

Statute Law Amendment Act

one, I do not consider that putting in the word "spouse" for "husband" and "wife" is a major change. It is purely cosmetic. The same is true when it comes to replacing the words "son" and "daughter" with "child". I hardly consider those changes very substantial when it concerns equality of people.

I think we should seize this opportunity in debating this very important issue to remind the Government of some of the commitments it has made toward equality. I think we should remind the Government of the promises it made in terms of equality for women.

● (1140)

Mr. Taylor: Which of you is making the speech.

Mr. Boudria: I await anxiously the participation in this debate of the Hon. Member who is heckling me from across the way. I am sure he will recall the meaningful commitments of the Government toward establishing equality. Equality is not achieved simply by replacing one word with another in a document, saying that everything else is too controversial and that one has to return to the drawing-board for more input. That is not leadership; that does not advance equality. There will not be equality for women until we change the situation whereby women on average make 60 per cent of the salaries of men. That is first and foremost. I, along with other Members in the House today, have children. In fact, I have a daughter, and I will never accept the notion, and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you would not either, that she is worth only 60 per cent of someone else's son. That is not good enough for me and I am sure it is not good enough for all Hon. Members. Equality has to manifest itself in a way where there is financial equality, and many things will evolve from that equality.

I listened to the Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald) when she spoke about the family allowance issue. That is an important issue because if we remove from women the only money they have in many cases, we will not achieve a step toward equality. We will go one step backward, and that is not progress. We have to start by achieving financial equality. At that point, if it ever happens, perhaps we will realize that the law is unfair because family allowance cheques are always made out in the names of women. Once financial equality has been achieved, perhaps that would be a proper subject to raise. We need not worry about it this week or next week because at the pace we are going now, financial equality will not be achieved in the near future.

The other day the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Coppins) indicated very eloquently in the House that the Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight), the lead Ministry in terms of equality for women within the Government, was satisfied, pleased, proud and so on, to have a 1 per cent increase in the number of women participating within his own Department. That Department is supposed to set an example for all other Departments. In fact, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East calculated that it would take until the year 2025 to achieve equality within that Department, the Department which is supposed to act as a catalyst for other Departments. That is dismal. It does not coincide with some of the Tory promises

during the election campaign last summer, promises in terms of fairness and equality. I should like to read a few of them to you, Mr. Speaker, because I am sure you will recall having heard some of them.

Mr. Nunziata: And making some of them.

Mr. Boudria: No, no, our Speaker is non-partisan. One promise was to work with the provinces to achieve complete pension reform which would guarantee all Canadian men and women fair and adequate pensions for their retirement years. For many years the federal Government tried to convince provincial Governments to include the child rearing drop-out provision in the Canada Pension Plan so that women could leave the workforce for a number of years without affecting their level of pension. That is not to say that the provision meant that women had to contribute while they were off work; it merely asked that they not be penalized for the years they were removed from the workforce for the purpose of child rearing.

Who was against this provision and fought the federal Government for years and years? It was the Conservative Premier of the Province of Ontario. Even after all other provinces wanted to end the present structure and opt for the child rearing drop-out provision, Ontario refused. The provinces must be in accord before changes are made to the Canada Pension Plan. I am sure the House is aware that the CPP does not have a Quebec component. Therefore Ontario represents greater than a third of the population of the country and has an effective veto over changes to that plan. It used that veto for years to stop the child rearing drop-out provision from coming into effect. That is a dismal effort in terms of equality.

Only recently have we seen a last minute, deathbed repentance on the part of the Conservative Government of Ontario which now claims to be ready for this particular change. It is taking a long time to reach this point, and women have been penalized because of the actions of the Government of Ontario which refused the change. It refused this change because it had borrowed extensively from the pension fund and did not want to add benefits in that it would have to repay some of the funds it owed. In order not to repay, it told the women of Ontario that they could not get the increase in benefits they deserved which the rest of the country and the federal Government wanted to give them. That is the sad record of the CPP.

I should like to continue with some of the Tory promises in terms of achieving equality, particularly for women. Government Members promised to make the federal Public Service a model to be followed in regard to equality of women in the workplace. I have already enumerated what the Minister of Labour is advocating. I do not read in this particular promise that the Government would act as a catalyst for the private sector from the year 2025 and on. This was not advocated during their campaign. Another promise was to implement an effective affirmative action program with adequate control, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms within the federal Public Service, its agents and Crown corporations. They have