

have heard so far were the empty words uttered by the Prime Minister. He fancies himself as an actor or a comedian, a kind of Johnny Carson who does not really want to respond to the Canadian people, especially not to the women of Canada whose economic needs are so real.

When the issue of equal pay for equal work is raised, Mr. Speaker, one thinks immediately in terms of the 10 per cent of the Canadian labour force which comes under federal jurisdiction. A simple glance at the Canadian banking scene reveals that women workers, particularly at the federal and provincial levels, earn roughly 60 cents for every \$1 earned by male workers.

The Government, the Minister and the Prime Minister did promise Canadian women that, the minute they got elected, they would do something right then and there to settle that problem.

● (1820)

[English]

The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) made promises to the women of Canada upon which the election campaign was built. He told the women of Canada that the moment he was elected tens upon thousands of jobs would be created for Canadians and that the women of Canada would see not only a fair application of equal pay for work of equal value, but that they would also see contract compliance at the federal level, and that people who wanted to do business with the Government would have to toe the line. During the debate last August he said, "J'irai plus loin".

We can see—as we saw in the white paper tabled today which considers the removal of universality of benefits to families who earn \$28,000 or more a year—that it is just another shallow promise by a shallow Prime Minister and a shallow Government which have no intention of delivering on the promises made to the women of Canada.

All partisan politics aside, the women of Canada showed during the constitutional debate in 1982 that they would not take a second stage or a second seat to anyone. The women rallied on all political sides—Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats and non-partisans—to ensure that the women of Canada were given equal rights under the Constitution, against the thrashings, groanings and moanings of the premiers of the Progressive Conservative persuasion in Canada. The women of Canada will not be silent. They are looking at this Government. They are judging the Prime Minister, not on the basis of his verbiage, of which there is plenty, but on the basis of his action.

If we look at the economic results which have occurred since September 4, the political results, and the unfulfilled promises made to the women of Canada, it is clear that this is a Government with a Prime Minister who had no intention of

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keeping the promises, who did not deserve the trust of Canadian women or the vote of the Canadian people, and who will be roundly chastised by the voters when they have an opportunity to return a Liberal Government. A Liberal Government will deliver on its promises in a way which the Conservatives have shown they are unable and unwilling to do. The women of Canada will wait four years and will continue to fight for the equality which has been denied them by the Government and the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has not even bothered to show up in the House for this very important issue.

[Translation]

Mrs. Gabrielle Bertrand (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the question raised today by the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) is of critical importance, but I really wish she could raise it more calmly and less aggressively. If she did, we women could perhaps get better results.

It is a fact that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is essential for women to gain economic equality. As the Hon. Member is aware, two departments and one agency—

Ms. Copps: I did not need to read my statement.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please.

Mrs. Bertrand: Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member should know, two departments and one government agency are responsible for applying the principle of equal pay for work of equal value within the Public Service. First of all, as the employer for the whole Public Service, the Treasury Board has the overall responsibility of determining rates of pay. The Department of Labour keeps employers informed about government policies and encourages them to recognize the problems which can exist in the workplace and to find mutually agreeable solutions. Finally, the Canadian Human Rights Commission receives the complaints lodged by employees coming under federal jurisdiction who were unable to obtain satisfaction from their employers.

I wish to emphasize that, to this date, four types of complaints laid by members of the Public Service have been settled to their satisfaction. The employees involved were able to obtain a satisfactory settlement in every case. It is only recently that one case had to be referred to a panel of the Human Rights Commission.

Legislation guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value has existed since 1977. However, these measures by themselves are not enough. They have to be applied efficiently. In the Speech from the Throne we find a commitment by the new Government guaranteeing compliance with the principle of equal pay in all sectors under federal jurisdiction. The Minis-