

*Private Members' Business*

Following that, I informed Conservative members. Gilles Bernier, the hon. member for Beauce, wrote me a letter on June 1, 1990, which pleased me very much. When I met him in person, he repeated again: "Guy, in my own riding, several pregnant women working at the radio station, in Saint-Georges-de-Beauce, called me to tell me of their grievances under the Labour Code". He added:

I agree with you when you say that the Canada Labour Code should include some standard for the preventive removal of pregnant women with pay, just as the Quebec Labour Standards legislation does.

In July, as I continued my efforts I received a letter from Hon. Robert de Cotret, President of the Treasury Board. Meanwhile, on May 17, 1990, I had moved the very motion M-655 that we are dealing with today. He wrote:

I should like to inform you that even if there is no federal legislation dealing with this issue, the policy concerning federal civil servants makes it a responsibility of Deputy Ministers to find other jobs, as the case may be, to pregnant women who are concerned about the possible effects of carrying out their assignments during their pregnancy.

And so on. He added that each case had to be looked into. I appreciated receiving his letter.

And, at the same time, around November, I modified all the unions in my riding. I wrote:

In November 1989, an Abitibi woman in the labour force told me of the problems she had to face when, pregnant, she asked to be compensated for preventive removal.

You know the story. I said everything there was to say. But last June I came across an article concerning precautionary withdrawal in the June 1990 issue of the magazine *Le Travail*. The title was "Pregnant women at work, insist that your rights be respected". It was the first time I read an article in that magazine. Here is a quotation from it: "A mother first in the eyes of everybody". A woman called Danielle said: "At work there are men and women who will not admit that pregnancy does slow you down some. Surely a pregnant women should be allowed to stay home when she does not feel well, said Danielle, who had a difficult pregnancy. Of course there are a few things we cannot do as quickly, like walking or carrying heavy loads. How often did I hear those words! It is not my fault if she is pregnant. That is not an excuse not to work. And these are the people who complain about the low birth rate in Quebec".

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that in Quebec precautionary withdrawal is a CSST-paid leave so that women working in a job which does not accommodate the normal evolution of pregnancy may stay off work during that time. I want to say to all members of the House that the government should consider including in the Canada Labour Code a provision for precautionary withdrawal from work for pregnant women in federally-regulated businesses in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, with pay.

Mr. Speaker, I hope all members and all ministers in the House will support this motion in favour of pregnant workers in Canada and in Quebec.

• (1710)

[English]

**Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hon. member for Abitibi for his consideration, abilities, and foresight to understand the needs of working women in Canada and his hope that he will bring it to the attention of the government of the day through his motion.

I would like to read the private member's motion:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider including in the Canada Labour Code a provision for precautionary withdrawal from work for pregnant women working in federally-regulated businesses in Quebec and Canada.

I say first of all to the member in a general sense and in principle that I think the Liberal Party itself can obviously agree with something as important as this is to working women. There are some loopholes and problems with the Canada Labour Code in this regard.

Perhaps the member could inform the House down the road, as we get into this matter a little further, just what are the nuts and bolts of the particular motion or, if we are to change the Canada Labour Code, what he means and to what extent the provision for precautionary withdrawal would take effect.

Is the meaning in that regard that the moment a woman is pregnant, that is at the very early stages of pregnancy, it is within the realm of the Canada Labour Code to allow for that woman to go on sick leave from that moment on for the whole period? Or, are there going to be criteria and some safeguards of the public