

Oh, yes, one thing about which some Hon. Members like to talk and regurgitate, with good reason, is the phrase: "jobs, jobs, jobs". We have created 560,000 of them since we came to office.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: And no less important is the fact that—and this gives one an indication of the fundamental differences between the approaches—85 per cent of that record number of jobs are full-time jobs whereas, of the small number of jobs created by our predecessors, only 19 per cent were full-time jobs. That is the fundamental difference between the Conservative and the Liberal approaches.

Also important and consistent with our commitment is that, of the jobs that have been created, 318,000 jobs went to women. That too is important.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I will not waste much time with regard to comments made by the Leader of the NDP or the Leader of the Opposition, but I would just point out to those who will hear criticisms of us today and will hear predictions of gloom and doom and catastrophe around the corner, just remember that when we brought in our Budgets and economic statements, the Leader of the NDP said that in terms of jobs, the net effect of the change in programs the Prime Minister promised would unquestionably be a net loss during the next fiscal year of between 50,000 and 100,000 jobs. Wrong again, Mr. Leader of the NDP. We created jobs.

The Leader of the Opposition indicated that we would lose 125,000 jobs as a result of the Budget of May, 1985. Not only have we not lost 150,000 jobs, not only have we not lost 50,000 or 75,000 jobs, we have created in excess of 550,000 new jobs for Canada and that, I think, is good news for all Members of the House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mulroney: With respect to social policy, I am referring to the social policy for our fellow Canadians and the quality of life in this country, well of course we are going to maintain our social programs which all of us consider as vested rights, the fruit of a social consensus, they are an integral part of the very fabric of our society.

Our programs can be improved and adapted to meet new requirements, of course. The problem, if we want to be reasonable and serious, still lies in the fact that we must find the money to finance these programs. It is not easy. If we print money, it has a direct impact on the debt and on inflation. If we make cut-backs, then we create social problems. If we borrow, our young Canadians will be burdened with a heavier

debt to repay. This is a complex and formidable dilemma for any Government.

We are trying to proceed by widening our economic base and creating more jobs, creating enough jobs so that the number of contributors will increase at the same rate as the number of beneficiaries.

For one thing I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that post-war Canadian men and women who have built Canada as we know it today are entitled to enjoy peace of mind, and financial security, and enjoy it they will.

We also raised the issue of women during our election campaign, and I think that the Speech from the Throne highlights a whole series of challenging possibilities to promote justice at long last with respect to the status of women.

We had also indicated that we would quite simply double an element of a wide-ranging program in favour of women, that during our first mandate we would double the percentage of jobs held by women on boards, agencies and federal councils, including as I said later the positions of deputy ministers in the upper echelons of the Public Service of Canada. I can tell you that our objective to double such numbers has almost been reached, and we will be doing even more in the course of our mandate. Considering our performance, you will see that we have already done better than our predecessors in two years and we are well on our way to setting records in this vital sector.

[*English*]

In the area of social justice we are all trying to build a society which is more tolerant and more caring. There is important news on this. We know that in Canada important news does not always make it to the front pages. However, last year the average income of Canadian families increased in real terms for the first time since 1980 and the incidence of low income among families declined for the first time since 1980. That is not a miracle, but it is solid progress.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: We have tried as well to serve the men and women who have served our country so well—our veterans. I pay tribute to the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Hees) who does an outstanding job on their behalf.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Wait till you see him in this job in 10 or 15 years. He is getting better every day. Thanks to the Minister, pension applications are now being processed in half the time previously taken and the percentage of favourable decisions has doubled. Greater pension benefits are being extended to veterans and their spouses. Age limits for dependent children are being extended and educational assistance to eligible orphans has been increased. More generous financial arrangements for former prisoners of war have been made. The Aging Veterans Program has been expanded. An additional 18,000 veterans have become eligible for this program. May I say,