

men did since the beginning of the session took another turn. At any rate, if other members have something to say, I would invite them to do so later, they will have a chance to be recognized. For now I have the floor, and if there is any respect for democracy, we should be allowed to express ourselves. It is not that often that we have a chance to do so.

First I would like to pay tribute to Canadian women for their tremendous input in the building and development of our country. This week, under a motion by the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) we had an opportunity to commemorate the recognition of the rights of Canadian women on the 50th anniversary of that event. It takes us Canadians a long time to get the picture and to recognize people's rights. That is what we did about Canadian women. Still, Mr. Speaker, it is a great honour and a duty for me to move a motion to favour the family by a policy of equity and justice toward the basic cell of society—the family—to whom we owe our being here tonight. Since the first debates in this House more than 100 years ago, the representatives of Canadians did not consider family policies many times. Sure, the House passed the Family Allowances Act and later on improved it through amendments, but changes made to it in the last session of the Thirtieth Parliament are still a controversial issue.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to believe in 1979, in a free, democratic and developed society, that we did not more often give a chance to the basis of our society to grow and become stronger, in order that the family, the basis of our society, could benefit from the recognition of the law, with all its rights and also to be in a position to assume all its responsibilities.

We are all guilty, we can beat our breasts when we see the divisions within our families, because we have always ignored their importance or even their existence. And yet we all mention the importance of family life in our speeches at the time of an election. Yes, in the last election campaign we saw that the party which is now in the official opposition, and which was then on the government side, had included in its program the recognition of the rights of the housewife in the following sentence: "that a value be set on the work of housewives and added to the gross national product". I was very happy to hear the then prime minister say that this would be included in our legislation, in our statutes, that it would be officially recognized through legislation so that a value could be set on the work of the woman who decides to work at home.

Mr. Speaker, twice already I have had the opportunity to present the same kind of motion in this House. Last year, when I introduced that motion, a government member of that time made the following remark: This motion is exactly the same one moved by the hon. member in the previous session. At that time, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) rose and said that he agreed that it was the same motion but he added: it proves that the hon. member for Bellechasse has a good memory, that he is convinced of the merits of his views and is ready to solicit again the support of

Social Security

all hon. members and to convince the government of the urgency of such a proposal so that we can at last recognize the rights of women working at home. Mr. Speaker, Canadians are watching us more critically than ever.

I hope that those who control the frail levers of power will work to this end. As for us, we hold the balance of power or whatever you want to call it. I recall the old balances used by our grandfathers with an arm on which you only had to move the beam to the extreme right to lift the weight at the other end. The balance is now going down! We used this balance not so long ago in the House on the amendment motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne. We used it freely and objectively and we shall continue to play our role of opposition in the same way.

This is why I say that we are in a very special situation and that whatever the obstacles placed in our way, we are determined that the wheels will continue to turn. We have a duty and a mission to fulfil in the House and that is what we are doing tonight during this debate.

Mr. Speaker, in amending the basic motion that was tabled earlier—since we amended it somewhat to enable all our colleagues in the House to unite in making this a reality—we took into account the fact that this policy should be applied on a voluntary basis so that, as several members and ministers noted, women will not feel that they all have to leave the labour market. This is freedom. If a woman wants to work outside her own home, it is her business. On the other hand, if a woman decides to stay home, it is also her business. On this point, Mr. Speaker, we are proud to recognize wholeheartedly the principle of equality and freedom for both men and women in Canada.

● (1710)

This policy is one that gives access to the family, not only from a quantitative point of view, meaning its monetary aspect, but even more from its qualitative point of view, in recognizing the importance of housework. In my opinion, we should seriously think about it.

As everyone knows, the family is the first free enterprise in our country and we must recognize it as such. It has become evident that we must consider as a member of the labour force in our country each person who assumes the responsibilities of a family. Also, our duty is to ensure the profitability of the family enterprise, as we do every day for small and medium businesses and for the multinationals. We also must take an important step forward by including housework in our gross national product.

As indicated by Mr. Hawrylyshyn in his "Review of some recent propositions to modify and extend the measure of the GNP", I quote:

Such an imputation must be included in the GNP as a measure of means since very important services come from this activity outside the market.