

Supply

To get out of this difficult situation, she wanted to attend classes in bureautics offered by her regional school board. This much vaunted program, which offered interesting work prospects, lasted 18 months. The federal government does not pay for 18-month courses. In fact, it only recognizes programs where students graduate after 12 months.

As a result, this woman continued to receive her meagre benefits till the end.

Once her benefits had expired, she enrolled in a program entitled "Introduction to non-traditional trades". Thirteen women registered for this 14-week training course leading to a job. According to the information I have gathered so far—since this program is on now—this program clearly does not work.

Non-traditional trades are not that common and job opportunities in these areas are practically non-existent in a tourist area like mine.

Then, why is the federal government offering this program? Why does it spend money in vain? Could it not carry out some studies to see if the labour market in my region is accessible to these women and if job opportunities are really there? If not, what good does it do to direct these women towards this training program?

Unfortunately, it seems this program is simply offered for the fun of it.

And these women can see after a few weeks that they are involved in something that leads nowhere. And yet, they were ready to invest their efforts and energies in this program to see the light at the end of the tunnel, that is, to find a job.

Instead, they are offered a strangely structured program where they are told about self-esteem and about the need to take their future in their own hands, to go for it. They are almost handed a mirror and told: "Look, you are the only one to blame if you do not work. So, do something about it!"

These women do not want that kind of therapy. They want something concrete, something real. They want to learn something that will help them find a job.

As I see there is only one minute left, I will conclude rather quickly.

Women are worth as much as men. Our society, our lifestyles and our values were such that women were not appreciated for their true worth. It is now time to correct this, and fast.

In light of some of its actions, it is clear that the Liberal government is not ready to take big steps in that direction. In spite of all the promises that were made to women in several areas, the federal government is very hard on women. The announced reform in the unemployment insurance program and old age pension does not augur well.

Thus, I encourage all the women in Quebec to say no to an increasingly threatening federal system.

• (1320)

Mrs. Eleni Bakopanos (Saint-Denis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite has made some remarks that I find very curious coming from her.

Firstly, she talks about solidarity and she belongs to a party that does not promote solidarity among all Canadians, including women. Secondly, with regard to solidarity, we have, on this side of the House, all the women who represent the government who have proven that they are in favour of solidarity. For example, on March 8 of last year, we opened a debate for all women on both sides of the House.

Now, I would like to ask a question of the hon. member. She gave the example of a woman who had come to her office complaining that she did not have access to government programs. Does the member not know that our budget provides for transfers to the provinces so that they can assume responsibility for these programs? They will be the ones who will be delivering these programs. That is what the member's party asked for and that is what we are doing. We both know that when women achieve economic equality, they will have equality in all areas. My question to the hon. member is this: Does she agree with me with regard to transfers?

Mrs. Guay: Mr. Speaker, the government says that it will transfer more powers to the provinces so that we can have our own programs tailored to our particular needs, but it should also consider giving us the money that we need to deliver these programs.

The federal government is getting ready to transfer to the provinces powers or, rather, responsibilities that we cannot afford to exercise. I think it is a very serious problem that we will have to face in the coming years. Imagine! At least Quebec has a good structure, but in some other provinces, particularly the smaller ones, it will be a big problem.

Secondly, when the hon. member talks about solidarity and says that the government cannot count on the Bloc Québécois, I will remind her that, last year, we introduced a bill on unemployment insurance for women. I do not know if the member remembers that, but we asked women in this House to show some solidarity with regard to this bill so that women who work with their husbands would not be penalized under the unemployment insurance program. The member's party voted against our bill that would have been beneficial to women. We called for solidarity among women. I will tell you one thing: as long as this solidarity among women does not exist, regardless of their political affiliation—and it certainly does not exist in this House at this moment—women will never get anywhere. Yet, we account for 52 per cent of the population. The hon. member has nothing to teach me and I think it is time she got her act together. When she sees a bill like the one we have introduced in this House, she should think twice before voting against it.