

Supply

The contrast in the increase in full-time jobs for women between the two periods is even more striking. During the last 30 months of the former Liberal Government's term, the number of women with full-time jobs rose by 128,000 and during the first 30 months of this Government's term, the increase was 327,000, a difference of 199,000 or over two and a half times as many.

It is important that women now have benefits in part-time jobs, that they have benefits in full-time jobs and that they get more full-time jobs. That is why the training programs we introduced have been so important. That is why the child tax credit and the sales tax credit were so important. They helped to move women out of poverty and into more comfortable and prosperous lives. We must all focus on that, particularly for elderly women, and that is why we have introduced so much pension legislation. We know how important that is.

That is the record of the Government in two and a half years. That is why I believe this motion is frivolous and should be defeated.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the Minister responsible for the status of women could call this a frivolous motion. It is a very serious motion, and I hope she knows me and my Party well enough to realize that it was put in all seriousness.

I would like to ask the Minister a question about the Secretary of State women's program which, as she knows, has been in some turmoil of late. I would like to know her view of the purpose of this program and why we have had to spend so much time, money and hours on the road with the SOS Committee defending this program when it is very obvious that the program is essential to carrying out the equality goals of the Government. Does she support the views of some Conservative Members on the committee who have been very difficult, members who have suggested that advocacy groups should not receive government funding, that groups like NAC should not be funded if REAL Women is not eligible for funding?

Second, the Minister mentioned the child care program. What is her position on the recommendation of the special committee on child care regarding the refundable child tax credit which would cost about \$300 million and put \$200 in the hands of each woman with young children? Would this money not be better spent by increasing child care spaces and improving the quality and flexibility—and I agree with her on that point—of child care across Canada?

Mrs. McDougall: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Hon. Member was not quite listening. I did not in any way suggest that she was frivolous or that the issue was frivolous. I said that the motion was frivolous.

If we are to engage in a discussion about women, we have to recognize and celebrate together some of the positive things that have happened. It is a case of whether the glass is half full or half empty. Until the glass is completely full, I would like to

talk about it in a positive way. Compared to what has gone before, the progress that has been made is something with which I can certainly face the country very happily.

I believe the women's program has made an important contribution to the ability of women to articulate the things about which they care. Like any program, it is worth reviewing from time to time. We should hear what Canadians think of the program, if the program is working and if needs have changed in the last five or 10 years. The inquiry that is being conducted both by the Secretary of State and by the House of Commons is a perfectly legitimate one. Having said that, I would certainly think it is quite worth while to continue funding some kinds of advocacy programs and I do not in any way disagree with that.

I do believe that there must be some criteria and perhaps it is time the criteria for our objectives changed. I have made no prejudgement on that. I would like to see what comes out of the House of Commons committee's study and the review of the Secretary of State. I would like to see more services for women and not just a continuation of some women's programs.

Once again, we need flexibility in child care. The report of the special committee was a very thoughtful one and attempted to deal with flexibility and the many different ways women need help in looking after children. I agree with the Hon. Member that the definition of family has changed. That means that we should do something for women who want to care for their children at home and something for women who need a structured system. We are taking that into account as we develop government policy because we all know what the options are. They are to fund the supply side, which is additional space, or fund the demand side, which is to give parents money directly. We all have a different view of where to draw the line between the one and the other.

● (1500)

I think the Special Committee on Child Care is to be commended for the work it did and the report it presented. I know this is an issue that the Hon. Member cares about as well. The fact that there is ongoing discussion with the provinces, and the report will be a part of that discussion, means that by the time we come forward with a policy it will be positive and will help the women of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister a question.

Yesterday, the Public Service Commission tabled its annual report for 1986. We are pleased to note significant improvements in the area of promotion and hiring of women in the Public Service.

A problem which seems to recur year after year is the ratio of women in senior-level positions, the so-called Management Category. We find on page 27 of the report that Government objectives have been lowered or reduced due to budgetary