

### Oral Questions

consultations with universities, think-tanks, the private sector and various provincial governments, a new organization, the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology, has been created. Yes, indeed, independent. It is that board which has assumed more and more of the responsibilities which previously in some areas had been assumed by the Science Council. It was felt by the government that while all of these agencies clearly had a certain value that this was the appropriate—

**Mr. McCurdy:** They were just too critical.

**Mr. Mulroney:** My friend says they were just too critical of us. They were not critical at all. They were supporting the policies of the government. They thought that the government had taken the proper move in creating the National Advisory Board on Science and Technology which created, for example, the Centres of Excellence, some hundreds of millions of dollars that have been distributed into universities across Canada.

**An hon. member:** Scholarships.

**Mr. Mulroney:** The Canada Scholarships Program which provides for 10,000 new scholarships in science and technology to be given to Canadian students across Canada. One of the conditions is that 50 per cent of all of those scholarships must be held by women.

\* \* \*

### THE BUDGET

**Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is quoted in the media today as calling Ottawa a fat city. This is a gross insult to the people of Ottawa. It is a gross insult to any city.

Yesterday the budget eliminated over 20 agencies that presently employ hundreds of people. I want to ask the minister if he conducted any studies that justify the closure of these agencies and if not, will he put an immediate stop to this harsh and unfair insult to the taxpayers of this region?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I never referred to Ottawa as fat city. If the hon. member has the quote, I would like to see it, because I cannot recall ever making it. I would certainly like to see it.

### PRESENCE IN GALLERY

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to draw to the members' attention the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Karl Erik Olsson, Minister of Agriculture from Sweden.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

\* \* \*

### PRIVILEGE

#### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE H

**Mr. Scott Thorkelson (Edmonton—Strathcona):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege.

On February 18 the members of Legislative Committee H apparently voted to adjourn consideration of Bill C-203, an act to amend the Criminal Code concerning terminally ill persons *sine die*.

This extremely unusual procedure has effectively meant that the bill is dead and will not be brought back to the House of Commons. This action on the part of the legislative committee has breached the privileges of the House of Commons and of individual members. It constitutes contempt of the House.

In addition to setting a dangerous precedent, it also flies in the face of repeated commitments to the empowerment of members. Under the Standing Orders of the House, bills that receive second reading are referred to a legislative committee for study and consideration.

It is important to appreciate the purpose and significance of this stage in the legislative proceedings. The sixth edition of Beauchesne's describes legislative committees as follows, in citation 759(3):

Legislative committees are appointed by the House to consider specific bills and amendments thereto.

It also sets out the function of a legislative committee in citation 798:

The function of a legislative committee is to consider the bill for which it was created, and to report the bill with or without amendment to the House.

This point is also made in the fifth edition at citation 763:

The function of a committee on a bill is to go through the text of the bill clause by clause and, if necessary, word by word, with a view to making such amendments in it as may seem likely to render it more generally acceptable.