

*Supply*

not necessarily pay the salaries for co-ordinators, and it does not necessarily pay the heat, lights and other things necessary to set up an office.

It is crucially important that it be brought to the attention of all members of this House, the kinds of things these women's centres do. We were told earlier that the federal government is not supposed to provide services for victims of sexual assault or battered wives, and so on. But one of the absolutely crucial services performed by women's centres is that they are a clearing house and a communications network for women who are otherwise alienated and isolated from the help they have to have.

Surely, no one needs to stand in the House yet again and remind any of us of the incidence of abuse of women and children. It is at a shocking and unacceptable level. Women's centres are in the front lines of fighting this abuse. They are not transition houses. They are not shelters. But frequently, for a woman in an extreme situation, the only place she knows to call is that place down on Main Street or that house where those women have those programs. She calls and is referred to the proper social service agency, if indeed there is one in the town in which she lives. If there is not a transition house or a particular agency, normally there are networks of women volunteers who will try to provide her with support and help to get her out of the untenable situation she is in.

Women across the country work an unbelievable number of hours as volunteers in women's centres. They work to help other women. They work, many of them, because there is no money available to pay them salaries, and so they do it out of a sense of survival for all women, out of a sense of duty, and out of a sense of what we must do to pull together.

The salaries that come from the core funding are hardly the kind of salaries to which anyone would aspire. The payment of part time and full time co-ordinators is still barely above a subsistence level in the country. Think about it again. We have talked about a maximum of 60 centres that are closing in the country, and the cut that is closing these centres is a mere \$1.6 million. Start

dividing up that quotient and see what it means on an individual level.

One centre in Nova Scotia was receiving \$46,000 and another \$49,000. Well, nobody is living high on the hog on the portion of those grants that pay for salaries. Nobody is able to deliver services of the kind that were being referred to this morning.

These centres are clearing houses. They are places of communication. They are referral services. They are places of safety where women can walk in the door and say: "Tell me what to do next. Tell me who to go to for help. Tell me who can help me in this situation in which I find myself, that I can no longer deal with. Tell me". That is what women are saying in transition houses in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and British Columbia.

Even if the project funding keeps the doors open a little while longer, without core funding the long term hard work of these centres will go for naught. The switch from core funding to project funding is the end for many of them and the beginning of the end for the rest.

The cuts to the Secretary of State women's program did not just affect women's centres. Funding to research organizations was also cut by 20 per cent, organizations such as the Canadian Council on Learning Opportunities for Women, the Canadian Research Institute on the Advancement of Women, the British Columbia Women's Research Centre, and in Quebec, *Nouveau départ*.

These are organizations that have done incredible service for women in the area of knowledge and communications. They are the women who know what problems are facing other women in the country, what resources are available for them, what educational facilities are there, and what research has been done to assist them in a myriad of activities as they emerge slowly into a world that is all too slowly heading toward the eventual goal of gender equality. Again, these organizations are run on shoestring budgets. Many women involved with these organizations do so on a voluntary basis.

One of the issues which relates to core funding and relates to the whole spectrum of the way the government deals with women is, of what value is the contribution of women? What is the value of the work that women do in women's centres, with CLOW, with CRIAW, NAC, and