

Supply

again take that kind of affirmative action to enable women to get into non-traditional occupations? Or is the Government once again simply going to leave it to the market-place and to the employer, which have traditionally given and continue today to give men the advantage?

● (1115)

We have recommended that 50 per cent of all federal training places should be allocated to women. The House will recall that we also advocated that 42 per cent of job-creation funds should go to women, as women constitute 42 per cent of the labour force. As well, we advocate that 50 per cent of training programs and retraining programs should be allocated to women, because women constitute one-half of the population. The Government has done nothing to provide that kind of affirmative action for women in job training and retraining programs. Indeed, as I stated previously, the Government has cancelled the one program which existed. Therefore, we call upon the Government, in the coming Budget, to rectify the past and to consider job training and retraining for women in a serious and affirmative way.

The third matter with which I would like to deal is job security. Job security is incredibly relevant today. What is happening—and Air Canada, a Crown corporation, is an example of it—is that employers are cutting back on full-time jobs and the security which goes with those full-time jobs. That is what the CALEA strike is about. In that case a Crown corporation, Air Canada, is attempting to have more of its employees work on a part-time basis or on contract. That will only lead to lower wages, no benefits and, of course, no security.

Why is this particularly important for women? Because women constitute 72 per cent of the part-time workforce. Almost three-quarters of Canadian part-time workers are women. Women will be pushed in increasing numbers into part-time work if the present trend continues. Of course, this is happening in the private sector as well and the Government has shown no interest in taking the initiative which it could to reverse the trend.

In relation to job creation, training and security for women is the whole concept of affirmative action. We had thought, given the statements which were made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) last summer, that very strong federal action would have been taken to ensure the hiring and promotion of women to make up for the past disadvantages which women have suffered. I will concede that the Government has done one thing as a result of the Abella report. It has suggested to the private sector that those companies doing business of more than \$200,000 a year with the Government establish a plan of action for the hiring and promotion of women. I agree that this is a first step, but they are given three years to work it out and there is no way yet provided by the Government to ensure that they will in fact work out a plan of affirmative action. There are no sanctions upon the companies if they do not work out a plan and no enforcement requiring them to do so. The Government is really basing its policy on blind trust and good luck, as

my colleague stated. There must be an enforcement mechanism and this is what we in the New Democratic Party have advocated. We hope that in the Budget itself the Government will recognize not only the principle of affirmative action but some of the costs in financial terms associated with it, and all of the reasons why only affirmative action will ensure women's equality in the work-place.

● (1120)

Equal pay for work of equal value is another concept which has been with us now for almost ten years or more. Again, much was said about it in the election campaign by the Conservatives and, indeed, by all Parties. Here again one small step has been taken, namely, that new guidelines have been established by the Human Rights Commission for enforcing equal pay for work of equal value. However, the onus is still on those who are not getting equal pay for work of equal value to raise cases. It does seem incredible that federal employees have to be the ones to take the initiative to get the federal Government to do something which the governing Party promised it would do on its own. And that remains the case. Employees must take action against their employer. There is no change there.

There is one step which might actually be retrogressive which seems to suggest, under the guidelines of the Human Rights Commission, that the rights of the individual to complain may be removed and only group rights will be recognized. I hope that the Government will take a very serious look at that implication, if that is in fact what is implied.

What is also needed, Mr. Speaker, is adequate funding for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which is why we have also included this in our motion. If it is going to be the enforcement agency for the provision of equal pay for work of equal value, it has to have sufficient funds, staff and resources to do the job.

There are other areas where the Government could have taken, and could still take in the Budget, steps which would remove some of the inequalities which women face. In small business, for example, everyone recognizes that women have proved to be in many instances successful entrepreneurs. It used to be one in ten successful small business entrepreneurs were women. It is now one in three. So more women are now becoming successful entrepreneurs, and we applaud and commend that development. Many women in small business do not have access to credit on the same grounds as do men. There is a discrimination against women, which has been well documented, in the provision of credit. Women are still seen as not being quite legitimate in the business world.

● (1125)

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) let the cat out of the bag on March 4 when he was asked by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan (Mr. Angus), why the Government did not include in the Small Businesses Loans Act a concentration on women and particularly their inaccessibility