

*The Budget*

ridings. There are amazing differences between the communities we represent as well as within these communities.

I think that our society can only be enriched by such diversity. We are not divided by our differences but by our silences.

[English]

It is fortunate that we have a forum such as this Chamber from which our travels can begin, where we can discover our similarities, share our differences, our ideas, our knowledge and ourselves.

I envision a walk which encompasses the beauty of our country. It will be a colourful walk. There will be mountains to climb and prairies to cross, for our walk will be as long as our country is vast, yet always there will be colour in the languages we speak and in the land around us. We will walk through the blooming of springs and the harshness of winters and we will come through having understood that we can only succeed if we walk together, if we leave no one behind.

Just as I will work to see Burlington grow and succeed, I will work to ensure that Canada also flourishes. We must build a healthy economy for our future generations and a society with racial and gender equality. These goals are mutually inclusive, for our economy can only be strong if everyone has equal opportunity to participate.

If we do not have full equality our development as a nation will suffer and when we have equal participation in Canada we will be at our strongest internationally.

This government's first budget sets a stage from which to strengthen our country. The reforms being sought by the Minister of Human Resources Development will continue that process.

I am proud to be part of a government that recognizes the inequities in our present systems, a government that is committed to making meaningful changes for all Canadians.

This is a historic budget, the first to note the different economic impacts on women in Canada. Too many Canadian children are living below the poverty line, especially in single parent families headed by women. The budget commits the government to examining the issue of child support payments to ensure fairness in taxation as it is critical to the future of many young Canadians. In my view child poverty in Canada is a threat to our economic future and a complete waste of our resources.

The budget will have a positive effect on small businesses. I am pleased to support Burlington's Business Women's Network, a group fostering entrepreneurship and encouraging growth among Canada's most successful business starters, women. People like Roxeanne Moffat, owner of Hillcrest Florist, and

Nancy Brewer, who started her own accounting business, are models of excellence and commitment to our fellow residents and to young people.

The axiom think globally, act locally is certainly relevant to Canada and is important to remember as we set the course for our new Canada. If we improve ourselves at a local level we can have a positive effect on the international scene. In Burlington, for example, we have various community activities and projects which have enriched our region both economically and socially.

We have learned the hard way by allowing our once beautiful Burlington Bay to be spoiled with the sludge of industry. Now we are learning that there is a new sustainable way to develop our economy and that Canadians have a commitment to clean up our past mistakes and share our expertise internationally and profitably.

I am pleased by the variety and breadth of local initiatives to stimulate innovative entrepreneurship. Burlington's junior achievement inspires and encourages young entrepreneurs to run their own businesses. They are closely associated with and influenced by local business persons who act as mentors and peers. It is great to see both young and old working together in partnership for a brighter future.

Certainly the older citizens of Burlington have incredible knowledge and insight to share. Many of Burlington's seniors, in age only and not in spirit, have enjoyed a second career by being involved in CESO International Services, a not for profit volunteer based organizations committed to human and global development with a goal of self-sufficiency whether for the First Nations of Canada or for other citizens abroad. On average CESO's volunteers are 62 years old. They are people like Larry and Patricia McMahon and Anthony Miele from Burlington who offer their skills and knowledge to others.

I believe it is necessary for Canadians to share these resources both within and outside our national boundaries. When we take positive action at a local level we will improve the quality of Canadians' lives. Inevitably this energy will spread beyond all boundaries.

• (1715)

In Burlington we have an organization that works locally and nationally to eliminate violence against women. CAVEAT was started by a local mother, Priscilla de Villiers, and is supported and sponsored by many people in our community.

Internationally, the United Nations has followed Canada's lead in working to eradicate violence against women. This is a human rights issue as much as it is an equality issue. All of our world's citizens will benefit when women need not fear for their lives.