

equality of opportunity. Our economic policies are putting Canadians back to work by the thousands every month and are creating hope in every region of the country. Our social policies seek to ensure that every Canadian has a full and equal opportunity to be employed and share in Canada's renewed economic prosperity. We propose the abolition of mandatory retirement as an absolute rule.

The Government is fully committed to expanding the role of women in the Armed Forces and will ensure that women will be able to compete for all trades and occupations in a manner consistent with the requirement of the Armed Forces to be operationally effective in the interests of national security.

Ms. Copps: Oh, yeah!

Mr. Crosbie: I repeat, to ensure that women will be able to compete for all trades and occupations. Already the Government has proposed an employment equity program to enhance the level of participation of disadvantaged Canadians in the workplace. We have acted and will continue to act to extend benefits to part-time workers to ensure that they are treated fairly. We have made a commitment to resources for the Human Rights Commission so that it can actively pursue the implementation of equal pay. As a matter of fact, it is an amount of \$500,000 for the next fiscal year. Reforms will be made to the Canadian Pension Plan to ensure that its provisions fully comply with the charter equality guarantees. Of course, two-thirds of the provinces having two-thirds of the population of Canada have to agree to changes in the Canada pension Plan. We have made progress and will continue to take initiatives to ensure barrier-free access for disabled individuals. The Secretary of State (Mr. Bouchard), who is sitting behind me today, announced on December 10 the steps we will take in that connection. The Government will take measures to ensure that the mentally disabled have full voting rights and equal protection and equal benefit under the law.

There are parallel reform processes presently under way. The Department of Justice is engaged in a major review of the Canadian Human Rights Act and in a long-term overhaul of the Criminal Code. Legislation will be arising out of the Badgley and Fraser report shortly. A commission of inquiry is looking at all aspects of unemployment insurance. The National Task Force on Child Care will report in the spring, and a parliamentary task force has been set up. As I mentioned, consultations with the provinces on pension reform announced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) continue and agreement has been reached on a number of those proposals. Employment equity is being tackled with the Employment Equity Act which was introduced and passed recently. Women's pensions have been given high priority and attention. Flexible retirement, I am announcing today, is our intention in respect of federal jurisdiction. In all these areas, including immigration, parallel progress is being made with initiatives which will demonstrate leadership in promoting equality, fairness and social justice.

I believe our response is a progressive initiative. It demonstrates the leadership of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney),

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who is very much interested in the promotion of equality, fairness and social justice. I trust that all Canadians will join us in the spirit and the letter of the law and that all people across the country share our commitment to fairness and equality in this society and will be supportive of the principles that are being announced which will guide the Government in its conduct.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1120)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my dismay at the Minister's cavalier treatment of such fundamental questions as equality and non-discrimination. It is just incredible, especially today, during women's week, when we were expecting a detailed report here in the House so that Canadians who are listening can make sure their legislators have acted responsibly and have taken the legislative, not the judicial route.

[*English*]

The detailed response just presented to us by the Minister, I believe, should have been written by the Minister responsible for sports because it skates around most of the issues. All it has really done is said: "We agree with the Adam Smith equality perception and the free market should determine what should happen to visible minorities, handicapped, women and the native people". It is true that a number of the issues have been covered. For my part, and on the part of the Liberal Party, it is with much regret that I heard the Minister's response and at 10 a.m. this morning received the ministerial document. I have not had time to really review it in detail, but I hope that my detailed review will give me much more hope that the wishes and needs to protect minority rights is more important than majority will. That is what my hope will be as I go through it clause by clause and recommendation by recommendation.

My quick flip of the material from ten o'clock until now has indicated to me more studies, more questions and very few areas of definitive action. I hope I am wrong, Mr. Minister, and if I find I am wrong I will apologize to you personally. Right now all I know is that we spent just under \$1 million to do our study and now there are more studies. You had the Katie Cooke report and now you are going out to do more studies on child care. That is totally inadequate and totally unnecessary.

Mandatory retirement is obviously against the law, but have you legislated in that area? No, you have not. Age being a factor of discrimination is now illegal. We must not substitute that retirement policy for a personnel policy, and rights are not an administrative convenience. Decisions must be based on *bona fide* occupational requirements, not industry standards.

Mr. Speyer: That's what we said.