

ests it would not have cancelled the Court Challenges Program.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of State and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): I do apologize but I would just like to designate tomorrow, Wednesday April 1, 1992, as an allotted day.

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SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S. O. 81—WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Ms. Clancy (p. 9052).

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear the debate by the hon. member. As usual, he has been very strong on many issues concerning women, as has been the tradition of the Liberal caucus.

I would like to make a very brief comment. Insofar as the pay equity program is concerned, we have to remind Canadians that they should listen and look and watch and hold this government accountable.

The government must be made to realize that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality for today and not for tomorrow. A real test of the commitment on the part of the government is for the government to develop innovative programs. During these days of fiscal restraint, one approach would be to look at reallocation of resources to ensure that pay equity happens today.

I would like a brief comment from the member if he agrees with that approach.

Mr. Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, of course, I agree. It is a question of allocation of resources, of choices, and it is critical that the government recognizes its obligations under pay equity provisions and makes sure that women are paid fairly within the Public Service.

Mr. Ray Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to pose a question to the hon. member. It goes in the way of comment. Every responsi-

Supply

ble politician in Canada must not just support the idea of equality for women, but must work actively to achieve it.

On Thursday, March 12, 1992, on television in Gibsons, B.C., the leader of the Liberal Party of B.C. said that he believed in pay equity for women, but not now. "We cannot afford pay equity for women".

It is unacceptable for the leader of the Liberal Party of B.C. or any other responsible politician to say that our society cannot provide pay equity. What Mr. Wilson is saying is that my three daughters and every other woman in Canada are not entitled to equality with men because it cannot be afforded. Mr. Wilson has said that women must remain in the job ghetto so men can continue to enjoy privilege and advantage, that women must remain in the job ghettos because we cannot afford to provide women with equal opportunity. Why? Because they are women.

Mrs. Diane Marleau (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to stand today and support the motion of my colleague: That this House condemn the government for its failure to protect and promote the fundamental rights of Canadian women, especially as reflected in the 1992 budget.

I would like to preface my remarks by saying that I do very much understand the predicament of women in Canada. I, myself, was raised, along with my two brothers, by a single mother at a time when women were paid a lot less for doing exactly the same job.

I am pleased to say that in many areas they are at least paid substantially the same money now, but pay equity certainly has not come into full force.

[*Translation*]

I rise today to denounce the harmful consequences of the recent Conservative budget for Canadian women.

During the years of Conservative government, more and more women and children have swelled the ranks of the poor. The connection between parental poverty and child poverty is beyond doubt, and there is no denying that women are over-represented among the poorest segments of society.

Although poverty in any form is unacceptable, the alarming number of single-parent families headed by women who do not have enough to live on is intolerable.