

*Adjournment Debate*

commitment to funding for women's shelters and other support services.

However since that time the review by the Minister of Human Resources Development has taken place. We have heard a lot of prebudget comments being made. Indeed there are Liberal members of Parliament who are advocating that these services to women's groups be cut or reduced.

As well, the federal government is considering combining transfers for social programs, health programs and post-secondary education to provinces and territories. One of the concerns in this regard of many groups across the country including myself is that it could break the social consensus that has been built in Canada. It has been one of the strengths of Canada that says that regardless of where one lives geographically and regardless of income there are certain standards of service that one gets as a right of a Canadian citizen.

It is also my feeling that these proposals to do this transfer without national standards would in the end hurt women more than men. Single mothers could lose many of the supports they now have. We know that is the group with the largest number of unemployed.

The Canadian Action Committee on the Status of Women estimate that violence against women adds at least \$1 billion a year to the bill for health and related services in Canada. It is the time for zero tolerance of violence against women. Yet I do not see from the government or in the Deputy Prime Minister's response a true commitment in this regard.

We have the Minister of Justice introducing gun control legislation that he says will make women safer because of the number of women who are victims of violence. Yet there is no proof the legislation he is proposing would do that.

It seems hypocritical to me that there is one piece of legislation that we are told by the Minister of Justice will make women safer in their homes, again with no proof, and at the same time they are looking at either not funding at all or severely reducing funding for services that provide information, counselling and protection for women who have been victims of violence.

I was quite interested in doing my research to come across a letter written in 1990 by the opposition at that time to a women's centre. It stated that core funding cutbacks, that is those proposed by the former Conservative government, would have a devastating impact on women seeking shelter from family

violence. That letter, by the way, was written by the now Solicitor General.

I want to ask again whether it is the policy of the government to have a real plan to combat violence against women or simply a public relations effort and whether in fact the government and the minister will be committed to having core funding for women's shelters to provide the services that help women who may be victims of violence.

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have already demonstrated our commitment.

In 1994-95 for the women's program of HRD Canada the contribution was \$4 million in core funding to a broad cross-section of women's organizations across Canada which carry out a clearly defined program of activities related to the areas of economic equality, social justice and access and participation.

In addition, the women's program and the disabled persons participation program of the same department are involved in the family violence initiative, providing approximately \$5.5 million for community based initiatives to raise awareness and promote institutional change.

I remind the hon. member, and I know how very deep her commitment to this issue goes, that in the February 1994 budget, the women's program budget for group funding was spared from the 5 per cent across the board cuts made to other HRD programs. That is commitment.

This government has also moved quickly toward prevention of violence against women. We have taken prompt action in several areas. The Minister of Justice today tabled gun control legislation. As well there are the amendments to the Criminal Code's peace bond provisions to be proclaimed into force on February 15, 1995. These amendments will provide increased protection to women and other victims of violence before the courts.

That is commitment and it is a commitment we intend to carry on with.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** Pursuant to Standing Order 38, the motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7.26 p.m.)