

recognizing the importance of family life and marriage for the wellbeing of society.

● (1710)

We are taking the educational route as our way of saying yes to the family. I am suggesting that on the one hand we have legislated for marriage breakdown; let us now educate for family build-up. This resolution urges that the Government consider, along with the Governments of the provinces, a program of public education that will affirm the family and will make use of television in so doing.

Let us recognize that already both the Government of Canada and the Governments of many of the provinces include within their educational programs certain provisions for educating people on the merits and values of the family. I say that simply to submit that there is no problem of principle in this resolution. The Government is already providing educational programs *vis-à-vis* the family. This is also true in the provinces. I do not think we have a principle to debate about whether it is in the legitimate scope of a government. It has been established over many years that governments have the right as well as the responsibility to provide educational efforts of this kind. It is a valid dimension of Government responsibility.

The issue that should concern Parliament is whether these existing programs are enough. Are they effective enough to do the job? With all respect to those who have devised those programs, I would have to say that the facts demand the conclusion that they are not enough because we have seen such a rampant increase in marriage breakdown over the past several years.

If we believe that it is in the interest of society as well as individuals concerned that the family be reinforced, then I say we ought to be open to think new thoughts and try new methods of becoming more effective on behalf of the family.

For example, we have seen in recent years how much power there is in the use of television for educational purposes. For several years now the Government has educated us on behalf of physical fitness and has done so with remarkable success. It has used television to arouse public concern for physical fitness and has enlisted support for such efforts as Participation and has done it well because of television. We have seen in recent years an increasing effort by Governments to inculcate the merits of safe driving and to educate us not to drink when we are driving. Governments have used television for this purpose.

Recently we have seen Governments adopt the use of television to persuade us not to smoke cigarettes and contribute to our own illness and the illness of others. Can we in Canada, as others have done elsewhere, use television with all its powers to communicate the value of family life and use this medium of communication to arouse within our people again a concern for the importance of the home and the importance of marriage that contributes so much to the quality of home life?

Fine family educational programs are presently sponsored by our Government. These are sometimes carried on by the Government directly through its departments and sometimes

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they are carried on by agencies that have been funded from Government funds. In discussing this motion, I think we simply need to take another step, a powerful forward step that can mean an increase in the effectiveness of the Government's efforts to reinforce family life.

I have discussed the possibility of this with experts and authorities in the use of television. I have discussed it with television writers and producers who are capable of creating short, dynamic, persuasive messages on the family. I am persuaded by what they have submitted to me. I know that any Department of the Government and any committee of the House would find quite instructive and encouraging the kind of program that expert writers and producers have put together and which requires only the necessary funding to communicate throughout the country.

When I use the word funding, I am not thinking in terms of large amounts. For example, one estimate for five spots produced at one time would come to \$176,600. If a one-spot message were produced at one time, the estimated cost is \$45,400. We are not speaking about extravagant amounts or astronomical figures of the kind we have become almost too familiar with in the House. We are speaking about something well within the power and capacity of the Government and the people of Canada which would not add appreciably to the cost required of the people but would achieve an objective which I am confident the people of this country would endorse.

Such a series need not judge anyone or reflect negatively on anyone who has sought relief from a matrimonial tragedy. It is just the opposite. It has been my experience as an observer and student of society that a remarkably large number of people who suffer a marriage breakdown go on to attempt a second marriage. They do not give up on marriage. We would not be offering simply a message that reinforces those people who enjoy a stable marriage and a stable home, but one for those who have suffered a troubled marriage and a troubled home and are seeking to begin life again.

Surely that is worth the effort of this Parliament. It is worth the effort of this Parliament to provide something that will reinforce those who are trying to carry on or trying to start again. This can be a way by which the House of Commons will say yes to the family and concur with the words of the Prime Minister that it is the family that makes our society and makes our country.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak to the question of the quality of family life. I agree with the Hon. Member who just spoke that this is an extremely important question and a very basic part of the quality of life in our society.

I do not want to be particularly partisan because I do not believe that this is a partisan issue. I am sure everyone in the House supports strengthening family life. However, I feel so deeply about the family allowance program, I cannot help but mention Bill C-70. When the Member quoted the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) saying that nothing is more impor-