

*Supply*

tear open that chrysalis or that egg, the new creation that comes out of it is weak because it has not had to struggle.

We need to be there for each other. We need to care about each other's struggles. We need to make sure there is fairness and impartiality. We cannot deliver things to people that they can best benefit from by achieving them themselves. That is a very important point in this debate. I hope that satisfies my hon. friend about what I mean in that regard.

**Ms. Judy Bethel (Edmonton East, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, yesterday the Canadian Federation of Independent Business had a press release. It said that women in new businesses are refused small business loans 20 per cent more often than men in new businesses. It also said that women in business pay 1 per cent more above prime than men in business do. I would like the member to respond to how we as a society should deal with these kinds of inequities.

**Mrs. Ablonczy:** Madam Speaker, this is an important point. On the face of it, these kinds of statistics look like nothing more than discrimination.

The question must be asked: Are the banks which are clearly in the business of making money simply refusing women loans because they do not like women? If that is the reason, then they should be hammered over the head. It is stupid.

What difference does it make if you are a man or a woman in business? The point is, is there a good business reason as to why this decision is being made? If there is a good business reason, then as a business woman I am going to make sure that I meet the concerns of the bank and qualify for the loan I need. I am going to satisfy the bank that it would be very well advised to give me the needed money because I am a good risk. That is the kind of initiative we need.

● (1530)

**Hon. Sheila Finestone (Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in the discussion today. I am delighted that the concerns pertaining to 52 per cent of society are being addressed in a thoughtful manner based on the political observations of people.

Politics makes strange bed fellows, if I could put it that way. Each of us chooses the political party that best suits our interests and concerns. Perhaps the way we view society is reflected by the choice of where we sit in the House. We have been listening to a very interesting approach. Much of it reflects the values I consider important. Some of it is totally outrageous and some of it is strictly political partisanship of the weakest form of politics I could possibly think of.

Notwithstanding, it is vital that we enter into this kind of discussion. I am very pleased to respond to the motion of the opposition member regarding federal action to achieve women's economic equality.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her motion. She is asking this House to affirm a principle that is also dear to my heart, the economic equality between men and women. It is not easy to achieve, but it merits discussion, particularly after the speech by the hon. member for the Reform Party.

Our government is firmly committed to helping women attain equality. There is no doubt that the equality of women, fairness and justice for all hinge on economic independence.

We also know that economic equality is fundamental to the well-being of women and indicative of the status of women in our society. Being affluent and having a good job make it easier to stand up for your interests. If you are at the bottom of the scale, if you are a divorced woman, if your parents have lived a life of confrontation accompanied by physical abuse, your life will not be quite the same. Equality will be lacking. I believe it is up to society, men and women together, to take an interest in these vital issues.

In my view, women must be able to take part in the workplace, to receive equal pay for work of equal value, and to contribute equitably to our collective wealth. I must tell you that, as a mother who had sons, would I not have wanted the same treatment, the same equality of opportunity for my daughters—had I been blessed with some—as for my sons, and as for my daughters-in-law today? If they have the same education, the same ability and the same experience, why do they not deserve the same treatment? I have never understood why we cannot ensure that our sons and our daughters live their lives on an equal footing. This situation can change if women decide to have children, and this must be taken into consideration as well.

I feel that it is very important to find a way of ensuring that the equitable contribution to our collective wealth benefits everyone, all members of our society, women as well as men.

● (1535)

[*English*]

I am pleased to be part of a government that is determined to accelerate the advancement of economic opportunity for women not only in the marketplace but also in their daily lives if they choose to work in their homes. I am honoured to serve under a Prime Minister who is committed to exactly the same goal.

The goal of the Liberal Party has not changed. Times have changed. What we saw as necessary many years ago has changed in the new reality of today's world, whether it is the technology