

Private Members' Business

various fields, but we must still recognize and help those who dedicate their lives to their families”.

I quote what Fred Driscoll, the acting minister of health and social services of Prince Edward Island, said in April 1986: “If we consider public funding for day care, we should ask whether women who stay at home do not have rights as well. This is a group that may have been neglected”. As far as I am concerned, it is a group that has been neglected.

I believe that some social policies should be tried out, especially a salary to women who remain at home. The Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, the Macdonald commission, proposed a thorough overhaul of our social security system. It suggested that Canada implement a universal income security program, UISP, which basically meant a guaranteed annual income for all families.

The idea that the government should offer everyone a guaranteed annual income, which was controversial in the 1960s, became a fundamental recommendation of a royal commission. Are experiments with policies yesterday's failure or tomorrow's hope? Labour supply is an important issue in evaluating income support and other social policies, because disincentives to work are a powerful argument against such programs.

• (1640)

Proposals to reform income support or social insurance programs in Canada have many times run up against the fear that changing the benefits for those who are able to work could be counter-productive. Basically, the fear is that money transfers may reduce the incentive to work.

Since a guaranteed annual income is far superior as a way to supplement the income of all those who need it, not only low-income workers according to the 1986 paper by Humm and Simpson, the idea of a guaranteed annual income to eliminate poverty is strengthened, since we must not hide the fact that poverty is a persistent social problem in Canada.

I urge the government to make the situation of women at home a priority and to take the necessary action to recognize their rights to fair compensation.

In closing, I would like to thank all the many women and men who have expressed their support to me since

1991, as well as all those who signed petitions and who telephoned me. I cannot name them all here and I trust that they will excuse me, but nevertheless, I would like to thank especially Beverley Smith of Calgary, whose study “Throwing Out the Baby with the Bathwater” was very helpful to me in this debate, as well as the newspaper *Vers demain*, or *Michael*, as it is known in English.

We have often seen posters in federal and provincial ridings demanding \$12,000 as a salary for women at home. I wish to thank them and the National Federation of French Canadian Women for the sound ideas they defend in this cause.

We know today that I have waited since 1991 to discuss this subject in the House of Commons, but today I have the opportunity of putting in the Notice Paper some questions concerning payment of a salary to women who remain at home. I will also have an opportunity to repeat this motion in the House of Commons. I say especially to women throughout Canada and mothers at home and children: Don't give up.

We still make speeches. I mentioned some distinguished Canadians who had made speeches in legislative assemblies, national assemblies, the House of Commons, on paying a salary to women who remain at home, that is mothers at home.

We have an example in the bill respecting precautionary cessation of work for pregnant women. Since 1990, thanks to women in the government and in the labour movement and working women, we have fought for three years to have precautionary cessation of employment recognized in the Canada Labour Code. We will begin third reading of it on Monday. It took us three years. Today in this House we are beginning to try to find a solution for mothers who stay at home, who work 24 hours a day, who are awakened at night when their children have problems.

I say to people and to members of this House in all political parties: Let us work together and try to find a solution on salaries for women who remain at home. I say that in a few months, it would be an excellent idea from a government, of whatever stripe that government is. It is important today when we talk about poverty. We talk a lot about all sorts of federal and provincial programs, but we never had a royal commission on salaries for women who remain at home, that is mothers at home.