

managed to speak on every subject and raised very discriminatory issues. I have a few questions to ask, so here is the first one.

Mr. Speaker, concerning the case she mentioned earlier, where a teacher could not get her benefits, can my colleague explain how it discriminates against women? She said so but I do not see how.

**Mrs. Killens:** Mr. Speaker, it does not discriminate only against women, it discriminates against all Canadians. However, this person is single, and a woman's problem is always more complicated when she does not have a husband.

[English]

**Mrs. Cossitt:** Mr. Speaker, I was interested in the comments which were made by my hon. colleague with respect to UI payments and how support payments to a spouse discriminate against women in that they must be declared as income for unemployment insurance benefit purposes. However, we could look at the other side of the coin. Males might well be in receipt of support payments and those payments would also be classified as income; therefore, that would negate the male from receiving unemployment insurance benefits as well. Therefore, I feel it is not a discrimination against women, as my hon. colleague seemed to imply.

**Mrs. Killens:** Mr. Speaker, the question is the same as the question which was put by the Parliamentary Secretary. It is not only the woman. However, if we look at the statistics we find that to be a woman and single is almost equal to living to the end of one's days in poverty. So my point is that it is worse for the women but it is also not any better for the men.

● (1230)

[Translation]

**Mr. Hudon:** I also want to ask my colleague how the change in the pension plan for widows and widowers aged 60 to 64 also discriminates against women? You said this measure discriminates against women.

**Mrs. Killens:** Here again it discriminates against men as well, but women are always hardest hit. It is discriminatory, and women will suffer more than men because most men have been on the labour market, whereas the women who will be affected by this measure have often been abandoned by their husbands who wanted to marry younger and more attractive women, and they feel rejected in life.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pépin) for a question or comment.

**Mrs. Pépin:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the question. When we say that women are discriminated against as far as pensions are concerned, it is a fact that women tend to survive their husbands by at least seven years. I must say that I too am concerned about pensions and retirement plans. Among men who do have retirement plans, only 50 per cent of

### Supply

married men have plans that cover their spouses as well. Among the remaining 50 per cent, even spouses who receive a pension will receive only half the amount their husbands would get. So, we live longer, but we do not have any money. In the legislation as it now stands, there is no provision for those who are single. So I definitely think that women, who make up 50 per cent of the population, suffer more discrimination than men. I wish the Hon. Member would ask around in his riding and find out how many men are aware of the fact that their pensions or retirement plans do not cover their spouses. They may be in for a few surprises.

**Mrs. Landry:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a comment. Of course, as a Government, we would like to help everyone in our society, but I think we should not forget that we inherited a very difficult financial situation and in spite of all that we did decide to help 85,000 widows and widowers. I think that is already a vast improvement over what the previous Government was doing, and perhaps later on, when the Treasury is not as bare, we will be able to help the rest of our society.

**Mrs. Killens:** Mr. Speaker, because marital status is used as a criterion, this discriminates against members of religious orders. I do not know whether anyone has really thought about it, but our parish priests and our nuns are not included in this program. These people have contributed to the quality of life in Canada, and when they finally reach the age where they could take a well-earned rest, the Government lets them down.

[English]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The time for questions and comments is now terminated. We shall resume debate.

[Translation]

**Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for External Relations):** Mr. Speaker, I must say that I rise somewhat hesitantly as the first Member of the opposite sex to speak in this debate, but first of all, I wish to pay tribute to all Hon. Members who spoke this morning, and did so with great sincerity and intelligence, to the motion before the House today. As I said before, I am somewhat hesitant this morning to add some of my own comments.

[English]

The motion states that the Budget which is forthcoming very shortly should contain four initiatives, one of which is, and I quote:

—reform of the tax system rather than the introduction of further public spending cuts which impact most adversely on women;

I would like to try to make the matter a little more human by citing the example, Sir, of someone I know who works about 55 hours a week as a truck driver and earns about \$18,000 a year. He is a resident of Quebec and pays \$6,000 in federal and provincial income tax, which leaves him \$12,000 per annum plus the earnings of his wife which are much less.