

Supply

I would like to thank the member for raising another issue which I found shocking. How can he reconcile that the government minister responsible for the status of women, I believe he said, had a role in building and opening the Campbell River Women's Centre and creating it as a community activist, with the fact that she is now failing to fight for it? I find it fascinating that that is happening.

I would really appreciate it if the hon. member would comment on that and possibly also, in terms of regional development, the failure of this minister to fight for the *Polar 8* which is also in her riding.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Madam Speaker, I agree that the minister responsible for the status of women is in a terrible position. First of all she, with other women in the community of Campbell River, realized the shortfall in services to women and the desperate need for a resource centre there. She got out with those women and campaigned in order to get the funding and the program rolling.

I happened to see her presentation on CBC after the news on Sunday night in which she was justifying the activities of the federal government. I have to say it is a terrible act of hypocrisy to know of those needs, to be moved to the point where she became involved in trying to resolve those needs with other women in the community, and then to turn around and to say that what the federal Conservative government had done was acceptable. That could only be construed as an act of hypocrisy.

I would let her conscience deal with the matter of finding the remarks of the Minister for International Trade funny. I mean that is such a tragic comment from a person so highly placed in the government that the appropriate action is a resignation, or a demand for the resignation.

I think that both of those ministers have some very serious soul-searching to do and certainly owe the public of this country an apology. In addition to the apology we need a change in behaviour. We need solid support for those women's resource centres. A partial funding, core funding, of those organizations is not acceptable. Putting them on a decent footing so that they can provide the needed services to the community is absolutely essential.

• (1710)

Mr. Lyle Kristiansen (Kootenay West—Revelstoke): Madam Speaker, I would like to add my own words of congratulations to my colleague from North Island—Powell River, particularly for his reference to the closing of the women's centres in the context of the debate on regional development.

I know some members of the House may have a hard time understanding how the two jive together, but I can assure the House that, as my colleague knows, in areas like mine in the West Kootenays and his in North Island, women often do not have access to the kind of social service institutions at the sophisticated level that they do have in major urban areas. Those centres do play a very vital role in the economic and social development of women and their organizations in hinterland areas.

People from my own constituency often find themselves here in Ottawa on behalf of the women in trades movement. I often see them in the galleries because they have been acting as advisers to the government on policies dealing with those issues. They, along with their sisters in the Nelson women's centre, in our case, are now being cut off totally at a time when we are seeing major construction programs beginning in our area and they finally have a chance to take advantage of some of those employment and economic opportunities. It is absolutely criminal and stupid. It is counterproductive for the government to be making major cuts to those kinds of development organizations just at this time.

The only other short comment I would like to make, and if my colleague has time to comment he may wish to, is on the major cuts that we now see emerging to the Forest Resource Development Agreements. The former Liberal government continued to make cuts to forestry over years and years. Finally, in its death throes, in the last one or two years, it saw the light and brought in a program that in 1983-84 saw some \$55 million from the federal government matched with the government of B.C.

When the Conservative government was elected in 1984 it thought it was doing great things when it spent \$30 million a year over five years. But we forgave it that annual cut because at least it did it on a sustained basis and it made some sense. Now it is going back to the worst