

*Supply*

advance. It is something that does not exist in many other countries.

Often we have delegations coming to Canada that sit down and meet with my officials at status of women, meet with the Canadian Advisory Council, and meet with NGOs, and then go back and try to formulate their own plans. I think we have provided a real leadership role internationally in this respect.

The other issue I also want to raise today, because to me it is of great primacy and one I know my colleagues feel the same way about, is the issue of violence against women. I see it as fundamental to women's equality that we address this issue and that as a society we take the steps that are going to be important to reduce, and I would like to say eliminate if I could be that optimistic, the kinds of violence that occur in our society: physical and emotional violence. Of course that is the mandate of the panel which is undertaking its work across the country. I know that I am very much looking forward to its final report in December of this year and an interim report in May.

Again I compliment my colleagues who sat on the parliamentary committee—the chair of that committee is here and other members—for their work on *The War Against Women*, a very important landmark report. In the response from the government last November we indicated our agreement with almost all of the recommendations and are seeking ways to work toward their implementation.

As we heard earlier today, my colleague, the Minister of Justice, tabled the regulations which go along with the Gun Control Act that was passed in this House. It is one facet of addressing of this issue.

Last December my hon. hon. colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby put forward a motion that was passed unanimously in this House designating December 6 as a day of remembrance and action on violence against women. We know that led to a tremendous amount of activity throughout this country and a heightening and an awareness of these issues, an awareness to which the panel is now adding in its work.

We have also seen the introduction of legislation on sexual assault in this House which will be coming up for debate I expect shortly. Many groups have spoken to me about it. They really think it is landmark legislation. I

hope we will have the full support of members in this House when that comes to debate and goes to committee. For women it is really significant in terms of changing the concepts. Often I think it is hard for men to understand in this issue, as well as when we get into issues of sexual assault, just how important that is to women. It involves our very being and our physical sense of ourselves which we want to ensure we can protect and cannot be violated.

We have also been very active in international forums. The Prime Minister attended the Francophonie last year and there was work done with respect to women at the Commonwealth. It was not only on the issue of violence against women, but the heads of government adopted the Ottawa declaration, to which the status of women ministers had agreed in their meeting, with respect to structural adjustment and ensuring that as structural adjustment occurs in countries it does not adversely affect women. That is very important for women throughout the world, both the north and the south. Most recently discussions went on in Vienna in the last two weeks at the UN commission on women in which Canada again played a major role, not only in the recommendations, for example, to increase the number of women within the United Nations organization and in management positions, something we have been really working on, but more important in a Canadian resolution with respect to violence against women, which was accepted unanimously by all countries. That was not easy, as I am sure the House can imagine. This means we can now move forward with working out the details of that and hopefully bring that back to the full United Nations General Assembly and then on to the world conference on women scheduled for 1995.

All these actions can start to make a difference for women not only in Canada but around the world. Women do feel a strong allegiance to their sisters and we know we have a responsibility to be of assistance.

There are other areas too that I think are important to remind ourselves of when we look at the progress of women in Canada. It is within the mandate of the federal government to ensure that women are getting their fair share of appointments. We are seeing women taking on increasingly responsible positions. In the Public Service we have seen a tripling of the number of deputy