

S.O. 21

across the country, these decisions were mistakes. What we should have had was a significant increase in the child tax credit, not by the \$80 that takes it to \$454 but rather by some 80 per cent over the base of the previous year. That would cost the Canadian Government a fair amount of money, but other decisions could be made. If we were seeing a genuine reform of the child benefit package which reflected and responded to the needs of Canadian families and at the same time we saw the kind of reform of the tax system which Governments should be carrying out to ensure that the Government has the resources needed to provide for Canadian needs and to give us the resources here in Parliament to meet those various needs, then there would not be the kind of crisis the Conservatives are always talking about. We could find the resources.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, if we had had a really thorough minimum tax we would have raised more than enough money to cover the costs of the child tax credit which we had proposed with an 80 per cent increase in it. If we took the 1981 MacEachen Budget and the reductions in marginal rates for the wealthy Canadians and rolled those back, we would have more than \$1 billion to use for the purposes of the child benefit package.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I call it one o'clock, after three o'clock the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon (Mr. Epp) will have five minutes remaining for his debate plus a 10-minute period for questions and comments.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock later this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 21

[English]

STATUS OF WOMEN

CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, up until October 18, 1929, your mother and mine, your grandmother and mine, and your great-aunts and mine did not know that they were not legal persons in this great land of ours. It took five courageous Albertan women to challenge the law all the way to London, England, to get an interpretation of the BNA. Only then were women in Canada declared persons in their own right. That was an historic and landmark decision which I salute today. However, women still remain disadvantaged in terms of income, social and employment benefits, and pensions. The Government has legislated a loss of economic rights for women through deindexation of family allowances,

discrimination in spousal allowances, and in the child tax credit. Equal sharing in pension benefits has not been achieved, and true employment equity will not be realized because there is no mandatory enforcement mechanism.

Just as those five women were not content with the way things were in 1929, we are not content in 1986. Women, speak out or your silence will be taken as acceptance or, worse still, satisfaction with the way things are.

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NATIONAL LITERACY DAY

CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT ILLITERACY

Mr. Bob Hicks (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was National Give the Gift of Literacy Day. This was the first occasion for the observance of a highly commendable initiative by Canada's private sector. The Canadian Book and Periodical Development Council has set a three-year goal to raise \$400,000 to combat illiteracy across Canada. This is precisely the type of partnership and momentum in our society which our Government wishes to support. I personally am pleased that the Secretary of State (Mr. Crombie) will carry the lead federal role in this initiative.

An estimated four million Canadians lack the necessary reading and writing skills to take part in many activities which the majority of Canadians take for granted. I am confident that the Secretary of State will provide the national leadership needed on this issue to enhance public awareness, and launch joint ventures which can help overcome this silent but very pervasive barrier to citizen participation.

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[Translation]

FINANCE

NECESSITY FOR MAJOR INCOME TAX REFORM

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, *Gaz Métropolitain* today has been awarded first prize among all companies which pay no corporate taxes.

Indeed, through a series of tax measures implemented by the Liberals and the Conservatives, this company was given the right not to pay any corporate taxes for four years on profits of about \$61.1 million.

Had *Gaz Métropolitain* been expected to pay even only 25 per cent of the corporate tax rate applicable to its profits, average Canadian men and women would have paid \$15 million less in taxes.

May this first prize stand as a reminder to the Conservative Government that a major overhaul of the tax system is urgent and long overdue.