

did not mention them. Saying that there were forces of change is one thing, but we would like to know what they are.

In Quebec, we know what our forces of change were and what contributed to these forces. We admit that there were also forces in Canada, but I would like to know what were the forces of change in Canada that might have had an effect on Quebec. Personally, I do not see them. That is what I am now asking the hon. member.

[English]

Mr. Bryden: Madam Speaker, far be it for me to instruct the hon. member in the history of Quebec. There is no doubt that in the fifties and sixties there was a great reaching out by the federal government under Prime Ministers Louis St. Laurent and Pearson. The history of the federal government did tend to be a history of anglophones prior to the arrival of Mr. Louis St. Laurent and Mr. Pearson and then we had Mr. Trudeau and so on.

We had an attempt, a very successful attempt, to involve Quebec in the life of the nation at large. Quebec has contributed enormously to Canada. I am surprised that my hon. colleague does not appreciate this.

[Translation]

Mrs. Debien: Madam Speaker, I will answer the hon. member by saying that we certainly did not take the same courses in the history of Canada and of Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to spend a few minutes this afternoon on this opposition motion. As I listened to the debate unfold this afternoon, with people speaking with heartfelt conviction from different political perspectives on the whole notion of women's issues, it was interesting to reflect on it based on our own personal experiences, our life experiences.

I thought of my mother and grandmother. My grandmother was a war bride after the first world war. She came from a life of some luxury in Scotland and arrived on the prairies in Vulcan, Alberta to live in a sod hut. I thought of what she went through in her life as they were breaking the prairies. I thought of how her circumstances changed relative to the circumstances of my mother who often said perhaps her life would have been a little easier if she had been a man. I think that was because she did many things which were not normally within the purview of women. To be charitable, she would never rate all that highly on a scale of one to ten regarding her interest in washing floors, dishes, and that kind of thing.

• (1720)

Interestingly she was the first women photographer ever in the newspaper guild in Canada. She edited and wrote a newspaper column for many years. I am very proud of her. She is in her

Supply

mid-70s. She always wanted to write a book so she wrote a book. We are now getting it published.

In her lifetime and in the lifetime of many of the women and men in the House, the role of women has changed dramatically in our society. It has changed dramatically as a result of the emancipation of both men and women. Perhaps the greatest change that has taken place, at least to my thinking, is the generational change between my parents' generation and my generation, and the relationship we have with our daughters.

Most of us in this room who have daughters expect our children to be treated with absolute impartiality, regardless of their gender.

My wife and I have a daughter who is an engineer. She is a very competent person. It used to drive her crazy every time a male opened a door for her because she could do it on her own, thank you very much. I said to her: "Kate, there are times when you just have to be a little gracious. Perhaps whoever is opening the door for you is just being polite. It is not a statement meant in any way to put you down".

Perhaps one of the things that is missing in this great raging debate between men and women is that every once in a while we have to lighten up and not take ourselves so seriously.

We evolve as a people and as a nation. It is an evolutionary change not revolutionary change. There are those who would say that evolutionary change has a way of being better than revolutionary change.

I believe the debate was worthwhile and placed in good faith by the Bloc. It is worthy of mention that there are all kinds of inequities in life, not just inequities of women. They may feel for one reason or another that their potentials are not realized. It is not just people of different ethnic backgrounds who feel that maybe their potentials are not realized because of that background. These things are not right and it is a value system that we all share.

We recognize that people should not be restrained from the opportunity of achievement because of any physical characteristic, whether they are women or because of their colour or because of their religion, or anything. It is the equality of opportunity that everyone feels is a right in a free society. Circumstance is earned. Provided we, as a society, ensure that everyone; women, men, young and old, have equality of opportunity, then we are on the right track.

Our challenge is to ensure equality of opportunity, that the ladder between success and failure is climbed by the amount of effort put into whatever opportunity is afforded.

I thank the House for the opportunity to put a few thoughts on the record. If anyone has any further comments, I would be delighted to entertain them.