

*Supply*

ministers who are women. Certainly the judiciary is an area that is important to women. They want to see themselves reflected in the judges. Only two weeks ago we were able to announce the appointments of not only Chief Justice Catherine Fraser as the first woman to head up a provincial Supreme Court but also the appointment of Madam Justice Rosalie Abella as the 100th woman judge in the federal sphere.

That has taken a lot of work because judges do not retire; they stay on. It is only as the vacancies come up that we are having to make these kind of changes. In all the appointments the government has responsibility for, we have doubled the percentage of women appointed. We are continuing to address that and continuing to make improvements.

Let us turn to some other areas. Education, for example, is one of the critical areas as we look at the opportunities for women's advancement. We know it is critical that women first of all complete high school, that they have opportunities to go on to post-secondary education, and that they do not drop out of areas such as maths and sciences which are so critical in terms of future employment opportunities. The ministers of science over the past few years have been working on this. The Canada Scholarships Program has been an important incentive for young people to study maths and sciences at the post-secondary level. Some 50 per cent of those scholarships go to women so we have this core of young women now going into those fields. We are seeing increasing numbers in the sciences and engineering professions. We also have been working closely with our provincial colleagues and our ministers of education to encourage them to ensure that young women are provided with the information and the support to ensure that they not only stay in school but that they pursue areas of science and technology.

The good news too as we look at statistics relating to women is that women are a growing influence in all sectors of society: economically, socially and politically. For example, between 1984 and 1991 the number of women in managerial and administrative positions climbed by 82 per cent. These kinds of positions account for almost one-third of all jobs that women have entered into over the past seven years.

There are some very bright spots in the professions. If we are looking at the issue of women being able to earn more money, being able to make choices and to look after their families and the future, we should look at things like the law and medicine where women are increasing in number, in some cases over 50 per cent.

Between 1981 and 1986 women were responsible for more than two-thirds of all employment growth in the professional categories listed by Statistics Canada. I think that is a figure that probably a lot of people are not aware of. It is a very important trend, one that we have to ensure occurs.

Indisputably—and I hope no one would argue about this—the participation of women in the paid labour force has become vital for our economy. We are 52 per cent of the population. It is expected that we will be 50 per cent of the labour force by the end of this decade. As a participant in a more closely integrated and more global economy, which we all know is the direction we are going in, Canada must draw upon all its resources, particularly the creativity and productivity of all of our citizens. They have come to realize that the efficient involvement of all of our human resources is essential to our continued social and human development.

• (1100)

I am not sure we have all the answers about how to do that but certainly through the number of strategies, prosperity strategies and human resources development strategy, we are trying to find those ways.

I come back specifically to the budget because my colleague has raised that. Although we have had debates in this House over a period of days on the budget, I would like to speak about some of the measures which I think are important advances for women, why I believe the budget is good for Canada in terms of getting our economic house in order, and why it is also good for the women of Canada.

Canadians have indicated to us that they want the deficit to be cut. They know that higher debt means higher taxes and they want an end to rising taxes. Those were clear messages received when women's groups were consulted in this process and many others who were consulted.