

Supply

Before he presented his first budget, the Minister of Finance told Canadians to expect a realistic budget.

[*English*]

The finance minister had said before the last budget to expect a realistic budget. The reality is that in this country 2.3 million people receive some kind of social safety help; approximately 1.5 million have no jobs; 3.8 million people, among which we have over 1 million children, do not have the basic necessities, and more than 60 per cent of single mothers, divorced or separated, are poor.

This budget will not help this problem at all. It has not helped to bring up the quality of life for women. In fact, this budget has many measures which will hurt women and children.

[*Translation*]

Millions of Canadian women are penalized in many areas.

- (1550)

The Conservative government has given up its promise to implement a national child care plan. Yes, Mr. Speaker, you heard right, this Conservative government has not kept its promise made eight years ago and has thus eliminated a way for women and children to escape poverty.

It is misleading for the government to have Canadians believe that they had to choose between child care services and programs for children at risk. Why does the government set poor and abused children against those who need safe affordable day care?

Canadians know that the government reduced funding for family allowances by over \$3.5 billion since 1986. Its reform measure, the child benefit, will not help fight poverty. This benefit will not be good for single mothers on welfare. The child benefit is not indexed to inflation, so its real value will go down.

The Conservative budget also eliminates the Court Challenges Program, which was set up in 1985 and gave women, minorities and disadvantaged groups financial assistance needed to defend their cases in court, as provided in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Without the funds provided under this program, the rights in

the charter will remain meaningless principles for disadvantaged groups.

Another blow dealt by this government to women is the calling into question of the spouse's allowance. The purpose of the Spouse's Allowance Program is to help disadvantaged older people under 65 until they are eligible for old age security benefits and the guaranteed income supplement. The government would seriously reconsider the Spouse's Allowance Program if the court extended it to divorced and single people. If the Mulroney government follows through, it will affect the most vulnerable, the poorest people aged 60 to 64, most of whom are women.

Another example of this government's irresponsibility is the downgrading of pay equity. The government announced that it would abolish the Pay Research Bureau, which collects and provides information that helps determine salaries, benefits and working conditions in the public service. It also announced a reduction in back pay for public servants.

In fact, the government does not intend to give any more back pay for the period before November 1, 1990 and will take the necessary action in Parliament to carry out this decision. For some 80,000 public servants, this is a rejection of the principle of pay equity.

Mr. Speaker, not only has this government abandoned its promise for a national child care plan, eliminated the Court Challenges Program, called into question the spouse's allowance and downgraded pay equity, but it has gone so far as to cut funds for social housing. Many single, separated or divorced mothers urgently need social housing. The Mulroney government announced that growth in spending on social housing would be limited to 3 per cent until 1997.

[*English*]

In 1990 this government limited its moneys toward the construction of social housing to \$91 million. In 1992-93 it is reducing this amount to \$70 million and it will be down to \$45 million in 1996. When you speak of social housing, again in large majority it is women and children who are affected.

The Mulroney government has also cut co-op housing and this cut will greatly affect single parents, the handicapped and some of the less affluent Canadians who are