

council should report not to a minister but through a minister, as does the Human Rights Commission and as does the Auditor General. Women represent 52 per cent of our nation, and they ought to be heard. While there are many able women here, women are still underrepresented. Will the Prime Minister act upon that recommendation and see that this House receives reports of the actions of the advisory council?

● (1425)

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I will gladly look into that suggestion and ensure that a report on it is made to me. I just want to emphasize, in reply to what was said by the minister responsible, that at least we on this side have introduced a constitutional charter, binding on all Canadians, which would prevent discrimination against people on the basis of sex. I noticed last night that the hon. gentleman's party has copped out on that. They suggested they are prepared to defend rights when everybody in every province in Canada agrees, but, of course, we know from what happened in September that several provinces are against the infringement of rights, with the result that obviously the hon. gentleman's party has copped out on this again.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

WIDER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN ON COUNCIL

Miss Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Madam Speaker, I should like to direct my question to the Prime Minister, who knows that we in this party urge very strongly—indeed I made a speech in the House—that the wholly inadequate section 15 be amended, and indeed it was a few weeks ago. The person behind that thrust was, of course, Doris Anderson; I think the right hon. gentleman knows that. The minister responsible for the status of women—and perhaps the Prime Minister does not know this—made three different speeches in this country, in Newfoundland, Montreal and Saskatchewan, in which he said that the proposals of the council under Doris Anderson were not good, that they had had bad legal advice.

I should like to ask the Prime Minister, in view of the fact that people in the whole of this country, and particularly of course the women, 51 per cent of the population, have written letters and telegrams of support to Mrs. Anderson for her position of protecting the integrity and independence of the council, and in view of the fact that one reason we are all so concerned is that there are patronage appointed people on the council and they do not have credibility in the eyes of the public—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Jewett: Doris Anderson was the one person—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Miss Jewett: I would like to ask the Prime Minister—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member was just about to ask her question. I would encourage her to do that.

Oral Questions

Miss Jewett: I will, Madam Speaker. I should like to ask the Prime Minister if he would seriously consider having the council made up of people who are genuinely representative of all the women of Canada, ensuring they represent the immigrant women, the native women, the trade union women, the working women, and so on, in much the same way as other councils are made up. Would he consider that?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, as regards the preamble which the hon. lady put to her question, I agree, and that is why in my first answer this afternoon I said I regretted the resignation of Doris Anderson. I think she has done some good work. I would point out that in bringing in our amendment on the equality provisions in the constitutional charter we were happy to do so on the advice of the council and of many people in the country.

I want to remind the House and the hon. member that the first draft of the charter was based on the desire to get as many provinces as possible supporting us. The hon. lady knows, because I know she is in contact with the government of at least one province, that the provinces generally are against this non-discrimination provision, and that is why we have waited for the pressure to mount on the provincial governments as well as on us to strengthen the provisions of the charter.

In so far as her suggestion for appointing members to the council is concerned, I will look into it, as I said to the previous questioner. It was my impression that members of the council were indeed representative of women in all walks of life. The fact that they are appointed by the government, it seems to me, does not mean that they are captive citizens, nor does the fact that ten voted against the proposition to hold the conference in May rather than in February and 17 voted in favour. What is the hon. lady saying, that the 17 should be smeared as irresponsible but that the ten, because they agreed with her, should be treated as responsible? Should we replace only the 17 and keep the ten? I think the hon. lady is on a bad course of logic in suggesting somehow the members of the council acted undemocratically and as tools of the government when they voted in this democratic fashion.

● (1430)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Jewett: Madam Speaker, the fact that some of the members on the council who voted to keep the conference in February were Conservative—because of course the hon. gentleman knows the Conservatives also made appointments—does not remedy the problem. Therefore I repeat my question to the Prime Minister. Would he not think it advisable, now that the credibility of the council is destroyed—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Miss Jewett: —to have a new council, comparable to, say, the Economic Council of Canada, whose members would represent, for example, labour, native peoples, native women and other immigrant women? Would it not be better that they be