This is how Section 28 was passed and I am most pleased about it. Besides, when you say that I recall the very important things the Liberal government did for women and that I take pride in them, I would simply remind you that Canada is one of the largest countries in the world with the most important legislation for women. We are one of the few countries to offer so much legislation about women. Therefore, as I said earlier, we may be considered as the culprit in everything that may have gone wrong but as far as the status of women is concerned, I think Canada has a pretty good record.

Mrs. Mailly: At the provincial level!

Mrs. Pépin: The provincial level is no concern of ours. Legislation sometimes overlaps in this field, but I am talking about the federal Government.

Third, about Indian women, it is a matter of what stand your caucus or mine takes. When you say we must let Indian governments decide for themselves, you are stating your position. And yours and mine on Indian issues differ greatly, and I have no intention of changing mine. I think the children must absolutely be reinstated in their rights; if the women are made members of Indian bands again, the children must also be granted their native rights. It all depends to which party you belong.

I must say that you seem to be well informed on pension issues. On all the others, unfortunately, having to dwell in the past and to deal in personalities shows how little you know about women's issues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments? Debate. The Hon. Member for Broadview-Greenwood (Ms. McDonald).

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, the Government is blamed today for its policy related to Canadian women. We are asking for concrete measures aimed at improving the status of women. Indeed, the Conservative party, when they were in opposition and especially during the last election campaign, promised such measures. Yet they have not kept their promises since then. On the contrary! Their policies since the election have been prejudicial to women. Let us first consider tax reform. This Conservative Government has maintained the federal tax increase proposed last year by the Liberals. This Conservative Government has found billions of dollars for oil companies, including multinationals. The Conservative Government did not fill the loopholes in the tax system, which benefit private corporations. The Government has even admitted that the most recent loophole with regard to research expenses is costing Canada more than $1 billion each year. Yet the Government could not find money to meet the needs of Canadian men and women. The old age security benefits, for example, could have been increased with that amount of money.

To pay for those hand-outs to private corporations, the Government had to save elsewhere. In fact, the Government has chosen to cut in the budgets of departments and Crown corporations like the CBC. Given that situation, women are those who get laid-off. Women who just recently got a job are laid-off. For instance, the budget cuts in research on the environment, ill-advised to start with, have particularly cost women their jobs.

This Government has a policy or rather an ideology favouring the private sector at the expense of the public sector, no matter what the consequences are for Canadian men and women. It follows that some jobs in the public sector are cut in favour of private sector growth. The growth of the public sector favoured women in Canada. This sector has been growing and giving good jobs to women since the Second World War. The men-women salary differences are smaller in the public sector. Social benefits are better, pensions, union protection, etc., are better. Now, women's jobs are threatened the most by the present policy of the Conservative Government. Unfortunately, the Government is blinded by its ideological concerns. Women are more practical and less interested in ideology. They are interested in the quality and the value of the jobs involved rather than in which sector they fall.

• (1620)

[*English*]

Women who came before the NDP job action group talked to us very specifically about this point. They talked about the need for good jobs, the fact that these jobs had developed especially for women in the public sector. Unions had fought for women and got better working conditions and salaries, and because of the ideological preoccupations of the Government these are the jobs that are cut back. The Government does not realize that there are particular implications for women in a policy which might seem to be gender-free. A policy of protecting the private sector and attacking the public sector has very serious implications for women.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women in Canada is very aware of these difficulties. Indeed, one of its major recommendations resulting from its conference this past weekend concerned precisely this point. I would like to read that recommendation to the House. It reads:

> Whereas the value of tax concessions allowed by the federal Government is between 30 and 50 billion dollars per year according to the Auditor General; and whereas these tax breaks benefit large companies and high income tax payers the most; and whereas this situation is largely responsible for the deficit; and whereas the deficit is now being used as an excuse to cut public spending; and whereas women are the first to be hurt by such cuts; be it resolved that NAC lead a campaign strongly recommending that the deficit be reduced through reform of the tax system and not through public spending cuts.

This is precisely what the NDP has been urging, along with many other organizations. I note the Economic Council of Canada, not known to be a great supporter of the NDP, recommended that this approach be taken rather than cuts in public spending.

I want to go on to some more specific matters in the resolution before us today concerning job creation and job training programs. We in the NDP believe that these must be specifically targeted to women. We do not believe that the laws of nature are favourable to women in that sense. We have seen that neglect means that the status quo continues. Women