

Supply

I assure the House that its lack of process in this vital human need will indeed become an election issue, not in the way the Government thinks and not in the way it predicted. Its procrastination on this vital issue, its delay and lack of interest—these things which have characterized the Government's approach to pension reform—will be major issues in the next election campaign.

• (1620)

What has happened in the interim, during these three years, is that thousands of Canadians have moved toward retirement, toward that period when they are unable to provide for their own needs. They do not have an adequate income because in the years when they might have been able to do that the opportunity was not there.

That is what happened during the three year period in relation to this very definite promise the Government made to work on pension reform immediately. Three years later, we see nothing but procrastination and delay. Only now is a parliamentary committee beginning to study this issue. This is an absolute disgrace for those people who will be locked into their retirement years without adequate income and without self-dignity. They have been robbed of it because of the inactivity of this Government.

Another pledge was made to Canadians in that great Throne Speech. Is it any wonder the Government is so hesitant to bring in another Throne Speech when it sees so much that is still in abeyance, not yet acted upon. In its role as a major employer in Canada, it said:

—my Government will play a leadership role by implementing affirmative action measures in the Public Service.

I do not need to tell you, Mr. Speaker, how lacking in progressing with affirmative actions this Government has been. We have had three years of delay, three years of not implementing any kind of analysis in the great majority of Government departments with regard to affirmative action. Only in three Departments has there been any analysis or plan of action drawn up. At the present time, there are no guidelines for the Government to implement affirmative action programs throughout the various Departments. What has been the result? Unfortunately, the statistics bear out the Government's lack of action in providing any kind of leadership in the way of affirmative action.

There was some slight improvement in the lot of women in the Public Service between 1975 and 1980, but it was minimal at the executive, senior, intermediate and junior levels of employment. Only at the lowest level, the administrative support level, did women increase in number. The number of women in the low paid job ghettos increased. That is exactly what should not have occurred. Any kind of leadership role would have reversed that to bring women into the higher categories of the Public Service. That has not happened.

I said that one of the reasons the Government has been loath to bring in another Throne Speech is that it has been so inadequate in carrying out the pledges it made in the Throne Speech of April 1980. It is not enough that the Government think only about Throne Speeches. It ought to be thinking

about how to take itself out of this House and away from making a further mishmash of governing this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are Hon. Members rising to ask questions of the Hon. Member who has just spoken?

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Restigouche): Mr. Speaker, I must admit my surprise that the Official Opposition could do no better than the motion it has placed before the House today. We hear a lot of discussion about allowing Opposition Parties to bring important matters forward. This is respected within our parliamentary rules and procedures. However, to have a convoluted motion brought forward by the Official Opposition on the first day of this week is more than I can appreciate. It does give us an opportunity, however, to correct the record with regard to many of the points the Opposition has attempted to make in the debate thus far.

Canadians across this country will recall the tactics employed by the Official Opposition in these last years. Points were made in the press and by Members on all sides of the House regarding the tactics employed during the bell ringing episode.

We are participating in a session which has included 492 sitting days, an average of 164 per annum, 16 fewer than the 180 provided for in the calendar year 1983 by the recommendation of the Special Committee on Standing Orders and Procedure.

Accomplishments heading the list include the patriation of the Constitution and the enshrinement of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. We have passed 162 Bills, including 129 Government Bills, 19 Private Members' Public Bills and 14 private Bills. The subjects include the Bank Act revision, Old Age Security improvements, the Canada Post Corporation, the National Energy Program and the Young Offenders' Act. The Canada Ports Corporation was debated for over 12 years. We finally have the Bill.

The public sector spending restraints legislation which was passed affects virtually every identifiable group. All of these measures have had a positive effect on every identifiable group in Canadian society. There was the development of the parliamentary task force to investigate alternative energy. There is legislation dealing with the handicapped, employment opportunities, North-South relations, regulatory reform, Indian self-government and pension reform. This is in addition to the work of the special and standing committees. There was the Subcommittee on Defence which studied the status of the reserves, and other important matters were dealt with with despatch. This has demonstrated leadership, about which the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) was so preoccupied and concerned.

I am really surprised not only at the lack of imagination of the Official Opposition in bringing before the House nothing more substantive than the motion before us, but by the Hon. Member's gall in bringing the subject of leadership to the floor of the House at this time. Considering the headlines in the last month or so, I thought that would be the last topic she would like to talk about during the course of the debate today.

Obviously the Official Opposition laboured considerably in trying to come up with something to be debated in the House.