1974 to 1975—the latest statistics which are available—by a total of three while the number of men in the Canadian public service at that level increased by a total of 94, can the Acting Prime Minister explain to the House of Commons why the increase in the number of women in senior executive posts in the Canadian public service has been so trivial?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will have to take this question as notice; it is not a field in which I have particular competence, as does the hon. member.

Mr. Clark: A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Neither the Acting Prime Minister nor his colleagues have any competence or any interest in this question, and that is what concerns us here. Since the latest statistics of which the Acting Prime Minister should be aware indicate that 70 per cent of the women in the Canadian public service now earn less than \$10,000 while 70 per cent of the men in the Canadian public service now earn more than \$10,000 a year, indicating that Canadian women in the public service are being frozen into the lower income categories, will the Acting Prime Minister now give us a commitment that the government of Canada will initiate immediately a review of the fundamental handicaps to women's career advancement in the public service of Canada?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has drawn the attention of the House to a matter of considerable importance. Obviously, I intend to ask the minister who is responsible for this particular aspect of government policy to look into it and to ensure that the facts which the hon. member has brought out are considered.