

individuals and not be lumped together as a group, discriminated against and denied access to some 40 trades and occupations, which they are quite capable of doing. We studied this question as a committee. We heard representations of the Armed Forces and others and we unanimously came to the conclusion that this denial of equality for Canadian women within the Armed Forces must end.

The Government again, on paper, has said "Yes, we are prepared to move. Yes, all trades and occupations will be opened" but when push comes to shove, there is no action. The Government says: "We are going to have a task force." Guess who will be on the task force? It will be the male generals who will decide whether or not women can operationally handle all trades and occupations. What we have is more study and more task forces.

In the area of part-time work, the Government says "Wait and see". We may do something but we are not sure yet exactly what we are going to do. We should explore more options". We have explored these options long enough. The systemic discrimination against women who are part-time workers must end. Seventy-two per cent of all part-time workers are women and they are discriminated against in the workplace.

On the question of employment equity, the Government has said Bill C-62 is good enough. This is the employment equity legislation before this House. In a really quite remarkable step, the Equality Rights Committee said: "No, you must go further. There must be effective enforcement mechanisms. There must be penalties. There must be an assurance of contract of compliance for companies doing business with Ottawa and major federal Government departments and agencies must be included. The Government says "Forget it. We are not prepared to move on this employment equity question," which is of such fundamental concern to women, to visible minorities, to the disabled and to native people in particular.

● (1600)

The Government rejected our proposals with respect to broadening the Human Rights Act to make equal pay for work of equal value a reality. There was no mention in its response to the issue of child care. The Government says it will study the question further. It will further examine the issue of maternity benefits for women in the Canadian Armed Forces, but has taken no action. There is no action with regard to political rights for spouses of members of the Canadian Armed Forces who live on bases as the committee recommended. There has been no action on many other important recommendations as well.

It is no wonder the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has said that it is extremely disappointed in the Government's failure to address the principle of equality between the sexes. As the Council says, women will not accept any further deferral of implementation of their hard-fought constitutional rights.

We made important recommendations in other areas as well, Mr. Speaker. In the area of marital or family status we

Motions

suggested that in Canada today we must recognize that a significant number of Canadians are involved in common-law relationships. The discrimination which currently exists against those involved in such relationships must come to an end. Those relationships should be recognized under all federal statutes.

With regard to the area of religious observance, we recommended a system of statutory holidays which would respect the religious diversity of the nation. The Government says there will be more study and more deliberation, but no action. There are approximately two million Canadians who are physically and mentally disabled. The Government says that it likes our recommendations, but needs more time for study and research. The disabled community in the country is insisting that the time has come for action, rather than for more study.

We were pleased with the Government's commitment to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to deal with the principle of reasonable accommodation. There will be more study in the area of political rights for public servants. We were pleased with the Government's response in the area of mandatory retirement, and we emphasize that we are studying the possibility of retiring at an age of less than 65. That flexibility, with a reasonable pension, is our objective.

With regard to women in the Armed Forces, I mentioned the hurdle which has historically existed and the attitudes which have been such a barrier to women. An example is the comment of the Member for Calgary East (Mr. Kindy) who said: "Physically it's a tough game. Do you see a woman changing a big tire? You have to have the physical strength".

Finally, in the area of sexual orientation, the Committee on Equality Rights made strong recommendations for specific changes. It recommended amending the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation. The Government has made no commitment. The committee recommended that the Armed Forces and the RCMP, two of the most homophobic employers in the country, should amend their policies to end discrimination against gays and lesbians. The order which continues that discrimination in the Armed Forces remains on the books today. It has not been amended, and another task force has been struck to study that important question. We recommended that the security clearance guidelines be changed, and the Government said there is no need. We called for a uniform age of consent and the Government said that it does not have to act on that at this point, but will study it further.

I want to pay tribute to the gay and lesbian community across the country which made very eloquent submissions in response to Private Member's Bill C-225, which was referred to committee. It talked in very real and personal terms about the implications of continued discrimination. I want to pay tribute to the equality rights group here in Ottawa which initiated a national campaign to urge the Government to act on our important recommendations.

Finally, I want to voice my concern with respect to the Government's refusal to move forward with legislative change. When I spoke on this issue three weeks ago one of the Tory