

The Senate: Proportionately Representative but Disproportionately Male

The Hon. Dame Margaret Guilfoyle, DBE

Mr Evans and ladies and gentlemen, I am very honoured to be part of the series of lectures that has been arranged by the Senate to note the women who have been in the Federal Parliament and, perhaps, to note the struggle that it was for some of those women to achieve parliamentary service.

It was very interesting to see the exhibition in the Parliament today; it made me reflect upon the many fine women who have been, and who are, members of the Parliament. Some of the pictures and the mementos brought back personal memories and others made me realise, in a more general way, the work done over perhaps two centuries to see equality of opportunities for women, particularly with regard to parliamentary service.

I have read the speeches of Susan Ryan and Marian Sawer, who have preceded me in this series of lectures. I have not had a chance to read Janine Haines's speech, but I hope that I am able to cover some different ground from that already covered, in case some of you have been tigers for punishment and have come to all four lectures.

It has been said, and we all know because we can see the Act on the wall in the exhibition, that the federal franchise was granted to women in 1902. It ought to be noted that, although we were somewhat early in having the franchise, it was much later that a woman actually entered Federal Parliament. That was not until 1941, when Dame Enid Lyons was the first woman to enter the Federal Parliament.

That was a long time ago. It would have to be said that from 1941 until 1971, when I entered the Federal Parliament, there had been but few women parliamentary representatives. At the time that I entered the cabinet, there was one other female Senator, Dame Nancy Buttfield; I was the second. I was the seventh woman elected as a Senator in Australia. At the time that I left in 1987, seventeen women were Senators and I think eight women were members of the House of Representatives.

In that period of seventeen years we saw progress in the numbers, but maybe those numbers will fluctuate from time to time. It is perhaps time to ask the question: are women in a transitional stage moving towards equality, not only with parliamentary service or parliamentary opportunities but also in all their spheres of activity?

The year 1975 is very much a notable year on our Australian political calendar but it is seldom remembered that it was also International Women's Year. It was in that year that there was focus, through the United Nations, on the aspirations of and difficulties for women. Throughout that year many countries around the world focused on women and on the themes of equality, development and peace.

Some years after that, in the late 1970s when I was in Canada, I was given some of the literature that had been produced during International Women's Year. I was fascinated to read about some of the early suffragist movements in that country and to look at some of the comments written some forty or fifty years before we started reading *The Feminine Mystique*. It was noted by the women in that country, which can be comparable in many ways to Australia, that the world had offered but few

opportunities for women and that it had been thought that women had a more confined place in the scheme of things.

I was interested in one book given to me. It was edited by Gwen Matheson and entitled *Women in the Canadian Mosaic*. She dedicated it to 'our mothers and foremothers'. We do not often use that term. We are quite happy to talk about our forefathers in a very general way, but it is unusual to see the word foremother.

She quoted in her book a feminist called Nellie McClung, who had written that 'the world has suffered long from too much masculinity and not enough humanity'. She also wrote that 'people must know the past to understand the present and to face the future'. Her book was called *In Times Like These*. It was written in the 1800s — a very different time from that which we were looking at in International Women's Year. But we were looking at the same struggle for the removal of customary and attitudinal barriers which act as obstacles to the progress of women. The struggle is not new, it has not ended, but it is good to focus upon it from time to time.

I found interesting another quote in the same book written in 1879 which read: 'The vote for women will not be the panacea for all human or womanly ills, it will simply be the opening of another door. The passage to a larger freedom'. We need to look at the past to understand the present and to look to the future. Perhaps you might indulge me, as I am the seventh woman who was elected to the Senate, by personalising some of the remarks that I make.

I was reminded recently of the words of James Edmond, who, after having walked with the artist Norman Lindsay past three women in a Sydney street — they may have been a grandmother, a mother and a daughter — wrote some doggerel about them, part of which reads, 'The woman I was, the woman I am, and the woman I'll one day be'. It is perhaps a bit circular when you start to analyse it, but if I look at the three generations of my own family starting with my mother, I see that there have been some changes, particularly in the last twenty years, during which time I was elected to the Federal Parliament.

My background is not a political one, in that I am not the daughter or a close relative of someone who was a political person. However, I do have a background that is without inhibitions about women's rights and responsibilities. My mother was a teacher who was widowed when I was ten years old. She was in Australia without relatives and had three children to support. I was very accustomed to the needs of a sole parent family and I was aware that, at any time, a woman must be capable of independence. My mother was quite selfless but, of necessity, she recognised that women should have political, economic and social rights equal to men. It was always her aim that I should seek education for a career.

Most of you know that I faced election for the Senate in 1970 following the retirement of Dame Ivy Wedgwood. I had a career as an accountant in business and in practice; I had married and had three children; and I had about twenty years service in the Liberal Party, particularly in the Victorian division. It is fair to say that I am a product of my own time and my own circumstances, just as we all are.

After I left school, I continued to study while in full time work until I was admitted to the professional institute at the age of twenty-one. The timing of this was notable, in that it was shortly after the war and I had the advantage of professional qualifications at a time when men of my age had been in wartime service; they were the ones who had to catch up. This was probably a reversal of the current situation: now women's careers are interrupted by family responsibilities. They often feel that they have

interrupted careers; they are always striving to catch up the time taken away from their careers.

I avoided some of the problems that some women had in that they were forced to leave employment which they had enjoyed during the war years when there had been a shortage of male employees. After the war, the returning servicemen were placed in the jobs that had been undertaken by women — in banks, industry and many places — because returning servicemen needed to be re-employed at that time.

In my case, education was important in that it gave me the opportunity to continue with my career without any displacement because of returning servicemen. It was generally recognised that my qualifications — at a time when there was a scarcity of people who were qualified to do certain jobs — were an advantage to me. I cannot claim that I had overcome great adversity in doing this: the timing and the circumstance suited my aspirations.

The education that I had gained for myself was important, because it is true to say that in the 1940s it was not recognised that there should be an equal right for men and women to seek education at a tertiary level. That meant that women had less of an opportunity to undertake some of the employment that they would have wanted.

If I look at my political background, I see that it is still very important for anyone wishing to enter Parliament to form a close association with the party of his or her choice. The Liberal Party was formed in the 1940s. It won Federal Government in 1949 and had a long and uninterrupted period of government. The opportunities that I had in the Party enabled me to hold office at the branch level in the early 1950s and to have a progressive involvement until such time as I became state chairman of the women's section of the Party. I was a member of the State Executive, the Federal Council and other bodies of the Party at the time that I became a candidate for preselection in the 1970 Senate election.

In Victoria, the Liberal women had equal representation on all-party committees and on the State Executive. This was thanks to the effort of women who were members of such organisations as the Australian Women's National League and others at the time of the formation of the Party. Dame Ivy Wedgwood was one of those women who had been active in the Australian Women's National League, as was Dame Elizabeth Couchman and others who, at the time of bringing their organisation into the new Party, insisted on the equality of voting power within the Party.

I was in a party that recognised the equality of the women in voting strength, but it is true to say that it was not a party that was seeking parliamentary representation for large numbers of women. In fact, the women in those organisations that preceded the Party were those who worked for the advancement of women and for sound government, but it was not a primary aim of theirs to see numbers of women actually entering the Parliament. They were interested in policies and issues, and they were delegates to many other community organisations and represented the Party in a number of ways in the community. They recognised the power of women to influence political thought and values, without necessarily seeking political office for themselves.

At the time of my preselection in 1970, I was one of three women who contested that vacancy from a field of some twenty candidates. My particular challenge was not a male-female one at that time, but rather a country-metropolitan challenge. This followed the changes in the Senate that had occurred in the Victorian team. John Gorton left the Senate for the House of Representatives and was replaced by Ivor

Greenwood, who was regarded as 'metropolitan'. The 'country' people felt that their slot ought to be filled at that time. However, the women of the Party felt that replacing Dame Ivy Wedgwood with another woman was important to them, and I gained that particular spot.

So I entered the Senate in 1971 very conscious of my responsibilities coming into one of the most powerful Houses of Parliament in the world. I was one of so very few women who had been elected to Federal Parliament and I did not at any time want to have a label of 'tokenism'. I have always recognised that there are so many dangers in tokenism. It can shut out many women who should be considered equal to other party members. The token woman perpetuates the notions of women's issues and a woman's point of view, and very often salves the conscience of those who do not consider that all women should be regarded on their merits.

Parties seem to place women in positions where proportional representation is used in upper Houses and they look for what they call a 'balanced ticket'; that is, 'We have one of everything, including a woman'. Sometimes there may be more than one woman, but there are few instances — and none that I can recall — where there is a majority of women on a balanced ticket.

The responsibility for women who are elected is to understand that, if the woman succeeds, her success belongs to her as an individual but, if she fails, her failure relates to all women everywhere. I was conscious of this and was often asked whether I was the first woman doing this or that. I always said that I thought that was not important. What was important was that I not be the last woman to have the opportunity to gain a seat in the Senate. I brought that attitude to my work in the Senate. It was not a case of wishing to be the one with the woman's point of view, or the token woman, but rather a case of wishing to be a full member of the Senate in every way.

When I entered the Senate, I naturally brought my own background in business and in practice and, I think, an understanding of the Australian political system. I did not come thinking that it was my role to pursue a single issue, nor did I think that you could be a single-issue person in a national parliament.

I was fortunate that I had the discipline of a party, working as it must to govern for all people everywhere. That means that you accept your responsibilities as a working member of the Senate and you do not look to a narrowing of the contribution that you might make.

At my first party meeting, I was fortunate to be chosen by my colleagues as a member of the Joint Committee on Public Accounts. It was important to me because it sounded as if it would be something that I would find interesting. I always felt that this committee, which included all parties and both Houses of Parliament, would give me one of the best opportunities I could have to learn about some of the processes of accountability of public expenditure and to get an understanding of how government works. It brought us closer to those people with whom we were working in the Public Service and the Auditor-General, with whom we also worked, and in many ways it brought us closer to a wide range of interests in many departments of the Government.

I served on that committee for some years until I became a minister. I returned to that committee in my last years in the Parliament, when I was again in opposition. In fact, my first words uttered in the Senate were to present the report of the Public Accounts Committee about six days after I had arrived in the place. I was absolutely terrified. I

had about a page and a half of instructions about when I had to sit, when I had to rise, when the President would indicate that he was seeking a vote and when I would then speak again to actually present the report and to have it adopted. It was not a case of making a maiden speech — it was simply a formality for me — but for some reason I was the person who had to present this report and it was my first utterance in the Senate.

I also became a member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Government Operations, which again seemed to link with my background. On that Standing Committee I had the opportunity to do the work of the Senate and to inquire into, among other things, matters of probate and things that were of topical interest at that time.

By the end of I think 1971 I was selected to go on to a select committee of the Senate to look at foreign investment in Australia. To work with colleagues on a select committee which brought into the Parliament those people in the banking sector, the mining sector and all of those who were investing in the development of Australia was a unique opportunity for me. The question was to relate to the extent of foreign investment. It is not new — we are talking about the early 1970s — and we are still talking about it in the 1990s.

If I look at the timing of my entrance to the Parliament, I see that I preceded the wave of the women's movement groups that were forming in the early 1970s or in the late 1960s. I think the Women's Electoral Lobby would say that it was most active around 1972, with that election which resulted in the change of government. I had, however, been politically active on similar issues in the late 1960s. Arising from much of the change that was occurring, there were pressures for the formation of a women's bureau in the Department of Labour. There were many issues in the United Nations Status of Women Commission — equal pay, equal opportunity and things of that kind — and there were early policy moves for child-care facilities, which I think were brought into effect at the time of the Gorton Government. My activities revolved around the issues that later became the issues of the women's movement, but I think my entry preceded its real activity. I am not able to say, as for instance Susan Ryan would say, that those groups of women worked to secure my election to the Parliament. I think I was active just that little bit earlier than was the women's movement.

In 1974 in the Senate I was asked by Mr Snedden to be the shadow minister for the media. This brought a new range of activity to me. Being a shadow minister in the Senate gives you the opportunity not only to shadow a particular area but also to represent a number of other shadow ministers — or ministers if your Party is in government. By being shadow minister for the media I had a range of other interests as well in which I needed to have some specialisation, including the issues of health and all the Medibank Bills that were around the place at that time. So 1974 was a very interesting and valuable time for me. I had direct responsibility for the handling of certain bills — such things as the Australian Film Commission, changes that were proposed for the Broadcasting Act, different areas of work that brought me to a new range of people with whom I have had a long and continuing association.

In 1975 Malcolm Fraser asked me to be the shadow minister for education. I recall that as being about my hardest year. To be shadow minister of that enormous area with no resources other than one staff person in an office in Melbourne was very difficult. I found that that again opened new areas of interest to me, particularly with the changes that were occurring in education through the period of the Whitlam

Government and the emphasis that there was everywhere on the need for education to be enhanced and for opportunities to be wider than they had been in the past.

I notice that none of your literature says that I was the caretaker minister for education in 1975. At the time of the appointment of the caretaker government I found that I was minister for Education for some six or seven weeks until that election had been held. Becoming a minister overnight was indeed a shock, particularly as we were in an election. The Senate had risen without passing the States Grants Education Bills. In the flurry of events on 11 November we had passed the budget, but it was only as I was walking across Kings Hall afterwards that the Clerk of the Senate came to me and said, 'Do you realise you've got up without passing the States Grant Education Bills?'. I really did not quite know what that meant, but I knew in about a day, because after being sworn in as Minister for Education I went straight to Western Australia to start my campaigning there. I arrived at the hotel with yards and yards of telexes giving me instructions about these bills and how the states were going to start the schools without the bills having been passed and so on. I realised then the segregation that there is between the Parliament and the Executive and the division of powers that do exist.

After that election I became Minister for Social Security. I was that minister for about five years until becoming Minister for Finance in 1980. As Minister for Social Security I probably had working for me the largest number of women in any government department in Australia. In fact, I think we estimated at one time that about 83 per cent of the people with whom the department dealt were women. It would be hard to say that we were not closely aware of the issues of women: whether they were single-parent women, unemployed women, or women who were seeking care and facilities for their disabled children or whatever requirement they had through that very large department. In that time I had an opportunity to see very closely the needs of women — having been the minister responsible for the International Year of the Child and later to be the minister who started the activities for the International Year of Disabled Persons.

After the 1980 election I was asked by the Prime Minister to be the Minister for Finance, which I found perhaps the most interesting part of the whole of my parliamentary career. In that area the minister looks at the whole of the activity of government. Having been the largest spender in Social Security, I became the person who tried to stop the other ministers in other departments spending — not as successfully as I might have done if you look at our 1982-83 budget. But it was as Minister for Finance that I drew on all of the experience that I had in the Senate. Having been a member of the Senate I was aware of the accountability of government to the Senate.

I, of course, have been elected more than most people who had the same number of years that I had in the Senate because I struck the double dissolution of 1974, which we loosely refer to as the Gair affair. That was when Senator Withers, as Leader of the Opposition, proposed an amendment to Appropriation Bill (No. 4) and Senator Murphy declared that the government would treat that as a denial of supply. A double dissolution was granted on the bills that were not passed by the Senate, and under section 57 of the Constitution the Senate passed the Appropriation Bills and the Supply Bills and then raced off to that 1974 election at which the Government was returned. Mr Whitlam won that 1974 election and led the Parliament into a joint sitting of both Houses of the Parliament. That was a fascinating exercise because a number of important bills were the subject of that joint sitting. At that joint sitting I spoke on the health bills which we had not been passing, but which were passed at the joint sitting.

The 1974 election brought three new women Senators into the Senate: Ruth Coleman from Western Australia, Jean Melzer from Victoria and Kathy Martin from Queensland. Dame Nancy Buttfield had retired at that election, so I was joined at that time by these three new Senators. There were four of us in the Senate, and there were no women in the House of Representatives.

In 1974 I worked through all of the things that we did. In 1975, to reach the date that I mentioned earlier, there was the dismissal of the Whitlam Government on 11 November and I became the Minister for Education.

Prior to that election in 1975, the Senate did another very interesting thing. It brought the public servants to the Senate to discuss matters in connection with the government's borrowing of money which was the subject of much discussion and the reason that the Senate was delaying the passage of the appropriation bills at that time.

You could ask me, I am sure, whether I felt that all of this was a worthwhile career for me. It was some seventeen years of my life. I would have to say that I felt I had the opportunity to do the things that I was capable of doing. I felt that my contribution was equal to those of my colleagues. I did not feel that I had any special privileges because I was a woman minister and a woman in the cabinet. I would have to say that, particularly as a Senator, I feel that the women have had opportunities to do things at first-hand and to recognise the concept of responsible government through the activities of the Senate.

As I looked at the exhibition I saw the number of women sitting in chairs in the Senate or in the House — in the case of Joan Child, as Speaker — and I recognised that the highest office and the control of the institution were in their hands at that time.

The Senate has always been, and I hope always will be, the place where legislation is analysed and where every clause and every subclause can be challenged and defeated. It is not a case of the numbers always being with the government of the day. Before 1972, the Democratic Labor Party had the balance of power in the Senate. It is not new for Independents to have the balance of power in the Senate.

I believe that in debate in the Senate the analysis of legislation can clarify the arguments. As a shadow minister or as a minister, when I went back to the debate in the other place to see what the argument and the issues were, I was often appalled to find that, because of the sheer force of numbers in the other place, there was very little argument there and the issues were very obscure.

I believe that those who have been fortunate to have served in the Senate have had more opportunities than most to question the extent of the executive's powers and to assert the general principle that Parliament is sovereign over the executive. At a time when many of our institutions are being questioned, that responsibility in the Houses of Parliament should not be treated lightly. The Parliament is the democratic expression of the people, and the general principle that Parliament is sovereign over the executive is a very important one to cherish.

If I were to conclude my generational framework for women — that is, the woman I was, the woman I am and the woman I one day might be — I suppose I would have to look at the women in the next generation following me. Some of them are in the parliaments. I look at my daughters and others in their age group who have careers. Starting from my mother's generation, through mine and now to my daughter's, I ask:

is the new generation making progress towards equality? You could probably say 'slowly' in the political context but there are now many more examples of parliamentary service and some solid achievements that can be the signposts for the future.

But women are still minority participants in preselections. Their career paths in the professions in commerce and in the Public Service are now notable. Their positions in the trade union movement are stronger in some cases. All of these things should position them as stronger contenders for political endorsement if that is their aim.

In terms of choices and support structures through legislation and by practice, there is greater recognition of their needs in the pursuit of a career. My daughters' generation may find that the door has been opened, but that — in the words of that earlier suffragette — 'the larger freedom may only be a reality for the next generation'; that would be my granddaughter.

Women's influence either in politics or in the community cannot be measured only by counting the women in Parliament or in government. There are so many pieces in the mosaic of our community life. I have the greatest admiration for women who are policy makers, advisers and in positions of responsibility. There are few who have ultimate responsibility in their sphere. The women in professions, in academia, in commerce, in the judiciary and in other institutions are playing a more dominant and more constructive role than ever before in our history. I think that we could say quite frankly that they are instruments of change.

We said earlier that we need to look at our history to understand our present and our future. I think it ought to be acknowledged that the growth of the decade of the 1960s made change urgent for those women who wanted to reach their potential and who sought independence. The social policy changes which were inescapable for government in the 1970s and represented growth of government in the 1970s developed a belief that more government meant more human happiness. I think that is now established.

What worries me is that the recklessness of the 1980s set the stage for modern government in the 1990s to make radical policy changes. It can be hoped that economic circumstances do not provide an excuse for governments to slow the momentum of the progress of women and deprive them of the career opportunities for which they have become trained and educated.

If we have worked through the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s only to reach the 1990s where it is an easy excuse or reason to say that economic circumstances do not permit this to occur, then I hope that we do not give the lowest priority to women or the needs of women in their participation as full members of society.

Equal participation of women in the Parliament, in the whole of community life, can only lead us to a better understanding of humanity and to the fulfilment of the aspirations that we would have for a civilised society.

I congratulate those who have arranged this series of lectures. I understand that you would like time for questions so I am watching the clock. I would be happy to accept questions and try to answer them on any of the matters I may have touched on or any of the things on which you feel I may have a point of view which interests you. Thank you very much for coming and for giving me this opportunity to talk.

QUESTIONER — I am from Australian Associated Press. On that last point you made, could you explain your concern that economic problems might be used as an excuse not to expand equal opportunities?

Dame MARGARET GUILFOYLE — I think we are in a political climate where some radical changes are occurring. Local government and academic institutions are changing with many of the policy changes. It is very easy for the government of the day to say that economic necessity means that some changes must be made. I hope that the changes that are made take into account the progress that has been made through legislation — sex discrimination legislation, human rights legislation and other legislative advances — and do not place opportunities for women lower than they should be or lower than any other sector of the community.

QUESTIONER — Would you say that realistically it is more difficult for a woman, especially a married woman with children, to enter into political life when community views and actions towards women and their role have not changed as much as some of us would have liked? For example, I was disqualified from the local government council for having the audacity to bring my children along to the council meetings. That was subject to an inquiry. When I said I had no other choice at that stage because there were problems at home, none of the men councillors could understand that those sorts of problems can impinge upon our public life. Do you see that?

Dame MARGARET GUILFOYLE — There are undoubtedly conflicts for women who choose careers, whether they be representatives in local government, State government or Commonwealth government. It is very difficult for a woman with children to enter the Commonwealth Parliament because of distance, travel and time away from home. I do not know how you overcome some of the attitudes that you have mentioned. I think there is a need for an attitudinal change, but there also needs to be a recognition by women that some things would make it difficult for that particular career at that particular time.

I think it should also be recognised that Parliament would not be the ideal place for children and that bringing children into a House of Parliament would not be good for the conduct of the business of that place. I think there is a need for recognition of what is appropriate and what can be managed. But undoubtedly women who go into any career — whether it is industry, commerce, academia or wherever — must make choices about conflicts that impinge upon family responsibilities. None of us can say that it has been easy or that it is easy.

I look now at the next generation that I mentioned, and I see that the women have very little choice about whether they will work or not. Most of them have to work. Therefore they have many conflicts with regard to the needs of their children and the way in which those conflicts can be resolved. They can be resolved by the other parent accepting some or equal responsibility for children, but undoubtedly each family has to manage in its own way, and each woman finds it extremely difficult. You get that gap in the service of a career that I likened to the gap of the men who were away at the war for four or five years. It is a gap that you have to try to close, and very often it is difficult to do so.

QUESTIONER — I would like you to comment on the complexities of today. I feel very strongly that we must not encourage the world to think that democracy is merely a numbers game. A citizen, to my mind, is responsible the whole of the time for what each person thinks is right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. We do not relieve ourselves of responsibility by putting a cross every five years or less. The rivalry that

has been encouraged, almost to the stage of gang warfare, has been damaging to us. At most times it is more important to gain respect. I was a single councillor on the rural district council and on the parish council, and gaining the respect of those men so that others following after would find the door easier to get into seemed to me important. It is important to be accepted by other people. I have many fine Aboriginal friends and it gives me great pleasure that I can be accepted by them. I think we have to remember that education starts at the cradle and not when the child goes to school. Sovereignty is the people's sovereignty, not national parliamentary sovereignty. I think Sir Thomas More demonstrated that for us Londoners. Decision is a matter of personal conscience.

Dame MARGARET GUILFOYLE — I am sure that most of what you have said would be accepted as the basis for the belief in our society as a place where people can work together. Some of the qualities that you have mentioned would be more predominant in women than in men, but if we are to work in a society as a whole society then there is the need for an interchange of those views and values.

I think that democracy, where every so often — and I do not mind how often — we get a chance to vote on issues, is something that we should value. If a parliament is elected and if a government is chosen by the people, that is a fairly healthy way in which to resolve any differences that we may have or differences in priorities that we have. It is not an easy time for governments to work in, and I think that respect and support of the people in the things that governments are trying to achieve are very important. That is what a national characteristic is and I certainly would always want to enhance it. I think you do it very often by enhancing the institutions that are important and that are our heritage.

So I think those words that you have given to us today reflect many of the values that most people would support. I like the way in which you believe that you ought to gain the respect of your male colleagues in whatever organisation you are in. I think that is very important. It is probably just as important that they have your respect.

QUESTIONER — Thank you for this address here today. I have just one question which goes back to your career as Minister for Social Security. There were a number of quite critical accounts published of your handling of the crisis in women's refuge funding in 1977, when the provisional arrangements under the community health program were expiring. There was a very long delay in the submission coming forward from the Department of Social Security. It has been said in accounts that that submission was bound to fail because it was not a very strong case to take over the women's refuge funding. Would you take this opportunity today to present your side of that story, which I do not think has been heard?

Dame MARGARET GUILFOYLE — My recollections about it might be imperfect. In any of the funding that came through in that department, you were sometimes looking at maintaining what had been in existence or you were looking for newer services that could be given. There were certainly differences in the community and possibly in government about the need for funding for women's refuges. I do not think that in my department, or certainly not in my mind, there was any doubt about the need for places where women and children could be safe from physical abuse and problems in the lives of their children.

I cannot quite recall 1977 and what the difficulties were with regard to it. I know that we had funding under a homeless persons program. We had funding under a women's refuges program and there were difficulties in some of the states with regard to accepting funding for women's refuges because they had different views about that

particular policy. But I would have to refresh my mind on exactly what point is worrying you. I can only think that some of the difficulties arose with negotiations with state governments.

I can recall that one difficulty that arose was the reluctance of those who were running women's refuges to provide information to government because they believed that made them insecure. I think there were some difficulties of accountability in the sense that governments usually like to know where places are, how money is expended and things of that kind. That might be one of the difficulties that you referred to, but I cannot expand any further on the point that you have raised.