

to credit. The Minister of Finance replied, as reported at page 2691 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Speaker, unlike the Hon. Member's Party, we have great faith in the ability of women to get credit.

That answer, Mr. Speaker, comparable to the one of the Minister of State for Youth and of other Ministers, simply ignores the realities before us.

We have also suggested that the spending cuts which we see, both provincially and federally, impact most adversely on women. If in the Budget the Government taxes more heavily the middle-income groups, denies universality to all, makes no serious efforts to improve the housing situation, does not raise the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and does not provide for genuinely universal health care, women are going to suffer the most. Already 62 per cent of single elderly women are living below the poverty line. It used to be that 42 per cent of families headed by women were living below the poverty line, but in 1983-84 that number increased to 50 per cent.

Is the Government going to address this most serious situation in our society in the forthcoming Budget? Will it also address child care, family violence, and the increased concerns of women's centres? Will it bring about at least some first steps toward the genuine equality of women in the Budget?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Mailly:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on the remarks made by the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett). While appreciating the fact that the Hon. Member's heart is in the right place, I have always wondered about the element of ambiguity in her approach to the problem of women's economic inequality. Since it is because of their dependence that many women are living in poverty, I cannot understand why the Hon. Member keeps promoting programs, suggestions, principles and a philosophy that tend to increase women's dependence on the State and to maintain them in their traditional status of second class citizens. It is because increasingly, women of my generation and especially, I believe, women in Quebec, are refusing to accept this dependence that people keep wanting to force on us that I decided to run as a candidate for the Progressive Conservative Party, a party that, first of all, respects the value of the individual. I could be, above all, an individual first, and a citizen on equal terms with every one. Second, my party recognized the fact that inequality is above all an economic matter, and a situation that arises from the attitudes of people in society towards minorities, whether these are large minorities, like women, or smaller minorities on the basis of race or creed or colour. Women experience the same unequal treatment suffered by members of these groups. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree when I hear the Hon. Member suggest that women should again start living in ghettos, the ghettos of quotas, for instance, or the ghettos where someone else is going to decide what their priorities should be. I refuse to accept this, and that is why I fail to understand why a woman, who has worked actively all her life to achieve equality

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for both men and women, keeps coming back with suggestions that would achieve the opposite of what women need.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I also would like to comment on the fact that the Hon. Member said the Government did not keep its promises. I may refer, for instance, to the amendment to the Indian Act, where native women are given equal rights with native men. There is also the spouse's allowance which has been extended, despite the fact that our economy is in such a deplorable state that it was not possible to do as much as we wanted but in any event, we did it right away. I would also like to mention the amendments to the legislation on prostitution.

I would also like to ask the Hon. Member whether she would agree that the presence of a number of women in Government, in the Cabinet, where six women hold major portfolios, and I am thinking of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Miss Carney), the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald), the Minister of State (Finance) (Mrs. McDougall), a first in our history, and also the representation of women in the House of Commons—I wonder whether the Hon. Member would not agree that this active representation by women in Government will accomplish far more for women than constantly wanting to put them in ghettos, asking for quotas and insisting on giving them more money and thus increasing their dependence on the State. If some day they manage to work their way out of constantly depending on men, whether these are husbands, fathers, cousins or brothers, the Hon. Member wants to make them dependent on the State. I therefore would like to ask the Hon. Member how she can reconcile these two considerations?

● (1130)

[English]

**Ms. Jewett:** Mr. Speaker, I have a very brief response. The Hon. Member has not yet realized that the inequality of women puts women in an enormously dependent position. The absence of daycare puts a woman in a dependent position. The absence of maternity leave in many instances puts her in a dependent position. The fact that 62 per cent of elderly women live in a state of poverty puts them in a dependent position.

The whole point of our motion and the purpose of our Party is to ensure that women are not in a dependent position. I must suggest to the Hon. Member that she and the other five women members of the Cabinet, if they are not there already, go over to Room 200 in the West Block to listen to the presentation being made by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women that is addressing the very issues that the Hon. Member raises.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Questions or comments. The Hon. the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State.

**Mrs. Landry:** Among other things, our colleague from New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett) expressed concern about