

head of the Conservative party and she is currently setting an example, to the prominent men of that party and of that country while at the same time giving goose pimples to members of the Labour party, if I may say so.

That goes to show that women did not wait for a law such as this one to take their place in public service more and more in business, in the professional as well as in the trading world, we see women asserting themselves and proving that they are as efficient as men, if not more so.

I believe this bill will nevertheless be welcome by the people. I hope it will be supported by all members so as to be passed following a study of all its objects for, as the minister said, it is an omnibus bill whose objective is to bring about improvement in many areas that have shown deficiencies up to now and particularly in certain fields, for instance as regards federal employees.

We are fortunate in Canada in that discrimination problems over race, colour or religion are scarce but still we should avoid sex discrimination.

We have been saying for some time now: Equal work, equal pay, not in the public service but in the case of federal employees other than public servants. For instance since 1971, a provision of the Canada Labour Code that came into force on July 1, 1971 provides that there must be no difference in the rate of pay of male and female employees working in the same industrial firm or under the same conditions, performing identical or substantially identical work, whose qualifications and endeavours are the same and whose responsibilities are identical or substantially identical.

As regards maternity leave for federal employees outside the public service, the Canada Labour Code provides a leave of up to 17 weeks, namely 6 weeks immediately following confinement and a period not exceeding 11 weeks immediately before confinement as well as any supplementary period resulting from a gap between the childbirth's actual date and the anticipated one. Afterwards, the employer must reinstate the employee in the position occupied by her at the time such leave commenced or in a comparable position with not less than the same wage and benefits. No employee shall be dismissed or laid off solely because she is pregnant. Mr. Speaker, one may recall that not so long ago, whenever a woman became pregnant, she was practically forced to leave her employment and sometimes, after confinement, she could not be reinstated in her position.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order. I regret to have to interrupt the hon. member, but it being five o'clock and pursuant to Standing Order 40, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale)—Indian affairs—With-

Abortion

drawal of vocational rehabilitation services from natives in Manitoba—Request for review and report; the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes)—Finance—Suggested review of reduction of tariff on tires; the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie)—External Affairs—Garrison diversion—Suggestion United States be asked for a moratorium on Project.

[English]

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, private bills, notices of motions (papers), public bills. There being no item under the heading of private bills, the House will proceed to notices of motions.

● (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

[English]

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND PROVINCES ON SUBJECT OF ABORTION

Mr. Stuart Leggatt (New Westminster) moved:

That an humble address be presented to His Excellency praying that he will cause to be laid before this House a copy of all correspondence between the Minister of Justice and the Attorneys General and Ministers of Health of the provinces dealing with the subject of abortion and/or section 251 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

He said: Madam Speaker, this motion was placed on the order paper some time ago; to be exact, on October 9, 1974. A long time after that, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang), on March 16, 1975, rose in the House and objected to filing the requested correspondence, in this case hiding behind the cloak of confidentiality as his reason for not submitting the correspondence. The reason the motion was placed on the order paper was a suspicion held by a great many people concerning the allegations surrounding the Minister of Justice and the administration of his particular office which was being called into question because of the interpretation he was giving to section 251(4)(c) of the Criminal Code, which may have been in conflict with the intentions of parliament at the time the code was passed and may have been in conflict with the practices and standards being applied by therapeutic abortion committees across the country.

I submit that the onus in this kind of situation is on the government. The onus is on the government, when it hides behind the cloak of confidentiality, to satisfy this House that it is not under an obligation to introduce and table the correspondence, because the public has a right to know how any particular office is being administered, particularly the sensitive office of the Minister of Justice. The suspicions that were held at the time the motion was placed on the order paper, I submit, were subsequently confirmed by correspondence that came to light not too long ago.

Section 251(4)(c) of the Criminal Code provides an exception for a therapeutic abortion where the therapeutic abortion committee has by certificate in writing stated