

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion***PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

**MANPOWER—ALLEGED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN IN TRAINING PROGRAMS**

**Mrs. Grace MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, one of the worst things about sex discrimination is that it is so prevalent it is never noticed unless you are a woman and come up against it. Because the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang) a short time ago refused to accept my assertion that there is discrimination against women in the manpower training program, I wish to take this occasion to draw certain examples to his attention.

First of all, and most obviously, it is the name of the program—manpower training. It is just as though it were reserved exclusively for humans of the male gender. It completely ignores the fact that one-third of the labour force is composed of women.

In the second place, the legislation establishing the program is discriminatory, such as the provisions of the occupational training act to not permit full-time household responsibility to be equivalent to participation in the labour force in so far as eligibility for training allowances is concerned. The report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women calls for an amendment to the act to make this possible. I have had a bill on the order paper for two sessions, to the same effect. Surely the minister should lose no further time in bringing forward such an amendment, which would do much to cut down the discrimination against women as far as manpower—and womenpower—training is concerned.

● (10:00 p.m.)

Third, the status of women report states on page 197 that “occupational segregation by sex is being perpetuated in the occupational training for adults program” and gives a table to show clearly that manpower offers the bulk of women trainees low-paid work like hairdressing, clerical and sales jobs and trains few, if any, in management courses. No doubt Manpower is up against the traditional attitudes of employers who take it for granted that men should be the office managers and women the filing clerks. But instead of accepting these discriminatory and old-fashioned attitudes. Manpower should be trying to influence employers in the new direction of accepting individuals according to their ability and not according to their sex.

When the discrimination of age is added to the discrimination of sex, the result is catastrophic for a woman. Here is a case from Vancouver involving a sole-support mother, the kind that would be called the head of the family if we had a more enlightened census form. She is 38 years old with three children, the youngest seven years old. She has a grade 12 education. She has been registered with Manpower since 1969. They phone her every three months asking if she is available for

[Mr. Ritchie.]

clerical work. She is, but the six-week brush-up course they gave her was not enough. Every time she talks to the Manpower counsellor she is advised to stay on social assistance. She wants to work.

Another Vancouver sole-support mother has several teenagers. She wants to train as a practical nurse. But the Manpower course would require her absence from home for three weekends out of four. Quite properly, she feels that she cannot abandon the teenagers for that length of time. She considered taking a medical clerk's training course but found that it would keep her away from home from three o'clock in the afternoon until ten o'clock at night—again requiring a long absence from her teenagers, this time during the period of their homework and bedtime. Obviously, these Manpower courses are not planned with the needs of women in mind, and yet a great many perfectly normal women have children whom they must support and care for. In neglecting to plan for their needs, Manpower is practising discrimination of a real and cruel kind.

Women make up almost 35 per cent of the labour force, yet last year 80 per cent of the people trained by Manpower were men; only 20 per cent were women. To overcome this discrimination I would suggest to the minister that he involve women in planning courses more adapted to their needs than is the case at present. If he did so, it would not take him long to find there is a necessity for arranging for part-time courses and hours that fit in with the responsibilities of caring for a home and children.

He would discover that sole-support mothers with children could be a tremendous source of part-time work in human services such as school aides, information centre aides, child care centre aides, part-time workers in recreational centres and a host of other jobs that society requires urgently today. Future job fields like these could take such women and their families off social assistance and allow them the right to stand on their own economic feet and to contribute their abilities to the community. And not only sole-support mothers: mothers with small children should be enabled to take courses which would allow them to retain their skills in their pre-marriage occupations so that when their children are grown and have left home they can resume their work in the community.

This sort of thing is what I believe Manpower should be working at under the heading of “unfinished business”. Until it does so, it is open to the charge of discrimination on grounds of sex.

**Mr. Charles L. Caccia (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the points raised by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis) can hardly be dealt with in the short time allocated this evening. If the hon. member has some alternative suggestions for renaming the present Manpower services, we would be interested in examining her ideas.

With regard to the three-year clause, the hon. member has a very valid point which the department has made an object of study. Something ought to be done about