

*Supply*

The final death blow to child care is a clear illustration this government does not protect and promote the fundamental rights of Canadian women. The Tory regime has indicated, by not going ahead with child care and putting the last nails in the coffin of child care, it has no interest in protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of women in spite of its long-term rhetoric.

On the matter of pay equity, one would have thought that any government, party or person interested in promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of women would ensure they would be paid the same for their work as men across this country. One would have thought the government would make strenuous efforts to ensure that within its own area of responsibility and power, the Public Service, it would clearly ensure that pay equity for women was a priority, if that government was concerned about protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of Canadian women.

In spite of much rhetoric on the government side, it has indicated in this budget that it refuses to recognize its commitment to pay equity for women in the Public Service. For years and years, women have been underpaid for their work in relation to men, but the government seems to think this is acceptable. It even prepared to introduce legislation, if necessary, to ignore a human rights tribunal decision on this issue if it is not in their favour, if it does not allow them to continue this dreadful, inequitable treatment of women.

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No government that was committed to protect and promote the fundamental rights of Canadian women would back off from pay equity for women in the Public Service. It would move forward strenuously to ensure that women are fairly paid. Not this government. This government is prepared to pass legislation to ensure that a human rights tribunal which may decide on the basis of the facts and the evidence that this government is remiss is overruled. No government that was committed to protecting and promoting women's interests would do that.

The last matter I would like to raise with regard to promoting and protecting women's rights and women's interests is with regard to the Court Challenges Program and the budget's implications here.

The government has in this budget decided that the Court Challenges Program would end, without consultation, without previous discussion in this House or with the groups affected. It decided that the Court Challenges Program would end. This Court Challenges Program, as we probably all know, enabled women and disadvantaged groups to take cases to court under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to make sure that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in fact did implement equality as it affected women and disadvantaged groups.

This government has decided to scrap this program, to scrap a program which would enable Canada's women a mechanism to ensure that they are indeed treated equally under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Surely any government that cared about equality, any government that cared about the fundamental rights of Canadian women, would ensure that there was a mechanism to implement the equality provisions in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and ensure that there was support for those groups which cannot find the resources to pursue their interests. Surely the government would ensure that there were resources available to them to put some meat on the bones of the charter, to make sure that the charter did in fact stand up for Canadian women.

The fact that the government has cancelled the Court Challenges Program is another clear indication of its lack of commitment to promoting and protecting the fundamental rights of Canadian women.

Instead of slashing and burning, instead of wrecking programs that are already in place, instead of ignoring previous commitments, if this government was really concerned with protecting and promoting the rights of women it would not have scrapped the national child care program. It would have made sure that a meaningful, effective national child care program would have been implemented. As the Prime Minister has said: "Without an adequate, accessible national child care program, thousands of Canadian women will be denied the opportunity to participate in the work place".

If this government was concerned at all about protecting and promoting the fundamental rights of Canadian women it would not turn its back on pay equity in the Public Service. It would strenuously push for it. If this government was really concerned about women's inter-