

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the judgment has been appealed. We are taking the position in the Court of Appeal that the judgment was in error.

With great respect to the hon. member, there is nothing at all inappropriate about the government saying that it disagrees with the court judgment, and it is appealing it.

We will be making our arguments to the appellate court and we are confident that those arguments will prevail.

**Mr. Garry Breitkreuz (Yorkton—Melville, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this confirms what I am saying.

The decision is being appealed by the Alberta government, not the federal government. It is my understanding that the federal government has not even applied for intervener status. Yet the minister says and continues to say: "We will pursue the appeal with every confidence that we shall win it".

The Attorney General of Canada has publicly vowed to pursue and win the appeal. How can the defendant ever get a fair trial?

**Hon. Allan Rock (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to begin with, what is at issue is the validity of an instrument created under federal jurisdiction. I am very confident that the federal interpretation of the law will prevail.

Second, the Alberta government, as the hon. member has just pointed out, agrees with the position. It is taking the appeal. It will argue the appeal and it will contend that the judgment should not stand.

Third, there is a world of difference between commenting on the facts of the case implicating the guilt or innocence of the accused person, which would be improper, and commenting on the legitimacy of a piece of legislation before the court on a legal argument as to validity. There is a world of difference and nothing improper at all has occurred.

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**HEALTH**

**Mrs. Dianne Brushett (Cumberland—Colchester, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

A recent Statistics Canada study indicates that women in Cumberland county have the highest rate of hysterectomies in the country. Because the rate is two to three times higher than the national average, because it is a costly invasive surgery removing the uterus, will the Minister of Health investigate to determine if these alarming statistics are unnecessary surgery?

**Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, phenomena such as this occur across the country. While the issue of medical practice is largely a responsibility of provincial

governments, the federal government has taken some initiatives in this regard.

In collaboration with provincial governments as well as national medical groups, Health Canada has developed guidelines for Canadian clinical practice. As well, the National Forum on Health is taking a close look at why patterns of medical practice differ across the country.

We are launching and have launched centres of excellence that will be looking at the entire issue of women's health. The government is determined to address issues of women's health that have been ignored for a very long time.

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[Translation]

**PUBLISHING**

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage. In the midst of the Ginn Publishing controversy, the heritage minister, we will recall, proved to be incapable of adequately looking after the interests of Canadian publishers. One year later, the minister does it again, announcing cuts in excess of 33 per cent to Canadian publishing development assistance and 71 per cent to grants for the distribution of new publications.

How can the minister justify such extensive cuts, which will hurt publishers, after his gross mishandling of the Ginn Publishing issue?

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us not get ahead of ourselves here. We are in the process of reviewing programs, to see how they can be amalgamated to increase efficiency, and the stakeholders will be consulted in the process.

**Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, how can the minister claim to protect publishers when he is chopping programs specifically designed to offset losses resulting from the elimination of the postal rate on books and the introduction of the GST, two measures that are still in effect?

• (1455)

**Hon. Michel Dupuy (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these measures were taken by the previous government. What I am saying is that we are looking at ways to replace these various programs with new and more efficient programs.

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**CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

**Mr. Bob Ringma (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, given the Somali incident, the Petawawa videos and the low morale in the armed forces and the fact that the members of our armed forces are being forced to do more with less, what does