

women have tended not to pursue the careers for which they have been prepared because they go out into a male world where their performance is automatically suspect, and where they are expected to marry, raise a family and do nothing else.

Now we are in a position to do something about this regrettable state of affairs. It was for the purpose of examining this problem that the Government of Canada appointed the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Women must be given the choice either to pursue a career or to raise a family, or indeed to do both. The Government is alive to the difficulties both of the present situation and to the potential complications of carrying through effective and desired reform. Nonetheless, after the matter has been given due consideration the Government will act.

In this connection, the Report of the Bird Commission is of the greatest value. The Bird Commission is a synonym, of course, for the royal commission because, as we know, the commission was headed by Mrs. Anne Bird. The report contains numerous specific recommendations—

Hon. Mr. Benidickson: Mrs. Florence Bird.

Hon. Mr. Martin: Yes, known as Anne Francis in her journalistic status, and Mrs. Florence Bird in her married capacity.

The report contains numerous specific recommendations to eliminate legal discrimination against women and to change the climate of prejudice and practical difficulties within which a woman must choose either to compete on the basis of an unfair book of rules, or else not to compete at all.

There are 167 separate recommendations which must be considered by every level of government within Canada as well as by private organizations and by business. Indeed, some of the recommendations of the royal commission report specifically relate to matters of housekeeping falling within the jurisdiction of our own chamber. I refer here to recommendations 51 and 52 relating to our practice concerning the appointment of messengers and protective staff, and the practice respecting the appointing of women to senior positions.

In reacting to the royal commission report, the Government has already stated that it is giving priority consideration to its recommendations. The Social Policy Section has been established in the Privy Council Office to oversee the Government's response to the report, and an interdepartmental co-ordinating committee is now at work examining its recommendations for consideration by the Government itself.

The committee comprises the following departments and agencies: the departments of Justice, of the Secretary of State, of the Solicitor General, of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, of National Defence, of National Revenue, of Labour, and of Regional Economic Expansion, as well as the Public Service Commission, the Unemployment Insurance Commission, the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and the Office of the Prime Minister. Other

[Hon. Mr. Martin.]

agencies and departments will be asked to sit from time to time as the work of the committee progresses.

This panoply of departments indicates that the Government regards these matters seriously. Indeed, the Speech from the Throne of last autumn anticipated something of what the royal commission report has to say in the areas of unemployment insurance, labour, citizenship, indigenous minorities, women offenders, and family planning. The co-ordinating committee has created working parties to aid it in developing specific recommendations for consideration by cabinet. These working parties are surveying the following areas as they relate to the status of women in Canada: economic life, political and judicial life, educational opportunities, family and community services, and the problems of the disadvantaged.

The Government is also giving consideration to amendments to the Fair Employment Practices Act as they affect women. Bills have been introduced—Bill C-228, an act to amend the Canada Labour Standards Code, and Bill C-229, an act respecting unemployment insurance in Canada. Among other things, the amendment to the Canada Labour Standards Code specifically forbids the maintenance of discriminatory levels of wages as between men and women who are engaged in the same, or substantially the same, form of work.

This bill further provides that all female employees with 12 months or more service shall be entitled to receive up to 17 weeks' leave of absence under the terms of a maternity leave clause. I am sure that this bill will receive the earnest consideration of all honourable senators.

The bill relating to the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act extends the foregoing legislation to provide unemployment insurance payments to women during 15 of their 17 weeks' leave of absence under the maternity leave clause of the amendment to the Labour Standards Code.

With respect to citizenship, the Government specifically proposes to abolish discriminatory legislation in this area affecting women.

The minister responsible for housing, speaking recently, has stated that he plans to introduce legislation ensuring that women have equal opportunity in securing mortgages for housing. He has also instructed the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to look into the feasibility of following the royal commission's recommendation, that the corporation should make loans available to augment the number of day-care centres in Canada. This is Recommendation 173 of the royal commission report.

The Government itself is encouraging the appointment of qualified women at every level in the public service. Directly and indirectly the Government is looking into the recommendations of the royal commission as they affect areas falling within the jurisdiction of the federal Government, to see what action can or ought to be taken.

Honourable senators, these are some of the concrete steps which the Government has taken to ensure that the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in our country will not be permitted to gather dust. As a