

S. O. 31

Quebec Labour Code. Is she agreeable to such a request and will she approach her government's labour minister about that?

[English]

Mrs. Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I am not completely familiar with the amendment to which the hon. member is referring. I will apprise myself of it.

I would agree and say that we have not come to the point where the salaries paid to women in the workplace are equal to those to men. That is something we are always conscious of, working toward and committed to.

[Translation]

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my colleague. I saw her applaud the announcement made yesterday by the Secretary of State for the Status of Women regarding the elimination of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

I would like to ask the member how civil servants can ensure the transparency which, I think, the Council now provides. How can she guarantee that civil servants will implement without any bias the different policies which will be put forward? How, in fact, can the department act as both judge and jury? I would like her to explain this because it seemed to delight her yesterday.

• (1355)

[English]

Mrs. Stewart (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I know a number of the women who for many years have participated on the Advisory Council for the Status of Women and say that we have appreciated the work they have done over the last number of years.

I believe that the announcement made by the minister was a good one. It essentially brings together disparate sectors that have been focusing on improving the status of women in the country in a consolidated effort. In a consolidated way we will be able to make significant progress in effort and on behalf of women with her announcement.

Mrs. Diane Ablonczy (Calgary North, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak today to the motion introduced by my hon. colleague from Quebec. I commend her for introducing into the House a good discussion on the whole issue of equality. It is an issue that has a lot of interest in the country, one that a lot of people are concerned about.

One of the lessons of history is that personal struggle and achievement go hand in hand. In fact, I know that is true for many of us here. Sometimes the Canadian public feels that members of the House do not know what personal struggle is about. I know from speaking to many of my colleagues, and

from personal experience, that we do have personal histories of struggle and achievement.

It is important for many of us to realize that these issues are not just something to be debated in the House, but they are issues which all of humankind have struggled with for many years.

I would like to outline to my colleagues some of my personal background in this area. I am the oldest of seven children. My parents were not well off, I think poor would probably be an accurate word. If I wanted money I always had to earn it. I have worked since I was very young in the summers and weekends to have the money I wanted.

The day I left home when I was 18, my mother came home with my youngest brother and so the family kind of went on even though I was going on with my life. My parents were not able to help me with my education. I put myself through two university degrees. I was also widowed in my thirties. My husband died very suddenly, leaving me a single parent and sole support of the family.

I became a professional person, a lawyer, before there was any affirmative action and before there were any nice government programs to help women achieve equality. Many people who I know are very proud and very happy to have been able to make the achievements in their life on their own merit.

The subject of this debate today is how we can best achieve the kind of results we want from our life—

The Speaker: The hon. member, of course, will know that immediately following question period, we will return to debate and she will be given the floor.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), the House will now proceed to Statements by Members, pursuant to Standing Order 31.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mrs. Carolyn Parrish (Mississauga West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today with pride and some dismay.

I am proud of the Minister of Finance who has proposed in this year's budget the most dramatic comprehensive changes in government since World War II.

I am proud to be part of a government that has met, and will continue to meet, the objectives necessary to wrestle the deficit and debt that are damaging the country to the ground.

My dismay has mounted over the past several weeks while I listen to the members of the third party refuse to join us on this