

tion. It is our intention—well within the delays provided for in the Constitution—to bring in an omnibus law which will erase those aspects of the current laws which are contravening the Bill of Rights.

APPLICATION OF CHARTER TO STATUS OF WOMEN

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, it is quite one thing to talk about equality rights, and I want to ask the Prime Minister about that because I believe the record of the Government is abysmal in that respect as well. But I am talking about acts on the statute books right now which are in clear contravention of the Charter of Rights. I want to know when the Prime Minister and the Government are going to bring forward legislation to rectify that situation.

With respect to equality rights, is the Prime Minister saying to the People of Canada that the Government is going to stand by the letter of the law and wait until 1985 before bringing in amendments to the Indian Act, to the unemployment insurance provisions, and to other pieces of federal legislation under the control of the Government and this Parliament? Is he saying to the women of Canada that the Charter of Rights has no application in terms of equality rights until 1985?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Of course I am not saying that, Madam Speaker. I do not understand the meaning of the Hon. Member's preamble. I am talking about legislation which is on the statute books now and which has to be changed, either in the equality sections or in other sections. I said that the Minister of Justice is bringing in an omnibus piece of legislation in order to set as many things as possible right in that legislation. I can only hope that we do not have, from the Opposition, as we did with the Bill of Rights itself, the kind of systematic and mindless opposition which we had when this legislation was before the House, and when that Party over there prevented us from making it into law for a period of many months.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Madam Speaker, if it was not for the Opposition, the Constitution Act and the Charter of Rights would have been a far more inferior product than that which was finally passed by the Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

POSITION OF LITIGANTS SEEKING PROTECTION OF CHARTER

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is saying to the people of Canada that the Government is playing no role, it is going to sit back and, some day in the future, it is going to bring in some omnibus Bill which might change the offending provisions of the current law so they will not offend the Charter of Rights. What he is saying to the people of Canada is that they must go to the courts at their own expense. The little man has to fight in the courts in order to protect his own rights. In only one instance is

there any assistance by the federal Government to litigants and that is in the case of language rights.

Will the Prime Minister not consider making provision within the bureaucracy to assist legitimate Charter cases? In the alternative, possibly by way of supplemental assistance, will the Government create an independent institution which would fund legitimate Charter cases and support individual litigants who might not otherwise be able to afford their defence in court?

● (1420)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member seems determined to set up strawmen and then knock them down. He says that we are leaving it to the litigants to set their record, to fight for their rights under the Charter. I have just finished telling him in two answers that, no, we will change the laws so that the litigants do not have to go through that process of fighting.

An Hon. Member: When?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, I find it difficult that the Opposition asks, "When?", when we have constant reports from our House Leader trying to get legislation which is obsolete now, almost, and the Opposition does not want to pass it. Perhaps Hon. Members opposite can give us some kind of a meaningful timetable to pass the urgent legislation, the legislation that was put before them at the beginning of the Fall, and they were unable to give us a timetable. I find it a bit hilarious that they are suggesting new legislation, new expenditures, and new advertising campaigns, if I understood the Hon. Member's first suggestion.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Truth in advertising is all we want.

[Translation]

Mr. Trudeau: As to the statement that the product is flawed, I am prepared to agree. For instance, the product is flawed with respect to the constitutional amending formula. Had it not been for the filibuster of that Party, we would have had a constitutional amending formula which would have given a right of veto to the four Canadian regions, the Province of Quebec included. It is rather paradoxical to hear the former Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party advocate more power for that Province, when it was his own Party which prevented us from implementing a constitutional reform which indeed would have had such a result.

[English]

REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF PROPERTY RIGHTS

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, I want to make a suggestion to the Prime Minister as to how he can perfect the Charter in a very fundamental way. The Prime Minister will know that Section 7 of the Charter contains only three of the four fundamental democratic rights, notwithstanding the fact that on January 22, 1981, before the