

*Supply*

the Government to examine seriously some of the shortfalls in the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

I hope the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins), who is an expert in this area and who I assume will be following me in the debate, will seriously review these studies. When she speaks about the accomplishments of the Canadian Jobs Strategy I hope she will also take into consideration some of its shortfalls, particularly for women. If she can do that and perhaps persuade the Minister, this country will be a better place for us all, particularly the women of Canada.

**Ms. Mitchell:** Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague for putting on the record that informative but rather disturbing analysis of the Canadian Jobs Strategy and training programs. In particular, the Statistics Canada study on part-time work was extremely useful.

I would like him to comment on another subject that I know is very close to his heart. It concerns the agricultural situation in Canada and the impact that the extreme stress and economic hardship of farming is having on women. Does he have any suggestions about what should be done, because I believe that farm women carry far more than the average burden of responsibility since many of them work on the farm as well as perform their usual family and homemaking responsibilities? Indeed, I understand that some women work in town in order to help buy the groceries. Would the Hon. Member comment on that situation?

**Mr. Nystrom:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for that question. I grew up on a small farm near the town of Wynyard, Saskatchewan. I spent my first 18 years there, until I went to university. I, and many Members of the House, such as the Member from the Camrose area, witnessed the tremendous discrimination farm wives experience in the economic and social system of the farm community.

First, many farm women not only look after the house and the children, but also do a lot of work on the farm itself. When I was growing up, these jobs ranged from milking the cows, to hauling the bales, to kicking the rocks. They very often received very little in return and did all this work without income. These women carry out this work without a pension or the ability to qualify for unemployment insurance.

These women represent a group of people in our society who do a tremendous amount of work and make a valuable contribution to this country through their farming skills, parenting skills, and managerial skills, but do not have many of the benefits provided by our society. I have seen case after case in which the land is in the man's name, in which the cheques come in the man's name, in which the man makes contributions to the Canada Pension Plan and to his RRSPs. I have seen cases in which the man has this and the man has that and in which there is very little for the woman.

• (1530)

In addition to that I see tremendous discrimination against farm women when it comes to matters such as child care. Obviously, many farms are a long way from towns, cities and larger villages and women are stuck on the farm with the children and do not have the options that their urban sisters do. I think that is a tremendous discrimination. What makes it worse is that we are now facing an economic crisis such as we have not seen in rural Canada, particularly in the west, since the 1930s. We have all seen the figures with respect to the price of wheat and the price of other farm commodities, which are exceedingly low. Much of the burden this creates must be borne by the farm woman in terms of the additional stress it places on the family.

I was in my riding not last weekend but the weekend before last when I had a chance to meet with three people who run the Yorkton Crisis Centre. This is a crisis centre which has been open for a short time, I believe just two or three years. They came to me with a request for lobbying for more funding. At the moment they receive a very small grant from the federal Government and nothing from the province. They receive small contributions from people in the community and from the city council. They came to me and told me that in the last year in the small community of Yorkton there were over 1,300 people who contacted the crisis centre, either in person by walking through the door or by calling on the telephone.

They told me that many of these people who called were farmers, men and women, who were going through stress because of financial problems. Many of them were farm women who are battered wives or who are having problems in that they feel isolated on the farm and have nowhere to turn. Those statistics alone have shown me what kind of problems farmers face in general but, in particular, the problems that women face because of the role they are playing in our society.

What we should be doing is bringing in adequate pension plans for farm women, as well as adequate pension plans for women who work with their husbands in small businesses. We should bring about recognition of the work that is done, not just in the home, and we have talked about the work done in the homes of urban Canada, but the work done in the homes of rural Canada as well as the work done on the farms by the women who make such a great and tremendous contribution to Canada.

I could name many women who live in the community where I grew up who not only looked after the house and the kids but who actually did more work on the farm than did their husbands. I remember in particular one family, and I will not give their name, where the woman, after having to do all the work in the house and looking after the kids, also had to go out and milk the cows. The man would stand by and watch her because milking cows is women's work.

So these women have made a tremendous contribution, particularly the pioneers who settled the West. I think the time