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welfare if her spouse has a job. In other words, she is not eligible for any government program.

I took this particular example because women are more likely to find themselves in this kind of situation. As a result of what I would call systemic measures that are counterproductive, a situation has been created where women who want to start a business will be less likely than men to have access to various types of assistance. This is unfortunate, because the government could have included a number of measures in the current budget to deal with this, but it did not.

I will continue with my example of a young woman looking at her future, making plans and trying to decide how she will go about it.

When she read the red book of the Liberal Party, during the electoral campaign, she might have felt that, whenever she decided to enter a new career, she would be able to take advantage of adequate day care services for her children, allowing her enough time to pursue a career while ensuring that her children receive a proper education and adequate support during their formative years. Now I am not saying that men do not have any responsibilities regarding the education of their children, clearly we have the same responsibilities as women, but the truth is that in the real world we very often ask women to be what we call superwomen, that is to say women able to juggle family, professional and social lives, and more often that not, without much help.

The government could have taken a number of concrete measures, since the Liberal Party had promised during the election campaign that if the gross domestic product was to increase by 3 per cent it would create 60,000 new spaces in day care centers. Recently, we have seen an increase in the gross domestic product, but no increase in the number of day care spaces which would benefit women, except for native people. Thus the commitment which has been made regularly to Quebec and Canada has now been rejected.

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The previous Conservative government did not live up to this commitment. The Liberals, who were elected on the promise to bring about changes, in this area as well as others, are following in their predecessors' footsteps. We can see why there is still a great deal of dissatisfaction and why the lack of concrete measures on the part of the government can be denounced.

As a result, a young female student graduating with a heavier debt load and the knowledge that adequate day care services will not be available sees no hope of improvement in her situation. When she learns, at the same time, that the bodies acting as watchdogs for the status of women are going to be axed, she has

every right to wonder what is in store for her. This young woman is full of vitality, very enterprising, and wants to go places.

I will now give you the example of another woman also full of vitality, but maybe not as lucky. For the sake of this exercise, let us call her Helen. Helen, a single parent with two children, stays at home. Housing consumes 40, 50, 60 per cent of her income. When she is told that the government is committed to reducing poverty, the first thing she expects is to spend a more reasonable proportion of her income on housing, somewhere around 25 to 30 per cent.

But nowadays, people often spend 50 to 60 per cent of their income on housing. This means that, with a welfare cheque, when you spend between 50 and 60 per cent of it on rent, you have to be a miracle worker in order to feed two children properly and, in the end, prevent them from becoming trapped themselves in the vicious circle of being poor children. Could the Liberal government not have set aside additional money for direct assistance to public housing, following the tour by the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development on the reform of social programs?

Oh, no. On the contrary. A press release by the minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on February 28, 1995 made a very simple announcement—no fanfare. Nowhere else was this casual approach taken, except with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, yesterday. Its demise was announced quite simply, without any fuss, during debate. The effect of this approach is just as hidden as in a press release. The press release in question announced a cut in the overall public housing budget of \$270 million over three years. What does this say to Helen, the woman I was just talking about, who has a housing unit to pay for and must perform miracles just to survive? What does she understand when she is told the public housing budget is going to be cut by \$270 million? So much for the light at the end of the tunnel.

This is a criticism that may be made of the present government. It fails to take solid measures designed not so much as acts of charity but rather to put people in a position to be able to get out of their present situations. The same example applies with respect to the government's continual attempt to use the American model in assisting poor families. The current approach of the government is to say what the Americans have done, basically. The government says it will help poor families, but with the money it currently gives the middle class.

Do you know what the effect of this is? More and more middle class families will become poor families. Then the government can crow over the fact that it sends them a cheque as a poor family. However, the approach in the past in Canada, and the one that worked, was to fight poverty by allowing the people just above the poverty line to continue to hope that their situation will improve and by giving poor families the means to improve