

## Oral Questions

[English]

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what the government decided to do was to abolish the order in council positions that are traditionally characterized as patronage positions.

As the hon. member will know, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women named people by order in council. There was a question put by women's groups across the country to which we responded. That question was: How can a person on the advisory council be at arm's length from the government when they are in fact appointed by the government?

It is for that reason we have taken the research funds and the funds that were previously paid to finance the order in council appointments and have ploughed that money back into research, which will be made available to women's groups across the country so that they can set their priorities instead of having them set by order in council appointees.

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## NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the Jeffries report identified critical leadership shortfalls in the Canadian forces. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the report's lament that soldiers are constantly asked to "do more, with less for less".

General Jeffries has been honest and courageous in saying what the minister seems ready to ignore: that he and his officials demand more but give less.

Will the minister acknowledge that it is the responsibility of good leadership, including himself, to allocate priorities and commitments according to resources, and that this responsibility has been neglected?

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after question period yesterday I received a copy of the memorandum General Jeffries had sent out and I went through it rather meticulously. Most of the contents of that memorandum paralleled the recommendations and the commentary of the special joint committee on defence to which the hon. member was a signatory.

On page 49 of the parliamentary report the committee said that morale was not a problem because of poor leadership. The hon. member now wants us to believe that the opinion he had with all the rest of the members some four months ago has somehow been changed.

The fact of the matter is that the committee of which he was a prominent member made a lot of recommendations. All those recommendations have been accepted and all the questions that General Jeffries raised are being dealt with in a full and consistent manner.

• (1435)

**Mr. Jack Frazer (Saanich—Gulf Islands, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ with the minister that all the recommendations have been accepted. Quite a number have not been accepted or instituted.

General Jeffries noted:

The difference between what is necessary and what is affordable is made up by people, people who are required to deploy more frequently, perform more tasks, work longer hours, take more risks.

He concluded that operational capability—

**The Speaker:** Order. I find today that the questions are really a little long and so are the answers. Would the hon. member please put his question directly.

**Mr. Frazer:** Mr. Speaker, having received this advice, will the minister ignore it, as he did in the case of the airborne regiment, or take action now to avoid what the report referred to as "a hollow army and burnt out soldiers?"

**Hon. David M. Collette (Minister of National Defence and Minister of Veterans Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to impinge on the goodwill of the House by reading yet another section from the same memorandum but I feel compelled to do so.

General Jeffries states in the memorandum that despite some of the formidable list of dissatisfiers, morale remains for the most part high. He goes on to embellish that. I think that is good enough.

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[Translation]

## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. On January 18, the minister, in reply to a request made by his counterpart in Quebec, refused to explicitly prohibit female circumcision and other genital mutilation, under the pretext that the current provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada sufficed.

Why has the Minister of Justice refused to explicitly add female circumcision and other genital mutilation to the Criminal Code of Canada, as requested by Quebec's justice minister, Quebec's human rights commission and all of the experts in the field?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to point out that opinions on this controversial issue are divided. In fact, according to an article in today's *Le Devoir*, Quebec's council on the status of women does not necessarily agree with the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women on this issue.

The Quebec council believes that amending the Criminal Code could inadvertently drive the practice even further underground and the federal government agrees. We are more in favour of trying to heighten awareness in communities with a