

Government Orders

government has pulled back on that funding in those three provinces. I want to say that children in B.C., Ontario, and Alberta need child care just as much as any child in this country, and that the women in those provinces who are battered and abused need shelters just as badly as the women in other parts of this country.

Then there are cuts in transfer payments to the provinces, and cuts to health and education, all of which spell disaster for women since they are more likely to be poor and in need of services like health care. To make matters worse, the majority of health care workers are women. They are the first to be laid off. They are the most vulnerable salary cutbacks.

We can't forget either—as if we could forget—the misnamed goods and services tax and its impact on women. It is a tax that is no good and does no service for the women of this country. The GST will work against women, who earn on average 64 per cent of what men in this country earn. Women will spend more of their disposable income on the GST than will men because they have a lower disposable income and because the GST is regressive, taxing consumption rather than income.

A single mom with two kids will consequently fork over the same amount of money at the cash register when she buys shoes for her child as the Prime Minister or any of the ministers on that side of the House will. What more could this government do, I wonder, to continue trying to keep women in their place? Well, how about letting unemployment among women jump dramatically in the last month. With one wave of the Tory wand, we have seen 41,000 full-time jobs once held by women vanish into thin air. But the cabinet magicians have been crying since last spring that Canadian women understand the cuts when put “in the context of government-wide expenditure restraints”. Why does this government feel that it can impose cutbacks on the people in Canada who are least able to take them? Why are they always on the backs of the poor and of the women of this country?

Canadian women want to know why this restraint, this cost-cutting magic, was not evident in the \$17 million loan to strip clubs in Canada, in the \$33 million increase in the budget of the Canadian Security Intelligence

Service, in the \$1.5 million spent on Senate committee room renovations, in the \$14 million squandered to advertise a tax that no one in this country wants, in the \$2 million thrown into Canada Day romp and pomp festivities, or in the uncalculated amount of money now being spent to prepare Canadians for war and death in the Persian Gulf.

On top of all that, I have been receiving angry calls and letters detailing the government's ignorance and incompetence when it comes to dealing with women. Individual women from Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver, and groups from Nova Scotia and Winnipeg, have taken great pains to outline the inherent contradictions in eligibility requirements for programs, services and grants.

All of these women and organizations have reached the same conclusion, that this government takes credit for changes which serve only to improve its public profile, and that this government has avoided fulfilling promises by making its proposals too expensive for its principles. This is a sad thing, since its principles for women were never worth much to begin with. Clearly, the women of Canada have lost confidence in this Prime Minister's rag-tag team. Those members of the House with female constituents should therefore support the motion and withdraw their confidence in this government and Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I am very proud this afternoon to speak about the leadership of our government and, particularly, of our Prime Minister.

• (1600)

[*English*]

I wanted to comment particularly and then ask a question of the hon. member from New Westminster on her comments about Canadian women, which are clearly and totally NDP philosophically based and have no resemblance to any reality whatsoever.

Since this government came to office we have made considerable progress on behalf of the women of this country. Our Prime Minister would be the first to say that there is a lot more left to do, because he is so