

Supply

As an aside, there are those of us who would like the government to go further. It is still the situation in this country now that if there are two families, family A and family B and both have an income of let us say \$50,000 and family A has one income earner and family B has two income earners, the way the tax system is structured now family B with the same amount of income and with two wage earners instead of one is taxed less heavily than family A. A number of us think that is wrong. We would like to see the government change that at some point down the road.

Other measures in the budget that Canadian women would applaud is a \$2.2 billion reduction in the defence budget. I have certainly heard a lot of Canadian women say they would rather see the government's limited precious resources spent on improving the social climate, the social environment for Canadian families rather than maintaining troops in Europe.

The government's decision to now bring those troops back and to cut defence spending is one that is going to be applauded by a lot of Canadian women.

In fact, government spending over all is going to be significantly cut, a \$7 billion reduction over the next five years. Why is that important to Canadian women? It is important because we are maintaining our ability to fund our own social programs. That is the most important thing. If the government over-spends it puts at risk its ability to fund those things we really believe in and I know the hon. member for Halifax believes in and why she put this motion forward.

Reducing the size and influence of government is most important. The budget addresses this one head on. Forty-six boards, agencies and commissions of the federal government are going to be axed or merged together in what is a real common sense move.

All government departments are going to have their budgets cut *de facto* by 3 per cent across the board. They are just going to have to do better. They are going to have to be more efficient; they are going to have to deliver their services with less redundancy.

Grants and subsidies are being cut in this budget by another \$370 million. Even the Prime Minister and members of cabinet are taking a cut in pay in this budget.

Therefore, the size and influence of government itself is coming down.

As well, the budget attempts to help the economy, to help small business to create jobs. The tax rate for manufacturers and processors is being cut by 1 per cent from 23 to 22 per cent and then further by another 1 per cent next year. Equipment write-off can be accelerated by 5 per cent.

Why does that matter to Canadian women? Because small businesses create jobs and a lot of those jobs go to Canadian women. It is important to Canadian women to have a sound economy and a strong, vibrant small business sector.

Back to the motion. The hon. member for Halifax says she wants to promote, protect and expand fundamental rights for women. Let me just run through how some of the things in the budget address those fundamental rights of women.

The budget attempts to stabilize the economy to ensure that we have secure funding for social programs. That is a fundamental right for a social safety net which we are promoting in this budget for Canadian women.

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The budget attempts to help create jobs and helps small businesses through a tax cut. That helps Canadian women by enhancing their fundamental right to secure employment, to jobs. Canadian women want to work. They want jobs just as Canadian men do and the budget helps them in that regard.

The budget reduces people's tax burdens. That increases and enhances the fundamental rights of women to have secure income, to have a reasonable amount of their own wages in their own pockets to spend for their families, for their children.

This budget helps people purchase houses. That is important. Women, the same as men, want secure accommodation. They want access to the housing market and they want to build equity for the future.

This budget targets public resources to effective child care. That enhances women's fundamental rights to assistance for those people who need it. That is very important.