

*Oral Questions*

suggestions on an appropriate mechanism which would ensure that we move forward with initiatives. We will also continue to address the root causes and find whatever might be the most appropriate way to deal with this terrible scourge in Canadian society.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Halifax):** Mr. Speaker, I know and I appreciate the comments of the hon. Minister responsible for the Status of Women, but I repeat, I asked and I want to know the views of the Prime Minister in this matter.

In these days with the threat of guns, the threatened closure of women's centres, ruinous cuts to women's research and development, and over-all, a recession that we all know clearly aggravates domestic violence, can we expect the announcement of a royal commission from the Prime Minister? If we cannot expect a royal commission, what does the Prime Minister believe? What is he prepared to announce today to give hope to Canadian women? Is he prepared to say that all of the women who have died—not just those in Montreal, but all of the women who have died—have not died in vain?

**Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women):** Mr. Speaker, I think my hon. colleague recognizes, as we all recognize in this House, that we have to continue our work toward full equality for women in all aspects of society. That is a challenge for all of us. It requires legislative measures. It also requires some fundamental changes in many of the attitudes that we have entrenched within our system for so many years.

We will be addressing all of these issues, and I know I speak not only on behalf of myself but for all of my colleagues and the Prime Minister, that we will seek new measures and new ways to achieve that fundamental goal of equality for women enabling Canadian women to live without fear.

**Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. With all due respect to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, who I feel is trying very hard to work on behalf of women, I ask the Prime Minister a question today because I think Canadians would like to know what the Prime Minister's commitment is.

This is the one-year anniversary of the tragic killing of 14 women in Montreal. We all, men and women, grieve for those victims and for their families. We also grieve

for the one in ten women who are beaten by their partners, for the one in four women who are assaulted, or for the women, one of whom is raped every 17 minutes in Canada, and for women who experience sexual harassment in the workplace and on campuses. One year after this massacre in Montreal, there is still not a woman in this House of Commons, not a woman in this country who can walk in the streets of a city in Canada and not feel fear.

This is not a social issue, this is a political issue. Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that we have to begin addressing the real problem of violence against women by addressing the issues of unemployment, poverty and programs affecting women in our society?

**Hon. Mary Collins (Associate Minister of National Defence and Minister responsible for Status of Women):** Mr. Speaker, I know that when the Leader of the NDP talks about those frightening statistics, she shares with all of us the grief that is felt by not only the families of the women who were killed at École polytechnique but the families and friends of women who are victims of violence in this country. Part of understanding the issue is talking about it, admitting that it exists. It is important that all members in this House recognize the extent of this problem.

We do know that there are links between violence against women and other issues affecting women's economic and social status in this country. That is why this government will continue its effort to ensure that women are able not only to improve their economic status in this country by ensuring that we work toward full employment and a viable economy, but that we work on the other issues of concern to women as well, work to ensure language training for immigrant women, work on new programs dealing with family violence and work in a whole variety of ways so that women finally can achieve that full equality, not only in the House of Commons and legislatures across the country but throughout Canadian society.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is directed to the Prime Minister. In its last Budget, the government decided to cut funding for women's centres. Next March, many women's centres across Canada will again be affected, including 42 in