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tions and exploitive wages. Today the struggle continues for economic, social and political equality.

In Canada, the government has chosen to commemorate International Women's Day by scheduling a budget debate in this House, a budget in which women's centre funding is cut 100 per cent and the funding mechanism for social assistance, for child care, and for shelters for battered women is strangled in three provinces of this country.

On International Women's Day, this government should implement its international commitments as a signatory to the United Nations treaties, not just talk about them, implement them to improve the status of women in Canada. It should not be undermining women's equality in Canada and misrepresenting itself at the international level.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Jean-Guy Guilbault (Drummond): Mr. Speaker, since today, March 8, is International Women's Day, we have the opportunity of drawing attention to women's status, accomplishments, concerns and expectations. 1990 is a significant year for women as we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Quebec women's right to vote. The government has made women's equality one of its priorities. The Employment Equity Act, the reform of the Divorce Act, the employment programs exclusively for women are but a few examples of the numerous initiatives taken to improve the lives of women in Canada.

International Women's Day is also a time to think of the work we still have to do to attain equality in every sector and to eliminate all remaining forms of discrimination.

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[*English*]

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, on this day designated International Women's Day, there are a myriad of issues that need to be addressed. However, I would like to take this opportunity to focus on violence against women.

Women, who make up half of the world's population and work two-thirds of the world's work hours, constitute the highest number of the world's poor and abused. They are clearly undervalued economically, socially, and many times as human beings.

Violence against women, which includes assault, mutilation, murder, infanticide, rape and cruel neglect, is perhaps the most pervasive yet least recognized human rights issue in the world. It is also a profound health problem, robbing women of their physical and emotional well-being, both vital to achieving widely held goals for human progress, especially in the Third World. Study after study has shown that women's sense of self is critical in reducing infant mortality and to birth spacing.

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Violence against women cuts across all cultures and all socioeconomic groups. In Canada, at least one in eight, or as many as one million Canadian women every year are abused by men with whom they are living. Yet we see the Conservative government not only cutting the women's programs but cutting some 80 women's centres that provide support and information to battered and sexually assault women, and to jobless, illiterate and homeless women across Canada.

Women are targets of violence because of their sex, and it remains a powerful obstacle to human progress. Measured by human costs alone, female violence is worthy of international attention and action, but has seldom been raised at that level, much less addressed.

Setting aside a day to recognize women is important symbolically, but without action it is rendered pointless and ineffective. I call on this government to stop paying lip service to women's rights and reinstate funding vital to Canadian women and to press the international community to recognize violence against women as an important human rights issue.

[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, today, International Women's Day, is particularly significant this year since women will celebrate three important events in 1990: the 20th anniversary of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, the fifth anniversary of the coming into force of the equality clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights and