

employment enhancement activities sponsored under Employment and Immigration Canada programs. However commendable these results may be, Mr. Speaker, the Government remains firmly committed to deal with the serious problems related to the status of women on the labour market. With that in mind, it is more than willing to examine any constructive suggestion likely to advance the cause of women, but it will not consider such vague and shallow opinions as this motion which does not lead anywhere.

● (1640)

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by paying tribute to the people who have put the question of women on the agenda of this country. They are the people in all of our communities who are seeing to it that all the various needs and concerns of women are being considered, responded to and taken seriously by those who are in authority in those communities.

I begin by paying tribute to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women which is meeting here in Ottawa this weekend. As usual, it is bringing before Canadians a tremendous range of important subjects, some of which will disagree with what each of us in our political Parties represents. It will bring forward some policies which each of us presently holds but will attempt to present to us both the urgency and the specifics by which that urgency can be fulfilled in trying to create a measure of true equality between men and women in Canada.

It is important to stress that it is, in fact, not these national organizations that are primarily responsible for transforming the nature of political discourse at the local level, but the groups which are developing themselves, bringing women together and giving a force to their cry for change in our communities.

These groups include ones in my community such as the Immigrant Women's Centre, which works so effectively with new immigrants and refugees who enter the Windsor area. They make the case powerfully as a consequence of their detailed experience that there has to be fairness provided for those immigrant women to have equal access to training of immigrants in English or French as their male counterparts.

I also pay tribute to groups like the one in Windsor called Women Working, which has tried to bring the issue of equality in the workplace, both on the job and in training for jobs, and make it a powerful, effective force for thoughtful change throughout our community and Essex County and Windsor.

I also refer to the local day care association which has worked so hard in trying to take this issue before the people of Essex County in Windsor and demonstrate as clearly and powerfully as it can why it is necessary to make urgent changes in this area rather than continue on the path of study

Supply

after study which has so marked the delay and lack of urgency with which the issue has been treated in the past.

I also refer to groups like the Women's Economic Forum in Windsor which has attempted to draw together professional women and give them a sense of solidarity as they face the very difficult day-to-day struggles which occur on the job to establish equality in promotions and social priorities throughout the community.

● (1650)

I wish to emphasize in tribute my strong regard for the Unemployed Help Centre which is headed by a very intelligent and articulate woman, Pamela Pons-Lauzon. She has been able to assist right across the country to see to it that women have at least equal access to the new job opportunities which we have been trying to create through government programs and which private businesses have also been trying to expand in the Windsor area.

To that group I would add the names of those involved in the various farm groups in our community, as well as the local of the National Farmers Union and the Essex County Federation of Agriculture, who are co-operating with me in conducting a full-scale survey across my constituency to try to identify and then to respond with urgency, concern, and sensitivity to the needs of rural women in southwestern Ontario.

I did not want to finish the debate by simply paying these strongly felt tributes to women's groups in my community. I should say that there are many others which I could add to the list. I want to deal with what I think will be an important economic challenge facing women, not just in my constituency or in the constituency of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell), but in the constituencies of all Members of Parliament.

I think it is now clear that we are heading for an agreement of sorts on free trade. It is an agreement the contours of which it is very difficult to identify at this stage because of the secrecy which has surrounded the whole process. However, there are several things which can be said about the potential impact of that free trade agreement if it takes place, when it takes place, with respect to women.

In this respect I draw particularly on material which has been brought together by the National Action Committee, and especially by Marjorie Cohen who is an economist at York University. She has spent a great deal of time looking at this issue. I believe she has raised very important warning signs for the Government, and certainly for women, as they look at their reactions to this potential agreement.

Marjorie Cohen has said that the Canadian Government appears to have ignored the impact that free trade will have on the service sector and on jobs in that sector. That is of great concern to us because it is clear that if one talks about the sector of the economy within which women have often been caught, in which women have often been ghettoized, it has been the service sector in terms of communications, banking,