

The Address—Miss McDougall

such a cost should not be paid for regional development initiatives.

The Member spoke about the isolation of the inmates and the lack of support services. Is he not aware that the people of northern Quebec must leave their homes and their support systems to find employment? Atlantic Canadians have done this for decades as well.

This position is, of course, supported by the New Democratic Party, which perhaps best explains why we have not been successful in the last two decades in solving the regional economic development problems of Atlantic Canada.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Hon. Member has given me the opportunity to remark further upon the issue of the Port-Cartier prison. As I indicated in my original remarks, the unemployment rate in the Port-Cartier region is 15.8 per cent. I am not for a moment suggesting that I support the placing of prisons based on regional economic disparity. However, if you want to locate a prison using that consideration, surely you would not place it in Port-Cartier where the unemployment rate is 15.8 per cent, but rather in Cape Breton where the unemployment rate is 25 or 30 per cent. I am surprised that the Hon. Member has not stood up for Atlantic Canada in order to receive more funding for his part of the country in view of the extraordinarily high rate of unemployment there.

In closing I would like to point out that if the location of this maximum security institution was based on correctional considerations we would note that there is no double-bunking in the Province of Quebec. However, in the Atlantic region, in Ontario, in the prairie provinces, and in the Pacific region there is considerable double-bunking. Therefore, if you want to build a prison based on need, you would not build it in Quebec.

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House today, particularly following the address by the Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata). I think there are some things the people of Canada would like to hear about social justice, particularly the women of Canada whom I intend to address.

This is my first statement in the House since I was named Minister responsible for the Status of Women. I want to make it quite clear how delighted I am to be carrying issues forward on behalf of Canadian women, the issues and the people I have been closest to and have cared about the most all my life.

● (1600)

Before turning to the details of the Throne Speech, let me remind Hon. Members that this month marks the fifty-seventh anniversary of the Persons Case, the famous court decision which granted the status of a person to women and thus made them eligible for appointment to the other place. In 1979, the Persons Awards were established and these awards recognize

outstanding contributions toward advancing the status of women in Canada.

I am proud to inform the House that this year's recipients of Persons Awards have just been named. They are Elizabeth Carr of Don Mills, the Hon. Muriel Fergusson of Fredericton, Denyse Rochon of Montreal, Berenice Sisler of Winnipeg, and Helen Yeo of Charlottetown.

Today's women are now officially persons and we, in our day and age, cannot imagine it otherwise. However, there are still many areas where it is difficult for women to be fully accepted as we would like them to be, as persons throughout our society. Our Government is committed to ensuring that across every spectrum women are indeed persons with equal rights and equal opportunities.

The view of the Government, as confirmed in the Speech from the Throne, is that issues of concern to women are an integral part of all our objectives; national reconciliation, economic renewal, social justice and constructive internationalism. Whether we are talking about science and technology or about regional development, our Government is committed to ensuring that women are equal beneficiaries of and participants in government programs and initiatives. The particular priorities outlined in the Speech from the Throne as well as those already under way are child care, immigrant women, pornography, and wife battering.

I am very proud to say that last week's Throne Speech represents another step forward in our Government's comprehensive package of initiatives for women. There is no simple definition of women's issues. They are variously described now as social issues, family issues, societal issues, and social justice issues. However, let us always remember that the issues we are talking about were put on the agenda many years ago and put on that agenda by women. They were not well addressed by former Governments. We recognize, of course, that the complexity of these concerns requires a variety of responses, a variety of solutions. We have worked hard to ensure that issues of particular concern to women are part of our cabinet discussions and that we seek women's views in our economic policy development at every stage.

We put a high priority on removing the barriers that have prevented women from participating freely and equitably in the mainstream of Canadian life. We came into office with a plan to meet that priority, and two years ago we announced that plan in our first Speech from the Throne. Since then we have built a solid record of achievements, and now we are moving forward again. We are using those achievements as a base to continue our efforts to address women's inequality.

Let me name just a few areas where we have already made some substantial progress. In the first Speech from the Throne, our Government made a commitment to pension reform. Since then, we have moved quickly toward the goal of ensuring a more secure retirement income for all Canadians, but especially for women who are hardest hit by poverty as they grow older. In my last portfolio as Minister of State for Finance I