

Supply

in the Public Service, of which approximately 80 per cent of those jobs were women's jobs? I would like to have answers to those questions.

Mr. Stevens: That is not true.

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, I can see that unfortunately the Hon. Member did not get the gist of my remarks at all. I am very sorry about that. He needs to come to grips with the basic issues that are being raised here, especially the legal and economic equality that women should have.

Perhaps I can tell the Hon. Member that I am not responsible for the provincial Governments in this country. I would like to see all provincial Governments establish Ministries responsible for the status of women. However, I would like to see far more done by the federal Government with regard to the responsibilities it has for women through the Minister responsible for the status of women.

When the Hon. Member asks me whether I am aware that money has been allocated to pension conferences, indeed, I am. I was at many of them. At every one of those conferences I urged the people from the federal Government who were involved to take some action and to stop the talk. That is what the question is all about. We have had conferences, studies and reports, but when will we have some action?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Erola: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald). Is she aware that the Minister responsible for the status of women made a gesture to the native women in this country and asked them if they required assistance in their efforts to attend the upcoming conference?

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could inform me that there will be a representative seated at that table from the Native Council of Women, I would be delighted to offer her my congratulations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other questions?

Mr. Nielsen: Where are the answers?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is it not the intention of the Government to make any kind of statement regard to the very fine speech made by the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald)? The normal practice—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

An Hon. Member: It is the normal practice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member is not rising on a point of order. The Chair will recognize Hon. Members seeking the floor. At this point the Chair will recognize the Hon. Member for Nanaimo-Alberni (Mr. Miller).

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I rise again on a point of order. The normal practice—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Minister, presumably, at the appropriate time will rise in debate, but at this time the Chair recognizes those Hon. Members seeking the floor for the purpose of making a speech.

Mr. Deans: Is the Minister not going to speak?

Mrs. Erola: Yes.

Mr. Deans: Then why don't you speak, as is the normal practice?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member for Nanaimo-Alberni.

Mr. Ted Miller (Nanaimo-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party on this very important Opposition day motion. I congratulate the Official Opposition for presenting us with the opportunity to deal with what I think is one of the most important areas of concern in Canadian politics today.

Today we will debate the issue of women, how women function in the economy, how we as Parliamentarians perceive women's issues and the importance that we place on those issues. The Minister responsible for the status of women obviously does not want to respond to the Official Opposition at this point. I think that is an indication that she really does not take her job as seriously as she would like the public, and particularly women in this country, to believe.

Mr. Campbell (LaSalle): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Hon. Member mentions that the Hon. Minister responsible for the status of women is not prepared to answer the Opposition. She certainly is prepared.

Mr. Deans: She is not prepared. Why does she not get up and do it, then?

Mr. Blackburn: She does not have her speech prepared.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Hon. Member does not have a point of order. The Hon. Member for Nanaimo-Alberni (Mr. Miller) has the floor.

Mr. Miller: Mr. Speaker, certainly one of the things that we cannot do in this country is to isolate women's issues from economic issues. I think we all understand just what is happening to women in the workplace today. They are usually the last people hired and the first fired from their jobs.

Let me deal with the economic issue for a moment. What is happening in the workplace? What is happening to the women in Canada under an economic program deliberately implemented not only by this federal Government but by other federal Governments around the world? We have a monetarist policy which purports to fight the causes of inflation through high interest rates. Unfortunately, it puts people out of work.