

support in what should be their golden years. It is so often the case that women who lack other means of support become "brides of the state"; governments become the husbands of last resort, impotent ones at that. Daycare, greater financial resources for child rearing, shelters for battered wives, maternity benefits, affirmative action—these are all issues which are very much with us. I am pleased that the Government of which I am a member, has addressed these issues with positive and forthright action.

• (1530)

I mentioned maternity benefits, Mr. Speaker. It was this Government which extended eligibility criteria and made it possible for adoptive parents to have paid parental leave. It is not always well known throughout Canada, because this happened just within the last year, that the Government doubled the child care tax deduction to a maximum of \$8,000 per family.

After much pressure on the provinces, we made it possible for women to drop out of the work force in order to raise their families without losing their Canada Pension Plan benefits. We have undertaken the establishment of a thorough public task force on pensions and will respond to its recommendations very soon.

I plan to bring a re-examination of financial arrangements for daycare to the forefront at the next federal-provincial meeting of ministers responsible for the status of women. We have allocated over \$9 million since 1977 to fund 666 shelter units for the victims of family violence under the CMHC non-profit housing program, and this support will continue.

We have boosted financial support for women's groups in 1984 to \$15 million. In the Speech from the Throne it was mentioned that the Government would reinforce its financial aid to women's programs. Just three weeks ago my colleague, the Secretary of State (Mr. Joyal), and I announced this additional funding to allow women's groups to continue the research and networking so essential to the development of progressive, commonsense policies to meet the needs of Canadian women. I am especially pleased that \$500,000 per year for the next five years will go to the establishment of chairs of women's studies in Canadian universities. If any Members have had an opportunity to read the Symons-Page report they will know that this is one of the recommendations it put forward. I recommend this report because it states quite graphically the plight of women in Canadian universities.

The Government has demonstrated a commitment to the advancement of women both as participants in the paid workplace and as the people who, for the most part, raise our children. It has acted to remove, reduce and eventually, we hope, eliminate the trauma associated with acts and practices which denigrate, degrade and dehumanize the female person. We have instituted guidelines in sexual and personal harassment in the civil service. We have implemented guidelines to remove sex stereotyping from all government communications. We have amended the Canadian Human Rights Act to protect against discrimination on the basis of sexual harassment,

pregnancy, family or marital status as well as physical or mental handicaps. We have revised the criminal statutes to make the prosecution of sexual assault a less traumatic experience for the victim and, more important, we have acted to remove the distinction which in the past viewed rape as something other than an act of violence and assault.

We have established a parliamentary committee to study sexually abusive broadcasting. We have set up a special committee to study the thorny issue—and it is a thorny issue—of prostitution and pornography. We fund a woman's group called Media Watch to monitor and alert women to sex stereotyping in the media. I am pleased to say that my colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mr. MacGuigan), is planning amendments to the Criminal Code to deal with these issues.

There are very few problems that I can think of facing Canadian women that the Government has not addressed in some form or another. This country serves as a model to the rest of the world for the degree of importance we attach to the emerging needs of women. Our record, while certainly always in need of improvement, stands proud among the nations of the world.

Our response to the United Nations resolution on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women was the most thorough and comprehensive report of all signatory nations. As a matter of fact it is being hailed as the prototype for other nations.

My Department has initiated consultations with provinces and territories in order to complete for the United Nations the 112 page questionnaire on the progress achieved in implementing the goals of the United Nations, namely, decade for women, equality, development and peace. Work on the questionnaire constitutes the first step in activity on our new plan of action on the status of women. Canada will be seeking re-election to the United Nation's Commission on the Status of Women in order to continue our international work for the advancement of equality for all women.

I could go on for the next hour or two reeling off the lengthy list of achievements of the Government in tackling women's issues. I should like to pause for a moment, however, and as we head into the next phase of the Government's mandate, consider what choices face Canadian women.

It is a very clear choice. The present Government's commitment to women is unassailable. This Party has a woman president, a woman as head of the policy committee, an extremely active and influential women's commission, more women Members of Parliament than the Opposition Parties combined and we have as many women in Cabinet as the Tories have in their entire caucus. We appointed the first woman Speaker, the first woman Governor General, the first woman to the Supreme Court. We have named many, many women to important posts within the Government. In fact, I would be very happy to distribute to Members the latest list of 1983-84. We have traditionally and consistently fielded more women candidates for elected office than any other Party.