

Supply

for exclusive hiring for the north, with a preference. That is the very major difference between the two pieces of legislation.

Mr. Hawkes: We may explore that when we have more time later this evening. Out of the four major mobility problems the minister referred to, could he indicate which of those would be solved by the constitution legislation of 1980?

Mr. Axworthy: We would hope that we can provide some solution to all of them. The charter of rights would establish a basic standard, a foundation upon which all governments and individuals would know that they have certain rights. Where there are impediments to that, such as the Newfoundland legislation, they could be struck down. But as the hon. member should know, because he is a member of the constitution committee, one of the other advantages of the charter of rights, whether or not it is in a non-discriminatory area, is that it will require governments to go back and check their statutes, their laws and regulations, to make sure that they conform to those precepts of the charter of rights. Therefore, they will have to make a complete re-evaluation to ensure that there is not, within their different standards or codes, that kind of impediment to choosing where they will work or live.

Mr. Hawkes: On Friday afternoon I asked the minister to read the brief in the Canadian Council on Social Development to the constitution committee. Has the minister taken the opportunity to read that? Is he saying to us he totally disagrees with their perspective and that they, in fact, are dead wrong? How can he make the statement he just made in light of the information which is contained in that brief?

● (1820)

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Chairman, it is not my function to agree or disagree with the Canadian Council on Social Development; it is the function of the hon. member who sits on the committee. The committee was established to receive briefs and representations, to sift through them, distil them, decide which is right and which is wrong and then to advise the House. As a member of this House I am quite prepared to put my trust and faith in that committee and the soundness of its judgment.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Hervieux-Payette: Mr. Chairman, first I would like to say how pleased I am to have this opportunity to state the point of view of a woman who has returned to the labour market. As a member, I suppose I am part of the labour market, but I should say to my constituents and probably to all Canadians that for 11 years I was a full-time mother and that at the end of those 11 years I had to resume my studies and complete my training while I was still acting as a mother.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a few general comments as a woman who is now on the labour market, who left a job in the private sector after having worked in the public sector. As for whether a bill of rights should be included in the constitutional motion, my colleague opposite was asking a while ago if Canadian women found it essential to have such a

bill of rights. I should say that in my opinion and in the opinion of the majority of women whom I have consulted so far in Canada, it is essential to include a bill of rights in the Canadian Constitution.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, one cannot claim that in 1980, after more than a hundred years, women have achieved equal status in the market place. There are many obstacles which Canadian women must overcome when they want to join or rejoin the labour force. Of course, one of these obstacles—which should not be one—is motherhood. The fact that they bring children into this world and thus contribute to Canada's future is not an asset but a liability for women who want to rejoin the labour force. Even their getting married is an obstacle, Mr. Chairman, and I am sorry to say in 1980, without a bill of human rights enshrined in the constitution, with a somewhat limited tradition of equal rights under federal and provincial legislation, following some ten, 15 or 20 years of experience of a federal or provincial charter of human rights, I find the status of women deplorable. Mr. Chairman, Canadian women have still a long way to go before they can get equal pay for equal work.

In spite of the organizations which have been established and the legislation which has been adopted, I suggest that all governments, past and present, have failed in their duty to provide jobs to all Canadians, especially to women, who want to work, something to which they should be entitled as a right. Mr. Chairman, there is also a part of our charter of rights which deals with manpower mobility. I suggest that these provisions will benefit women. There are agreements under the red seal concerning tradesmen. We are all well aware that there are very few women involved in the various trades who are able to move from province to province. Some professions have acquired national status, like engineering, technology, and others. We must confess, however, that in some occupations which seem reserved for women, there exist important obstacles preventing them from securing employment. And I suggest that it is the federal government's responsibility to eliminate these obstacles partly or entirely.

With regard to job access, Mr. Chairman, I think the job-creation program should make it easier for women to get back onto the labour market, especially for those who have raised children and now have to help pay the cost of their children's education or those who became head of the family. Those women, Mr. Chairman, who are now in their forties, who were unable to attend school for very long, now find themselves at a dead end in that they are left with taking very low-paying jobs or else living on unemployment or welfare benefits. And I must say, Mr. Chairman, that in this day and age it is unthinkable that in a country like Canada about 70 per cent of single parent women and their children are getting welfare payments. Indeed there surely must be something missing in their education for the women to be in such a large number in that category. Mr. Chairman, I suggest we should dispel the impression too often given by the business community or even by government circles that women are parasites in society and