

Supply

• (1255)

Today, I am doing exactly that, and I am thinking more specifically of the 52 per cent of the residents of Shefford who are women.

The federal budget for 1995 tabled by the Minister of Finance totally ignored the social contract between the government and the majority of taxpayers in Quebec and Canada. The budget brought down by the hon. member for Lasalle—Émard ignores the economic and social realities facing the middle class and the less well-off groups in our society.

This budget denies women the right to a fairer and more equitable society. In fact, the budget is just a smoke screen to hide the real problems.

Left out of the budget altogether are measures to ensure that women get equal pay for equal work and a better standard of living. Last year, the Liberals voted in favour of measures that would be fairer and more equitable. Today, those promises have evaporated.

In fact, in the key sectors of health care, social assistance and post-secondary education, the Liberal government actually decided to make the worst, not the best but the worst of a bad situation. The first to suffer as a result of cuts in transfer payments to the provinces will be women and children.

The federal government has offloaded its financial problems on the provinces and on, Quebec, without considering the impact these cuts will have on women.

In addition, Ottawa has decided to launch a second attack on women who are senior citizens by calculating the amount of their old age security cheque according to the income of their spouses. This reduction comes in addition to the reduction in the age tax credit announced last year.

I deplore the fact that the federal government has offloaded its problems on the provinces instead of eliminating overlap and dismantling tax shelters that deprive the government of hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

The government's priorities are not in the right place and lack vision. You would think Ottawa was managed by a bunch of brokers looking for a good deal and speculating on the short term market with other people's money.

I do not mean to criticize the profession as such, but this is not what we need here in Ottawa. Those who govern us should be responsible people who are prepared to listen to the majority of taxpayers who are sick and tired of being squeezed.

Take, for instance, the Canada Assistance Plan, also known as CAP. Despite the provisions in the assistance plan regarding subsidized day care services, the shortage of adequate and

affordable services remains a significant problem for a very large number of families with one or more children.

The lack of day care spaces is a fundamental concern for low and middle income parents.

This is a deep social concern, a concern which was expressed in the red book, this famous red book of the Liberal Party, which we might have thought would lead to some action plan.

We can read on page 38 of the red book, and I quote: "Canadians with young families need a support system that enables parents to participate fully in an economic life for the country— Recent research by the National Council of Welfare indicates that the single best predictor of whether a family has adequate economic resources is whether it has two wage earners. A growing majority of Canadian families need two wage earners to achieve a reasonable standard of living. The availability of good quality child care at an affordable cost makes the difference between a family living at the edge of poverty and a family living with a moderate standard of living".

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This is straight out of the red book. A good child care system, affordable for all, is an economic advantage. It allows poor parents to re-enter the work force instead of having to continue to rely on social assistance and food banks. It also creates jobs, especially for women, since on average one job is created for every five children in day care.

Therefore, the Liberal principle of a service allowing access to financial independence remains a promise, it has been shelved, like all the nice sounding election promises which will be conveniently forgotten before the next election campaign.

According to the Liberal red book, in each year following a year of 3 per cent economic growth, a Liberal government will create 50,000 new child care spaces. We have reached this rate of economic growth this year. Since child care which is funded by governments is funded 50/50 by the federal and provincial governments, what will become of the spaces promised by the Liberals, if the government cuts transfer payments to Quebec by \$350 million?

What will become of the 40 per cent of the costs of new child care spaces to be assumed by the federal government, which is evaluated at \$120 million in 1995-96, \$240 million in 1996-97, and \$360 million in 1997-98, amounting to \$720 million over three years? These figures come from the red book. It has been a long time since the red book, the Liberal bible, has been mentioned. What happened to all the nice Liberal promises?

Let us now talk about social housing. As a whole, the 1995-96 budget puts an end to any new initiative in this area. Since close to 17 per cent of Quebec families and 16 per cent of Canadian tenants spend more than 50 per cent of their income on rent, it is