

*The Address—Mrs. Duplessis*

living in an era of internationalization, where our own future well-being will depend very largely upon international trade. That is why our Government is trying to find new and secure markets for our exports and carrying out bilateral negotiations with the United States. As a member of the committee on Canada's international relations which held public hearings throughout Canada, I can assure you that Canadians share our government's view that successful negotiations would guarantee future generations of Canadians a promising economic future.

Finally, my fourth objective was to make it possible for women to play a more significant role in our society. Because we represent 52 per cent of the Canadian population, it is quite normal to see to it that our interest is adequately promoted.

Our Government is quite sensitive about the advancement of women in our society; that is why in implementing the new Canadian Jobs Strategy, we will set up for the first time objectives focussing on the participation of women, greatly helping them to find a long-term and productive job.

The Throne Speech has revealed the high priority which the Government is placing on the elimination of obstacles impeding the full and free participation of women in our national life. We are happy with the significant increase we have witnessed these past few years in the number of women appointed to the highest levels of the Public Service and to various Federal boards and commissions. However, this is only a first step towards full equality. I would urge the private sector to follow this example, and we need the co-operation of the private sector to guarantee the success of our endeavour.

Adopting the employment equity principle, as outlined in the Abella Report, is entirely in line with the Government's commitment to full equality for women. The measures announced to ensure that Crown corporations, federally-regulated businesses and contractors providing goods and services to the federal Government give women and visible minorities better employment opportunities have already been adopted by the House of Commons.

Personally, I am one of those who firmly believe women must be encouraged to set their sights increasingly on decision-making and executive positions, and not only in the traditional sectors but also in the sectors of the future.

As you probably know, I am very interested in the high technology industry. During the last election campaign, I was anxious to see carried out one of the most important projects in my riding, namely the creation of a National Optical Institute at Sainte-Foy. So I was of course very proud to have the privilege of taking part, with the Prime Minister of Canada and the Premier of Quebec, in the official announcement made on June 5, 1986.

Mr. Speaker, the institute will provide for the creation in Canada of many new and permanent jobs and for stable economic development, both at the local, provincial, national and international levels and it is further proof of the national reconciliation that has taken place.

I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, that women should obtain jobs in high technology sectors, and I think that this major project is a unique opportunity for them to find employment in these sectors. This project will also be a way to promote and encourage co-operation between governments, universities and the private sector in the field of research and development. This goes to show that our Government is aware of the increasing importance of developing science and technology in Canada and that it will spare no pains to promote its expansion.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member for a riding where the technology sector is a very important one, this announcement was very welcomed indeed. As a woman, as a former teacher and as a wife and mother, I am very glad to note that our Government has emphasized the need to eliminate obstacles to a full and free participation of women in our national life and to promote social justice and the family unit. As I often point out, I firmly believe that the family unit is the basis of our society. For me, family life is an essential aspect of the normal development of any individual and any society.

As stated in the Throne Speech, the Mulroney Government is resolved to defend and strengthen the institution of the Canadian family.

We in this House may have a special understanding of the importance of family life. I am certain that we have all realized at one time or another how difficult it is to reconcile the exigencies of a heavy workload with the desire to be with our families. We all know the importance of the support, the encouragement and the understanding we receive from our family if we are to do our job in this place.

In addition, we all understand how important it is to improve the quality of our time with our family, whatever its quantity. For most Canadians, the family is a place where there is a climate of love and trust and where each member can achieve a balance between his personal needs, the requirements of his social position and the pressures put on him by the need to get an education or to earn a living.

We ask a lot of our family unit and it asks a lot of us in return since we are responsible for ensuring its success and survival. When something threatens the family unit, there can be tragic consequences for its members. In our efforts to strengthen and support the family, we must not idealize the family unit or view it so narrowly as to exclude the experience of many Canadians. It is true that most Canadian families are what some would call traditional families. There is no doubt in my mind that when both parents participate as much as necessary and whenever possible they do the most to promote the development of their children.

However, Mr. Speaker, we must not forget that there are many single parents in our country who work hard to provide a positive family environment for their children. These men and women must meet special challenges, including what still remains of the stereotypes they represent for people with outdated attitudes. In addition, we must also recognize the role of