

Oral Questions

women, the problem is very fundamental. The teaching of math and sciences in the elementary and secondary schools has not been followed as it should be in the training of women. They are, therefore, unable to take advantage of the training programs that we, the federal Government, offer to them. The provincial Governments have failed in their responsibilities to women.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. David Crombie (Rosedale): Madam Speaker, is the Minister actually saying that because in an earlier period of their lives these women, not having proper math and physics training, are not able to have retraining programs from the federal Government, and that they will be written off?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): Madam Speaker, it is not what I am saying.

Mr. Crombie: It is what you are saying.

Mrs. Erola: What I am saying is that it is impossible for women to take advantage of the training programs that are available to them because they have not had the proper educational background. I suggest the Hon. Member look at the Science Council of Canada's recently released report "Who Turns The Wheels". It states specifically the very real problems of women in this country.

REQUEST FOR CHANGES IN RETRAINING PROGRAMS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of State responsible for the status of women.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: The Minister of State said that the state of preparation of unemployed women, and I use her words, prevents those women from taking advantage of federal programs. What changes does the Minister intend in federal programs to allow those unemployed women to take advantage of the retraining programs and not simply be written off as uneducable, as the Minister of State tried to do yesterday?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): Madam Speaker, I would like the Minister of Employment and Immigration to answer the second part of the question. The first part of the question is very real—how do we address the fundamental problems of women in this country? I appeal to the women of this country to go their Provinces and their educators and say to them, "Give us the proper training in the beginning", and then we will finish the job at the federal level.

PROVISION OF RETRAINING PROGRAMS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, the Minister of State cannot have it both ways. She cannot say that there is a problem caused in the past by provincial education systems that can only be solved by the federal Government, and then go to say that the refusal of the

federal Government to solve that problem is the fault of the Provinces. She cannot have it both ways. Since she has now asked the women of Canada to set her policy and said that the Minister of Employment and Immigration will announce it, will the Minister of Employment and Immigration answer two questions.

First, the Minister of State responsible for the status of women said that a 41 per cent increase in unemployment among women is, to quote her, "not substantial". What in the name of God is substantial if 41 per cent unemployment is not?

Second, will the Minister of Employment and Immigration tell this House of Commons what the Government is going to do, and precisely when it is going to do it, to make its retraining programs deal with the problems of women who are now prevented by the Government's own policy from taking advantage of those programs?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Madam Speaker, it is very unfortunate that the Leader of the Opposition has been so distracted by his political problems in his own caucus that he has not been aware of what actions this House and this Government have taken. I would like to point out, for example, that when this Government came into office the Government of Canada offered something like 14 Outreach Programs directed toward the needs of women. We now have 32 programs available. We have more than doubled the number of programs that his Government offered to enable women to get into our training programs.

Further, he may not be aware of this, but last year this Government passed a National Training Act which provides special allowances for women to move into non-traditional work. It provides special grants to non-profit, community and business organizations to offer special training programs for women in non-traditional work. Just last week it provided \$41 million to modernize the training facilities across the country in order to provide for those new training places. I think the Leader of the Opposition is in desperate need of retraining.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

QUERY RESPECTING GOVERNMENT PLANS

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, as one of my colleagues pointed out, I will do considerably better in Winnipeg than the Minister will.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I regard the matter as being very serious when the Minister of State responsible for the status of women says that 41 per cent unemployment among women is not substantial and when she admits that the present arrangement of her policies, and I use her words, "prevents women from taking advantage of retraining programs". In other words, the status