

External Affairs if she can find a way to give a commitment to this House to recognize the government of Croatia so that it can take its place in the international world.

Finally, I cannot help but use the opportunity to draw attention to the fact that the government is coming forward with \$9.5 million for humanitarian relief and is taking the time to bring it before the House, while at the same time it is blotting Canada's reputation around the world and betraying a commitment to the people of the world by cutting back on official development assistance. We see in Somalia and even in Bosnia that the heart of these problems is the failure of the world to come to grips with the issue of justice and to distribute this world's goods fairly and properly. That is really what is at the heart of so many of the problems the world is facing today.

• (1530)

For the government to cut back on hundreds of millions of dollars to the poorest people of the world while it takes the time of this House to make much about its generosity on behalf of the Canadian people is the height of hypocrisy.

This minister is responsible for Official Development Assistance. It is time the government was called to account for its failures on this point.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme (Saint-Denis): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I just wanted to say, once again, it is unfortunate that the Standing Orders do not allow us to put questions to the minister or to pursue the debate on this very important issue. I have always said this is one of the weak points of the Standing Orders. I do, however, want people to realize that we are determined to go ahead and change the Standing Orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The hon. member for Saint-Denis knows perfectly well that if he wants to improve the Standing Orders, he can submit suggestions to the appropriate committee of the House.

Mr. Prud'homme: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. You may have realized that the reason I raised this point of order was to give notice that I intend to

continue, as you suggested, my submissions to the committee that is considering these matters.

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[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

HUMAN RIGHTS

Hon. Mary Collins (Minister of Western Economic Diversification and Minister of State (Environment) and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the occasion of International Women's Day to draw to the attention of the House one of the key elements of women's equality. In fact this year the theme of International Women's Day that we have adopted at the federal level is "Women's Rights are Human Rights".

In 1993 the world is more clearly aware of the abuses of human rights than ever before. We have heard the Secretary of State for External Affairs talk about it in the context of Bosnia, but there is hope because in June of this year even more attention will be focused on this issue when the United Nations hosts the world conference on human rights for the first time in 25 years. That conference will be taking place in Vienna, Austria.

Events around the world present opportunities for a more rigorous examination of the unequal treatment of women in our society and the chance to create a new ethic of justice for both genders.

The acknowledgement that women's rights are human rights also has important consequences for the way in which we view fundamental issues in our societies. The right to food, to shelter, to property, to social security, to health care, to employment, to religious and political freedom and to live without fear of violence should all apply equally to women and men. In many cases in many parts of the world they do not.

The facts underline this scenario. Women constitute half the world's population but they put in two-thirds of the working hours. They grow half the food but they receive one-tenth the wages and they own a mere 1 per cent of the world's property. They are the main educators of the world's children yet they make up most of the world's illiterate people. They are guardians of family health yet 15 million of their babies die annually from entirely preventable diseases.

We should take pride today on International Women's Day that indeed Canada has been on the forefront of international efforts to accelerate the recognition of