

These terms of reference are purposely very broad in order that the council will have freedom to take whatever action it considers necessary. To enable the council to carry out its mandate effectively, provision has been made for a full-time chairman plus two vice-chairmen working on a full-time basis who will be supported by a staff and office. The council will meet as often as it feels necessary, and its first meeting will probably be early in July.

The council will also have authority to publish its reports, recommendations and statements. In this way the council will be in a position to keep before the public, as well as the government, the whole question of the status of women.

In establishing the council in this manner, I am aware that it does not follow the exact recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in that it will not report directly to parliament. However, the main objective in having a body that reports to parliament is to enable that body to make its advice public so that parliamentarians can look at the advice and question the government concerning that advice. By giving this advisory council authority to publish its recommendations and reports, this objective has been met.

In considering whom to appoint to this council, I felt strongly that it must be as representative as possible of all the women of Canada. For this reason, I wrote to women's organizations across the country and publicly requested their assistance in suggesting people who could contribute to this council. More than 200 letters have come back, all with excellent suggestions. The list of names that I am now tabling is made up of the best people available, 28 people from across Canada of varying backgrounds and experiences, all of whom are vitally interested and concerned about the status of women in our country.

I am appointing as chairman Dr. Kate Cooke, who has been chosen because of her excellent understanding of the problems of women in all walks of life, because of her ability to work with and communicate with people of varying backgrounds and concerns, and because of her in-depth knowledge of the situation of women in Canada at the present time. Dr. Cooke has a Ph.D. in sociology and is presently with the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. She will be taking leave of absence from the government to fill this position. The two vice-chairmen will be appointed after the council has met.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House that as well as setting up this advisory council on the status of women, the government is taking other actions to improve the position of women in Canada. I will be introducing, in the very near future, a bill to amend the Canada Labour Code (Fair Employment Practices). The purpose of this bill will be to amend the act so that discrimination on the grounds of sex, age and marital status will be added to other prohibited grounds of discrimination by employers and unions coming under federal jurisdiction. Hon. members may recall that a bill to this effect was introduced in the last parliament; however, there was insufficient time for debate and it died on the order paper. The bill that will be introduced in the near future will contain a number of improvements, specifically in regard to pension and insurance schemes.

Status of Women

I also wish to announce at this time that the regulations under the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act have been amended so that all government contracts will include a provision that, in hiring and employment of workmen to perform work under a contract, the contractor will not refuse to employ and will not discriminate in any manner against any person because of that person's race, national origin, colour, religion, age, sex or marital status.

In line with amendments to the Canada Labour Code, my colleague the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) will be introducing amendments to the Public Service Superannuation Act. These are presently being drafted by the Department of Justice and it is the government's intention to introduce a bill amending the Superannuation Act in the very near future. These amendments will follow the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

In addition, the Treasury Board has developed a new relocation directive with appropriate provisions to implement the recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women on the subject of removal expenses for public servants. The new directive will be issued shortly and will replace the actual removal expenses regulations. This does not require legislative action.

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the minister sincerely for his courtesy in sending me a copy of his statement this morning. I assure him that my question of yesterday on this topic was not as a result of any leak from his office, although I understand this government has a propensity for leaks.

My party treats this matter very seriously. The status of women in Canadian life is not funny, is not a joke, is not something for locker room snickers. The subject is not amenable to tokenism. The government, parliament and the political parties must do more than mouth platitudes about the subject. I must say that although I deplore some of the stridency of language I add, gratuitously, that this is quite understandable because of the lack of results women have achieved up to now. The royal commission, after all, recommended in 1970 that the advisory council on the status of women should be established and report to parliament. The government, unfortunately, ignored that good advice and took a different route by appointing what is, in reality, a committee that is to report to the minister. The results will enable us to judge who is right.

Despite what the minister says, in my opinion the terms of reference he enunciated today are much too restrictive. Mr. Speaker, the parties must be serious about women candidates in public life. Surely the twenty-ninth parliament provides splendid evidence of the quality of women Members of Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fairweather: The hon. members for Ahuntsic (Mrs. Sauv ), Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis), Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald), Saint-Michel (Miss B gin) and Louis-H bert (Mrs. Morin) are a credit to themselves and to this parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!