

certain amount of their time in the home carrying on home-making activities as part of a changing lifestyle. It is important, I believe, to recognize this trend.

I am sure most hon. members can confirm this either from personal experience or from the experience of friends. I can think of friends of my own who from time to time have varied the sequence of participation in domestic tasks. It happens from time to time that one or other partner decides to leave the public labour force and work in the private labour sector of the home. Thus it is not totally the case that work in the home is reserved for women. There should be a flexibility attached to modern arrangements in societies such as ours.

Of course, changes of this kind do not come quickly or easily. Indeed, presentation of this motion does, of itself, create a danger—that in responding to the motion as it is phrased we might be moving toward a solution which would create more difficulties than the present problem. By this, we might be in real danger of reinforcing the whole notion of a female ghetto as represented by work in the home.

I say this because implicit in the motion before us is the idea that, basically, women should remain in the home. To concur with the proposition put forward in this motion would, I suggest, simply strengthen that particular conception. The thrust of the proposal is that women would be in a position to remain at home without suffering economic loss, a consideration of particular importance today when, unfortunately, a second income is necessary if many families are to survive. Such families find themselves in a situation where one wage-earner simply cannot supply the household needs. So especially at the lower end of the income scale we find women being forced out of the home not by choice but through economic necessity.

I can well imagine that the hon. member who proposed this motion has done so with the needs of such families in mind. However, adoption of the motion might lead to substantial difficulty. I would refer to a recent report of the Canadian Council on Social Development entitled "Women's Pensions", specifically to pages 124 to 126, which analyze the whole question of pay for housework. The report outlines the various arrangements which could be made to improve the economic position of those who work in the home but recognizes that specific solutions would almost ensure further dependency, locking women particularly into a housework role from which it would be very difficult to escape. Summing up the options available, the report states:

Finally, the pay for housework proposal does nothing to solve the sexual division of labour inside and outside the home. Indeed, it may simply serve to legitimize it.

That one sentence contains the nub of the difficulty presented by the hon. member's motion. Further, summing up the report on page 235, there are one or two further comments which go to the heart of the housework for pay question. I quote from paragraph two of page 235:

The recognition of so-called housework must be enhanced through fundamental reforms such as family law reform as well as through largely symbolic but important changes such as the inclusion of such work in the measurement of gross national product.

Housewives' Allowance

The author of this report, Mr. Kevin Collins, has done outstanding work with the Canadian Council on Social Development and has now gone on to work with the Canadian Labour Congress. Here he has stressed the need to recognize the importance of the work which is done in the home. For far too long, those who have worked in the home, for the most part women, have been regarded as providing a service of a kind which in other fields was provided by slave labour. If this motion does nothing else this afternoon, it emphasizes once and for all that those who work in the home are adding every bit as much to the total welfare of society and the totality of the gross national product as those who are employed in the well-known and strong professions of society.

● (1742)

I say again that we owe great credit to the hon. member for Bellechasse for bringing forward this motion. However, as I said, the danger is that we will reinforce the notion of a ghetto. It would lock women in particular into a no-choice situation. They would be forced to remain in the home, even though that may not be their basic desire.

As some members will recall, only a few days ago in this House I raised some questions with the minister responsible for the status of women. Knowing his great interest in this question, I am sorry he is not here to participate this afternoon. I raised with him the report that had been distributed through my office by a group of concerned female public servants. They indicated there were considerable problems within employment in the public service of this country. I want to quote a couple of sentences from the report to show how difficult it is to break down the notion of these ghettos, whether they exist in the home or in the public service of this country. In the opening part of this report they state:

The attached is from a group of concerned women who are witnessing every day signs of increasing discrimination against women workers. Press reports have indicated that there is growing opposition to women workers. Few have reported on the fallacy of the argument that women are a cause of the high unemployment rate.

If women are the cause of increasing unemployment in our society, by all means let there be a regular allowance so that they can get out of the work force outside the home and stay in the home. However, if we were to take that very retrograde step, it would be a terrible disservice to the women of this country. The report goes on to note that we have already established in public service employment in this country a very great ghetto. I want to read a brief section from the report under the heading "Job Ghettos". I quote:

One million women work in the clerical group and half of them are stenographers, typists or receptionists.

This is in Canada generally.

In services, almost two thirds of the women work as cooks, waitresses or hairdressers. Of the half million professional women, more than 60 per cent are school teachers or nurses. In the federal public service, the percentage of administrative support jobs filled by women has increased steadily over the past five years (from 68.2 per cent in 1972 to 78.8 per cent in 1976), thus creating the biggest job ghetto in the public service.