

worked very closely with my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), to put an end to 10 long years of debate on pensions and to forge an historic pension agreement with the provinces. As a result, beginning in January, 1987, Canadians will receive improved benefits under the Canada Pension Plan, including mandatory credit splitting on marriage breakdown. We have made other pension changes to ensure earlier vesting, portability and better pensions for women in employer sponsored pension plans.

In another area, we will give first priority in this new session to legislation authorizing prepayment in November of the 1986 child tax credit. We have pressed forward as well with our ongoing commitment to women in the labour market where they have often lacked opportunity to work and contribute at full capacity. Our employment equity legislation has been designed to counter the long years of women's underemployment and to give women a chance to capitalize on their abilities. Through employment equity, we have taken an important first step in ensuring that companies under federal jurisdiction meet the challenge and reap the benefits of being equal opportunity employers.

We have also amended the Indian Act to remove its discriminatory references to native women, and passed legislation to facilitate the enforcement of support payments. In keeping with our earlier commitments, we brought forward women's concerns at all national discussion tables and will continue this when First Ministers meet next month in Vancouver.

● (1610)

[Translation]

Our Government is proud of that progress. But we know there is still much to do. It is clear that problems faced by women cannot be solved overnight, but we have acted faster and more sensibly than the previous Governments, and we will continue to do so.

The last decade has witnessed deep changes in labour market structures in this country. The massive influx of women in the labour force, especially mothers of young children, has changed our economic and family life. Women still shoulder the heaviest part of the burden of family responsibilities.

In our first Throne Speech, we committed ourselves to giving women equal access to the labour market. True to that commitment, we have established a parliamentary committee on child care. We have made sure that the committee has everything it needs to complete its work and we are impatiently looking forward to the tabling of its report next month. The report will be our plan of action in the field of day care. The recommendations of the parliamentary committee will guide us in our discussions with women's associations, the provinces, business circles and labour unions.

The Speech from the Throne has reaffirmed the conviction of this Government that time has come indeed to have women

participate fully in all stages of the decision-making process. We were committed to increasing the number of women appointed to various federal councils, boards and agencies, and we have gone a long way towards that goal. Already, more than 25 per cent of our discretionary appointments involved women. We have also intensified our efforts to increase the number of women in the upper echelons of the public service. Right now, 381 women are among senior management in the Public Service. When we came into office there were only three women at the deputy minister level; we now have seven, including some who were appointed more than once over the past two years. As deputy ministers, all these women hold key positions. My own Deputy Minister for privatization is Mrs. Janet Smith. Our Government is determined to set an example for the private sector of a fair and equitable administration.

And now, Mr. Speaker, allow me to emphasize the determination of our Government to give women more ready access to better employment opportunities. For too long now the labour market has taken advantage of the fact that women are underpaid. We must help them leave the traditional job ghettos and secure jobs which are fully consistent with their experience, their education and their aspirations.

[English]

We are determined to ensure that women receive fair compensation for their work. Within the next few weeks the Canadian Human Rights Commission will be publishing additional guidelines to facilitate compliance by employers to implement the legislation requiring equal pay for work of equal value in federally-regulated industries. My colleague, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret), is working very closely with Public Service unions to fully implement this legislation within the federal Public Service.

[Translation]

When we came to power two years ago, we quickly realized that federal employment programs did not meet the needs of Canadian women. We immediately undertook a complete review of these programs and replaced them with a new training and employment strategy known as the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

The positive effects of this initiative are now starting to be felt. For the first time, the federal employment strategy includes employment equity measures such as targets for women's participation. These targets have helped women and unemployed people find lasting and productive employment.

Over the next two years, we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our programs, to make sure that Canadian women fully avail themselves of these training possibilities.

While dealing with training, Mr. Speaker, I should like to mention that I met this morning here in Ottawa my provincial and territorial counterparts. We discussed ways by which the two levels of Government could co-operate to improve training programs available to women. The results of our discussions will be submitted to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and