

Supply

We have also implemented the federal contract program to ensure that all contractors doing business with the federal Government are doing their share to train and preserve a representative and equitably distributed labour force. Moreover, we are trying to persuade all contractors big and small doing business with the federal Government to apply employment equity principles. They know that we are very serious about this.

Those two measures, the Employment Equity Act and the Federal Contract Program will impact on the work life of over a million Canadians. Those two initiatives offer both women and other members of target groups an opportunity to play a more important role on the labour market.

It is not enough to create openings, we must also ensure that those people can benefit.

What about the young for instance who, having dropped out of school, do not have the required skills to get a job? What about people at home and mothers who want to return to the labour market after a number of years, but whose skills no longer meet current requirements? What about women who cannot afford child care in order to get training, or who only can get part-time training?

Previously, no adequate steps were taken to effectively meet the needs of those women. Now, thanks to employment planning, we are tackling that problem and many others still.

Through employment job planning, goals have been set for participation of women and members of other minority groups, and excellent results are reported in that respect. But more importantly, in each program, women have an opportunity to acquire the skills needed to enter the labour market. Under the Canadian job strategy, subsidized training and work experiences are available for young women who have a hard time making the transition from the schooling system to the labour force, women who return to the labour force after just being homemakers for some time, women who have been unemployed for a long time, women whose jobs are threatened by technological change, women in communities who have suffered from economic hardship or long-time unemployment.

The rate of participation of women in the training and work experience project is representative of their percentage of the work force. Flexibility is one of the major assets of the job strategy. Women are encouraged to take part on a part-time or a full-time basis in various activities and all training and other allowances have been increased to encourage more women to participate.

Moreover, allowances are now granted on the basis of the number of hours spent on those activities, which means that they can be paid to part-time participants.

In the case of women with dependents, the dependents' allowance is a fairer recognition of child care costs. As far as women in rural or isolated communities are concerned, training is more readily available for them as travel, commuting and food allowances have been increased.

Under the Canadian Job Strategy, we have come to grips with all the obstacles faced by women. For instance, the initiatives taken with respect to welfare recipients will benefit women with an urge to become full-time members of the national workforce.

We have been taking a number of steps this year to enable women to choose from a wider range of activities, in other words to help a larger number of women get non-traditional, better paid jobs. We have also been urging employers with greater insistence to promote activities that will make it possible for women to work in positions which were traditionally open to men only. The federal Government is also committed to a number of changes which will help women as their needs and the situation of the labour market change.

We must take a closer look at any question concerning the change in women's career orientation with a view to increasing their numbers in jobs where they are now under-represented. This question and the other one related to professional ghettos, that is limited opportunities for women, are two major concerns. However the Government alone cannot change individual attitudes nor remove social obstacles preventing women from gaining access to training courses or employment in fields traditionally reserved to men.

As I have already pointed out, employment growth forecasts reveal that within a few short years jobs will be concentrated in the service sector where women have always been more numerous. Many of the 10 professions which are expected to expand considerably between now and 1992 are professions traditionally occupied by women. Most of the others do not pay very well. Women who are anxious to sever all connections with professional ghettos may find these forecasts very discouraging. Essential though it may be for women to be able to venture into predominantly male professions, that is not enough. It is therefore imperative that they become skilful enough to change jobs and professions, and that the federal Government promote co-operation between academic circles and the labour market. As my colleague the Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest) pointed out yesterday, it is holding extensive consultations with provincial representatives in an attempt to draft a national education policy which would make it easier to prepare young Canadians, men and women alike, to join the labour force.

In this respect, Mr. Speaker, we cannot act unilaterally. Even with the assistance we provide through our programs, the federal Government alone cannot change individual attitudes and eliminate obstacles which prevent women from being active in the labour force and play their proper role in society. This is a challenge to all of us.

So far, Mr. Speaker, the Government is quite satisfied with the results. Last year under employment planning programs the participation rate of women was 46 per cent, up from 37 per cent under previous programs. In excess of 197,000 women throughout Canada underwent training and participated in