

Social Security

At page 56 of a brief addressed, I imagine, to all Canadian parliamentarians and entitled, "Women and Work—Five Million Women—A study of the Canadian woman at home", by Monique Proulx, one can read at page 56, and I quote:

That step would constitute solid quantitative evidence of the role of women in the productive activities of our economy, a role that has been reduced in the past because of the market criteria to which the GNP is geared . . . the officialisation of those estimates in the national accounts would even contribute to a certain extent to the legal recognition of women's contribution and consequently their rights to the economic value of the family heritage.

Mr. Speaker, we are not the only ones considering that question. All women's associations across this country have seriously examined at various conventions this step which should be taken by the Government of Canada. Those associations of Canadian women put forward considerable arguments which should draw the attention of all members in this House so we will really be taken seriously when we want to legislate to give all sectors of society, all social classes, the tangible recognition of their rights. Also, Mr. Speaker, at page 38 of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, published in 1970, one reads, and I quote:

The housewife who remains at home is just as much a producer of goods and services as the paid worker, and in our view she should also have the opportunity to provide for a more financially secure future. Canada has given some of its workers an opportunity to do this through the Canada and the Quebec Pension Plans. To neglect to do the same for some three and one-half million other workers in the home is to ignore the essential nature of their work.

It is all very nice, Mr. Speaker, on Mother's Day, to give them nice bouquets of flowers, to make beautiful resolutions and praise their merits if the day after everything is forgotten and we do not act like responsible people who can do better than tell them we love them and then forget about them. What is important is not just to hold out bright prospects to them, but give them the full means to fulfil themselves, and that means adopting that motion today. I would urge the government to introduce a bill which would give them the recognition I just referred to.

When we know that the workers' average income is \$15,000, would it not be logical, Mr. Speaker, that through a housewife allowance that policy would guarantee to our families the Canadian average income as if it were the vital basic income? As for the families where the father's income exceeds the average income, the father could for the same reason benefit from a tax credit equivalent to the average allowance granted. That policy, Mr. Speaker, would thus help give a correct evaluation of the cost of such a measure and ensure its indexation. I know that on the government side they will ask me how we propose that could be evaluated. It is not up to me to make evaluations, but I am prepared to indicate which criteria to use to warrant that amount.

We can base ourselves on the three following criteria: first, the potential salary of the person; second, the cost of hiring one servant; they are hard to get nowadays; even millionaires have difficulty finding servants. Because we failed to recognize the fact that they perform an essential role in our country, we

created that situation. And, third, the cost of paying for each job, separately. What would that cost be, Mr. Speaker? Every day we pay for work that is considered helpful for production as a whole, and is part of social, economic and cultural evolution and justice. Sometimes we forget to recognize the worth of those who choose the fundamental work of guiding the education of the children and running a home smoothly.

I remember how, last June, during a debate in this House, the hon. member for Kamouraska at the time, Mr. Dionne, whom almost everyone knew at least by name, a respected hon. member to whom I pay homage for having served his people and country very well, gave the following example: If a man hires a woman as a servant, he pays her a weekly salary; after weeks and months, if love steps in and he marries her, he no longer pays her a salary. Automatically, her work is no longer recognized as such, which it had been previously; after marriage, that falls through.

We should reflect on that behaviour and realize there is much to be done to change that state of affairs. Much could be added to this but time flies, I see. I should very much like my motion to be adopted. I do not want my colleagues to say that the hon. member himself killed his motion. I merely want to give an outline of it, hoping that it will be accepted and referred to a committee for further study.

I know there are some who will say it would cost us an eye and a tooth, that it would cost a lot. Mr. Speaker, let us face facts: those very same hon. members may have been the first in the past, and may be in the future, to vote blindly for budgets for arms, ammunition to destroy lives; not their own, mind you, but those of others: not me, oh! no, the others. So billions of dollars to make arms, that is not too costly. But billions for mothers, for the women who work at home, who deserve to be recognized by voting funds designed to pay her an allowance under a guaranteed annual income? They are going to waver but they will be the first to cast a blind vote in favour of the estimates in order to give billions of dollars to those who cash in on the credit of the nation to their advantage and put us into debt to the tune of billions of dollars. We only need to study our budget deficits of the last few years to realize that we are paying up to \$9 billion a year in interest on borrowed money because there exists an institution, a monetary system parallel to that of the state. On that subject most people do not pay much attention. All they say is that the system is as it is and that we must bear with it. Yet it is that system which is driving us closer to bankruptcy and which we must change. While doing so we must recognize that we ought to grant to the woman who has chosen to stay home and carry out that splendid mission I referred to earlier, the recognition of her rights. I urge the present government which in the past gave the impression of endorsing that policy to show proof of their sincerity so that the motion be carried and a bill introduced to that intent.