

debate. I think he has made his point and I hope he is satisfied with the results.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate the member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) on his praiseworthy intention, namely, that the government grant allowances to women who intentionally stay home to attend to family chores instead of entering the labour market, the purpose of the measure being to ensure a supplementary income to that earned by the husband and thereby matching the family needs.

Unfortunately, Statistics Canada shows that in the present context a certain category of citizens in Canada is becoming poorer and poorer while the rich are getting ever richer. I am afraid that we would harvest precious little from a new housewives allowance program and I think that housewives deserve much better than that. In fact, there are more than 700,000 unemployed in Canada, most of whom are women. There are also 2 million old age citizens of whom 54 per cent, that is 1,166,000, have no income other than their old age security pension and their guaranteed income supplement, which amounts to \$325.95 a month or \$602.44 for a couple. There are also seven million Canadians whose income is lower than \$10,000 a year, while we notice in all provinces that more and more people depend on welfare assistance, 59,000 recipients of social assistance in Newfoundland, 10,000 in Prince Edward island, 73,000 in New Brunswick, 61,000 in Nova Scotia, 511,000 in Quebec, 395,000 in Ontario, 59,000 in Manitoba, 49,000 in Saskatchewan, 100,000 in Alberta, a rich province, 179,000 in British Columbia, 6,000 in the Northwest Territories for a total number of 1,508,400 individuals who receive social assistance in Canada and among them we note a high percentage of women and single parent families.

Mr. Speaker, I think that to assist women remaining at home, it would be advisable that the government set up at once a guaranteed income program and to ensure that such program would really assist the citizens with average incomes it will be necessary to consider first all administrative costs of our various social programs at the federal as well as at the provincial level, for example, the veterans' pension, the old age security pension, the income supplement, the federal and provincial family allowances, the child tax credit and social welfare. There is also a policy for public housing such as low-rent dwellings to assist low income-families. There is also in Quebec and other provinces the school tax. We note that most of those programs are useless.

It would be much better to review immediately all those programs to set up a guaranteed minimum income program which would enable us to cut heavy expenditures at the administration and management levels. The amounts recovered could provide some remedies to citizens. In addition, it would be urgent—to assist immediately that group of citizens—that the Progressive Conservative government as well as

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the hon. member for Bellechasse help the Liberal members prevent the government from increasing oil prices, because we know how important fuel and gasoline prices are for citizens with average incomes.

The government should also be made to establish rental aid programs. Third, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation programs designed to make homeownership easier for families should be maintained and improved; fourth, the government should set up a guaranteed income program encompassing the needs of housewives who remain at home, and of all low income Canadians.

[*English*]

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member for Kent (Mr. Holmes) that my remarks will be brief enough to leave him some time to make his contribution.

I find it somewhat interesting that while we in this chamber are debating a motion which has to do with the rights of women, across the street from us a building, that for many decades has been a male bastion, is on fire. I heard the rumour and I went out to see if it is true that the Rideau Club across the street is on fire. It is only recently that women have been admitted to that place. I wonder if it means that some of the men are so upset about women getting into that club that they decided they had better do away with it. However, the Ottawa Fire Department is out there in force, so the building may possibly be saved.

I want to indicate my support for the proposition put forward by the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert), and I do not intend to qualify that support with a lot of ifs and ands and buts such as we have heard during this debate. There still ring in my ears the speeches we heard last week in celebration of the fact that 50 years ago women were declared by the Privy Council to be persons. Surely if they are persons, one of the things they should have is equality with men. I believe we have a long way to go before we establish equality for women.

References have been made to statistics about the level of incomes, both in working years and in retirement years, which would show what a disadvantage women suffer. Those statistics are there staring us in the face. Indeed, if we are going to do anything about equality in retirement, we have to start by having equality all along the way.

The hon. member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) quoted a report which raised the question of whether paying women allowances to do work in the home might regularize that kind of employment, and might do something to the social structure. My view is simply that women should have the choice. They should be free to go out to work in the labour market outside the home or to choose to stay in the home, raise their children, and serve the family that way. Everyone says that women are free to do that, but in a world in which economic problems are so great, they are not free if the economic situation is such that they have to go out to work in order to supplement the family income. I should like to see, in