

specific targets and goals and timetabling to ensure that there is compliance by the federal Government, Crown corporations and the private sector. She was very clear in that particular recommendation.

[Translation]

The Abella report clearly states on page 215 that a voluntary program is not effective at all.

[English]

We need some mandatory regulations. If we do not have that, I do not think we will have any appreciable increase of fairness and equity in jobs for women in this great country of ours.

Another point which I am concerned about is that of enforcing employment equity in the country. The Government is saying that the Human Rights Commission can do that. Where is the money to come from for the Human Rights Commission? It presently has a backlog of cases. Is Parliament willing to vote a substantial increase in funding for the Human Rights Commission to undertake this important work? I do not get the indication that it is.

I mentioned as well the important issue of training. It is important to ensure that we have more positions in federal Government training programs for women. I suggest that 50 per cent of those positions should be filled by women. Fifty per cent of the funding for training should be for women in the country. That is the type of affirmative action we need for the Canadian female majority. However, that is not happening in our country today.

Another issue which concerns me is that of the elimination, since the election of the present Government, of the program of non-traditional occupational training. That program was eliminated in the Budget cuts of last November. That program should be reinstated to give women a better opportunity to receive an education or technical skill in a job which is seen as non-traditional. In my remarks before one o'clock I gave two or three very good examples in that particular field.

Another issue is part-time work. I said in French that I think this is a growing tendency in the country. It will hurt women much more than men because 73 per cent of part-time jobs are held by women. We must take a very strong stand to attempt to preserve full-time jobs where possible rather than letting them be eroded into the field of part-time work where there are very few or non-existent benefits. We must ensure that benefits in part-time jobs are prorated with regard to health care, dental care, pensions, sick leave, and maternity leave.

I would like to conclude by asking the House to keep a commitment made in the last election campaign. For the first time in the history of our country we had a debate on women's issues which was organized by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women. The leaders of the three Parties in this country spoke in a very positive way about the need to remedy and eliminate the inequalities which exist for the women of Canada. I see no significant evidence that there has

Supply

been any move by the Government to change that since September 4.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, we now have the opportunity to amend the Canadian legislation to provide equality to Canadian women. Mr. Speaker, there is much discrimination and unfairness in our modern society and it is time we do something about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments. Debate. The Hon. Secretary of State of Canada (Mr. McLean).

Hon. Walter McLean (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege for me to take part in this debate.

• (1520)

[English]

I am pleased to have the opportunity today to reaffirm my Government's commitment to the achievement of full equality for women in all aspects of our society. Just six months ago this session of Parliament opened with a Speech from the Throne that did more than any previous Government's statement to recognize the needs of women. Members of the House will recall that we made a commitment at that time, which we have sought actively to maintain, to take a comprehensive and integrated approach to improving the status of women.

[Translation]

This approach was clearly demonstrated by our commitment to implement the economic renewal strategy which is so badly needed in this country.

[English]

Key to the economic renewal and equity for women is a co-operative process of federal-provincial consultations. In this vein, I have pledged to work closely and consult regularly with my provincial colleagues—my fellow advocates with Governments of this country—on behalf of women. Their assistance is vital to improving the status of women in areas under their provincial jurisdiction. I am referring here to areas of health, education and, perhaps most important of all, the delivery of employment programs.

In order to assist in this process of consultation, last December I invited my provincial and territorial counterparts to Ottawa for a special and extraordinary meeting. At that time we discussed how we could best address the issue of equality for women within the context of a debate on the general economic policies of the Government and the nation. We will continue to address these themes when we gather again in Winnipeg in June for our annual meeting.

Our Government also recognizes that inviting women to join as full partners with business, labour and Government in all major economic decisions is essential to ensuring that Canada and Canadian women achieve their full economic potential. Women have long baked the nation's pies; the time is overdue for women to sit at the table and share in the eating of that pie. To this end, we have made a special effort to ensure that