

I will not go into any details of the bill. The honourable senator from Fredericton, who is thoroughly conversant with the question, has already done so and, moreover, I would not want to delay the passing of this legislation.

In the name of Canadian women and particularly of those of Quebec whom I represent, I congratulate the promoter of the bill, the Honourable Milton F. Gregg, Minister of Labour, and all those who have supported him in this act of justice toward the working women of our country.

You may rest assured that these women are working for no other reason than to make a living for themselves and their families.

I hope this example will be followed by the provincial Governments of Canada in relation to the female workers under their jurisdiction.

I am wholly in favour of this bill, which is a most interesting piece of federal legislation.

(Text):

I am sure that all honourable senators will vote for this bill, because there is no good reason for opposing it. A truly big man is never afraid of a woman who fights for her rights.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Haig: I would like to ask the sponsor of the bill (Hon. Mrs. Fergusson) a question. I have never understood how it came about that employers would pay men more than they would pay women for doing the same job if the women could do the job just as well. Why has that been the universal practice? It is interesting to recall that when I first went to work in a law office most stenographers were women, although there were quite a number of men too. However, nowadays there are practically no male stenographers. There must be a reason for this. And what is the reason why employers will pay men more than women for doing the same job?

Hon. Mrs. Fergusson: I do not know. I was prepared to answer questions on the bill, but I do not know that I can answer questions on how this practice has grown up. It is rather complicated. Probably the explanation is that men traditionally held the positions. When women took over jobs during the war they were considered as filling them on a temporary basis; they were regarded as replacements. There has always been a feeling, which is gradually being dissipated, that women's worth in their work is less than that of men. I do not believe that is true, but it is a belief that people have held. It was felt that women were replacing men on a temporary basis only, and although women

have stayed in employment this idea has continued. That is about the only explanation I can suggest.

Hon. Norman P. Lambert: Honourable senators, I am not rising to express any opposition to this bill but I would like to emphasize one aspect of it which comes to mind when I recall some words that were expressed by a member of the other place, a fellow-member with the late Agnes Macphail, when that very charming likeness which the sculptor was able to produce of her was unveiled in the hall yonder. Angus MacInnis said, "I am pleased to be here to pay tribute to the memory of the late Agnes Macphail in spite of the fact that she was a woman, to emphasize the services that she, the first woman to become a member of the Canadian Parliament, was able to render as a woman of Parliament standing entirely on her own two feet".

It is interesting to recall that when Miss Macphail came to Parliament she considered the sessional indemnity received by members—all of whom except herself were men—to be too high, and she actually turned back into the treasury a portion of her sessional indemnity for a couple of years, until she realized the mistake she was making.

Some Hon. Senators: Oh, oh.

Hon. Mr. Lambert: I mention that simply as a preliminary to expressing the hope that this bill does not place too much emphasis upon the sexes in relation to economic activities and economic values. I think that the result of two wars probably did more than anything else to enhance the economic value of women in industry and elsewhere in Canada, and also revealed to everyone who has had anything to do with public affairs or private business that on the part of women of this generation at least who have taken their place in those fields there has been a degree of efficiency and conscientious devotion to the task at hand, which has had a salutary influence upon the economy of the whole country. I do not think there is any doubt about that; many examples could be cited in support of that statement.

I hope that this growing equality of the sexes in these fields will not resolve the women into a unionized body seeking through the Department of Labour and its machinery of arbitration to obtain privileges because of their sex. Frankly, I do not think it is necessary at any time for anyone who is advocating support of a bill like this to emphasize the idea of equality and rights of women as opposed to men. The old feminist movement of Mrs. Pankhurst is gone. The