

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Now my question for the minister is on another subject. The pattern is very clear: demonstrators are arrested on the Hill, native people's communications programs are ended, debate on the GST in Parliament is interrupted and Canadian women are ignored. Is the minister prepared to assume her responsibilities in Cabinet and fight to restore the programs for the women of Canada?

[English]

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that my hon. colleague would not be condoning anyone breaking the law under any circumstances.

What I would like to bring to her attention is that my colleague, the Secretary of State, last week advised this House that a special allocation of project funding had been made available to the provinces of Newfoundland and British Columbia whose senior officials went to Newfoundland last week and met with officials of the women's centres to assist them in deciding on how they wished to proceed. The money is there. It is available for the women's centres if they wish to take advantage of it.

I would also like to point out to my hon. colleague that this government has undertaken considerable efforts for the women of Newfoundland. Just a few months ago the government opened a women's enterprise centre in St. John's, Newfoundland with the support of \$800,000 from the Atlantic Opportunities Agency. That is an example of the variety of ways in which we can support services for women in Newfoundland and across this country.

Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister.

I think the minister has her priorities mixed up. Next she will be sending in the army against the women of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. McLaughlin: Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women at the time of the budget cuts said that they would be "potentially devastating". Surely, if the minister is willing to listen to the women of Canada, they are saying that they are devastating now.

These are services for battered women, for women with family problems, to assist women to get into the job market. They are essential services.

Will the minister reinstate core funding for these women's centres? She knows that project funding alone cannot keep these centres going and that it is core funding we are talking about.

Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to get the record straight. First, the women's program of the Secretary of State is a limited program to fund advocacy and education activities of women's organizations. It is not designed to support services for women. Very clearly, in the terms of reference for the women's program, it says it does not fund services for women.

In terms of the services for women in the provinces of Ontario, the province of Manitoba, and to a great degree the province of Quebec, it is the provincial government which bears that responsibility, using 50-cent dollars under the Canada Assistance Plan. We should be working as the province of British Columbia, my colleague has said, on a task force to look at the appropriate way, a better funded way, in which to provide services for women in the provinces of British Columbia and Newfoundland where the provincial governments have not picked up this aspect.

I am prepared to work with them, I hope that they will as well, to ensure that these services can be provided for.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

Mr. Speaker: I wish to draw to the attention of members the presence in the gallery of the Hon. A. W. Lacey, Minister of Commerce and Technology of the province of New Brunswick.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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FISHERIES

Hon. Roger C. Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the acting minister of fisheries, the acting Prime Minister, in his latest of many acting roles.