

Supply

This jurisdiction is one for which it currently has no control. The provinces and territories are primarily responsible for the issue of child care. As provinces enact their own child care legislation and establish the accompanying regulations regarding the number of attendants per child, physical requirements of child care settings and training levels, all important criteria, dwindling transfer payments to the provinces become an even greater issue. How can this government justify downloading more responsibility to already cash strapped provinces?

• (1130)

What I have explained here would introduce a level playing field for both work and stay at home parents and would have far reaching positive economic implications. The potential for single income families could mean a drastic decrease in unemployment. For each person vacating the workforce a job opens up for the unemployed. The parent who chooses to be at home would have the opportunity and time to volunteer at schools, hospitals or local community centres, relieving some of the financial pressures currently facing these organizations which rely on government funding. It becomes a circle for success.

We are advocating in favour of the family and those measures which will help Canadian families remain the social and economic building blocks of this country. These are the issues which affect and concern all of us, women and men. The issues of child care and the choice to work or stay at home predominantly affect women.

The Liberal budget demonstrates a lack of understanding and commitment to this fundamental reality. Reform's vision of social policy overall includes the decentralization of spending authority to the levels of government closest to the people, an improved framework of co-operative national standards, the empowerment of families and individuals, and a reinvigorated charitable sector.

It is my belief that complete equality has come to reflect the core values of what I call the new feminism. I see any attempt for change in this regard caught up in the social engineering process as sustained and subsidized by Status of Women Canada.

The Liberal budget did nothing to move us away from a tradition that perpetuates an old style of issues management, review, consult, discuss, a never ending circle of policy development going nowhere. Women want action on these issues which are so important to them.

When the Minister of Finance tabled his budget he announced he was transferring to Status of Women a women's program from Human Resources Development. When he undertook this move he transferred \$11.3 million to Status of Women, \$8.6

million of it for straight grants to special interest groups, and \$2.7 million for the administration and distribution of those grants. That amounts to an administrative overdose of close to 30 per cent. No business can afford to operate like this. No family country can afford to operate like this. No household can afford to operate like this. How can our government?

The move was followed this week by another announcement from the Secretary of State for the Status of Women. As of April 1, 1995 the National Advisory Council on the Status of Women will be disbanded. Yet there was no mention in the budget of an amalgamation of the NACSW with Status of Women Canada.

The secretary of state allowed the estimates for the advisory council on the status of women to be commissioned, estimates which were published and released. They were of no value, for not one month later the announcement was made that the advisory council on the status of women would cease to exist. The secretary of state permitted an expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars in consulting fees to produce part III of the estimates when she knew all the information contained therein would not be used. It would not be needed. What kind of leadership is this?

Not only do we have a department failing to disclose, we have wasted taxpayers money in order to further an unknown agenda at this point with respect to the budget. It is this kind of politics which has caused Canadians to find politicians less than forthright.

On the issue of this department change, it is a tentative step in the right direction in terms of reducing the size of government. I acknowledge that. However, in terms of cost reduction it really is tokenism. A saving of \$1 million cast against an exploding debt is cold comfort to Canadians waiting for an improved fiscal climate.

• (1135)

We need a dismantling of Status of Women altogether. I say this for two reasons. It would remove the stigma of special interest groups from women who are seeking to make positive change socially, economically and politically. Canadians would view this with favour as we strive to reach true equality without subsidized funding supporting these groups. It is a divisive practice creating us versus them.

We would see government moving away from the cycle of reviewing, consulting and discussing with no action. The issues important to women would be more readily addressed and quickly if it were moved into the various departments for which there would be authority for action. Violence against women could be dealt with by the Department of Justice. The whole issue of breast cancer and research would move to the Department of Health. The finance department could have the opportu-