

*Status of Women Study*

the rent scale for public housing is applied. Similarly, the previous allowance for working spouses was increased substantially.

I also announced that space for social and recreational facilities, which can and I hope will continue to include day care centres, will be eligible for federal assistance when provided in housing for low income people. Furthermore, I have asked the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to look into the report's further proposal that CMHC make loans for the construction, purchase and renovation of buildings for day care centres. This, I might say, is not an issue for CMHC or myself alone to decide, but would have to be one possible aspect of a wider federal policy for which I must admit having a bias.

At various levels of government, not only federal, we can and should remove discrimination and constraints. I suppose that many will argue that we should stop there and thereafter let women as well as men make their own way. But this government has a feeling there is some catching up to do. There may be a need for some special incentives.

To address myself specifically to one other recommendation here may I say that we are not biased against the idea of a federal-provincial conference. If our informal discussions which will be taking place support this idea, it is very likely that we will proceed.

The debate is useful, and I will summarize by saying that our bent as a government is, in areas open to us, to encourage and to seek out women of competence, to provide special support where that is feasible and practicable, and to encourage other levels of our society to do the same. I hope and expect we will give leadership. More important, I think that as individuals and as groups Canadians have to address themselves to this question of the elimination of discrimination wherever it appears.

• (4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, on rising to take part in this important debate I must first congratulate the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) for bringing this matter before the House this afternoon, and on doing it in such a substantial way by the motion he has presented to the House. It is quite likely true in this discussion, as in many others, that the events and realities of the situation may greatly outdistance both the type of discussion we have here and the issues which are of principal concern. However, even if we are dealing with this subject somewhat late in the day, in comparison with the concerns and interest expressed in this far-reaching question of the status of women, better late than never must surely be the axiom and this must justify the argument that we should be spending the time of the House on this particular issue.

In fact I feel that, in dealing with it in the context of a one day debate, we do nothing more than open a host of questions that need to be raised and looked at very carefully in the hope that we may first discover the exact nature of the problem and, secondly, determine whether there are certain steps that can be taken by Parliament

[Mr. Andras.]

to alleviate the most serious aspects of the problem. The question that confronts us in this debate is a basic one. Are half the members or our society living in an inferior or discriminated position with respect to the other half? Is there in fact a basic question of inequality for women in this country today, or has this whole concern for women's rights and women's liberations simply been generated as another in the endless series of fads that seem to be the product of our culture, and are perhaps the result of the tremendous flowering of the devices of mass communication in our time?

Is it not true, as an earlier poet was moved to comment, that "the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world"? It is a pleasant phrase, a phrase that I am sure all hon. members have heard. I would assume that in an earlier day it was a convincing one. In spite of the fact that men occupied the prominent positions in society, became heads of state and for the most part, produced works of art, the person who stayed by the hearth, who cared for the young, who provided a home for her happy warrior when he returned from another victory, provided evidence of the essential truth in this statement that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.

Well, of course in this age of enlightenment we are finding that that was one of the clever put-downs of an earlier time, one that may still be used by some people who would like to believe that in our modern society women enjoy all the opportunities, all the access and status that seem inherently the right of their fellow citizens of the world, men. But of course we know it is not true. We know it is nonsense. In fact, we are not so many years removed from a time in which some of the discrimination was so obvious and blatant as to be impossible to believe. Here, I refer to the time of good Queen Victoria when the ladies were concerned about such basic things as having the right to vote and about being recognized as human beings. It was a time when Queen Victoria was moved to comment:

The Queen is most anxious to enlist everyone who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of "Woman's Rights" with all its attendant horrors... It is a subject which makes the Queen so furious that she cannot contain herself. God created men and women different—then let them remain each in their own position.

One would have liked the opportunity, having heard the Queen declare herself in that fashion, to ask her whether or not there should be a limit put on such things as the right of succession. However, I gather one did not ask those kinds of questions of Queen Victoria. We know, however, there were those who tried to respond to the problems of women's inequalities in the early part of this century, such as the well known Mrs. Pankhurst who, trying to make her point crystal clear, at one stage said:

Trust in God: She will provide.

**Mr. Anderson:** May I ask the hon. member a question?

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Yes.

**Mr. Anderson:** I am just wondering whether the hon. member is implying that Queen Victoria did not have