

*Adjournment Debate*

Some people might accuse me of overdramatizing. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the women who came to see me in my office today, and those who saw the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the Secretary of State, will be able to assure you that this is not excessive. It is the truth. We need an answer, and we need it now.

**Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the hon. member's concerns conveyed on April 6, I can only reiterate that the Secretary of State expressed his commitment that day to the advancement of Canadian women and to organizations representing their interests.

Ours is a sensitivity balanced with the realization that all sectors in our society share a responsibility with us to put a sizeable dent into the crippling national debt which has become the legacy of our inheritance. We admit that we are asking a lot from Canadians. This is not a popularity contest, but a contest with time. The longer we wait, the less you and I will pay, Mr. Speaker, but it is our children and their children to come who will be stuck with our bills. We want to grant our children the financial security that the hon. member talked about.

It would actually be easiest to shield Canadians from the truth about the deficit. This government, however, does not subscribe to any blind eye school of accounting.

Our budget will reduce the deficit to \$23.5 billion next year and cut it in half to \$14 billion in three more years. We are bringing Canadians ever closer to the goal of cutting the deficit in half by 1993-94.

We are building an economy which will allow Canada to have the social programs and the opportunities needed truly to ensure equality for women, an equality backed with funding in the bank, not on credit.

The budget measures are not an abandonment of this government's promise to promote equality and justice for women. This government's record since 1984 is one of commitment to women. Funding reductions to the women's program of the Secretary of State do not break the promise to work for equality and justice for women. The women's program will still support more than 550 groups in this fiscal year.

The hon. member was quite correct in stating last week that the minister told us that women's groups now receive project funding. She even cited a women's centre, as she did tonight, in Nova Scotia that had just been granted \$46,000 of project grants. If our colleagues on the other side do not listen to us, well maybe they will listen to the member for Halifax.

Let it be stated emphatically, and once again, that the women's program will continue to assist women's groups in Canada. Money is available for project funding for groups undertaking activities that meet the mandate of the program. An organization's overhead costs that are related to project activities can also be funded.

Clearly the Secretary of State will help the centres continue their activities and will be as flexible and as generous as possible in applying funding guidelines and eligibility to criteria.

• (1820)

During the four years that preceded our mandate the previous government spent \$12 million on programs to assist women.

In 1984 this government decided that women's programs needed generous funding. Since that time we have more than quadrupled the amount to \$56 million in the women's program support. We have added relevance to our partnership with women's organizations from coast to coast, and our partnership remains in place.

[Translation]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Phillip Edmonston (Chambly):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the Minister of the Environment or his parliamentary secretary more questions about the famous Green Plan which was released a few weeks ago.

At that time, when I asked questions in the House, I even accused the government of talking a lot but doing little about environmental protection. I maintain the same accusation today because several weeks have passed since I last spoke in the House and I learned that not only does the 29-page Green Plan of fairly vague questions contain no financial commitment of the government, but in the last two weeks I also learned that many environmental groups have criticized the government very severely for its inaction.