

indicated that many different departments of government are affected, including the Prime Minister's office, the Department of Labour, the Department of Justice, the Immigration Department, the Secretary of State Department, the Department of National Defence, the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Department of Finance, and no doubt there are many others. What is everybody's business is nobody's business.

Perhaps the Prime Minister himself would undertake the responsibility, but it may be that the burden of his other duties would make it impossible for him to do so. If so, the duty of following this report through, taking the responsibility in cabinet, giving adequate priority to the legislative program arising out of the report, should be delegated to a senior minister.

Those familiar with the report will be well aware that many of the recommendations fall within the jurisdiction of the provincial legislatures. This is particularly true in the field of the recommendations with regard to education which are designed to ensure that education as a whole, including textbooks, will portray women as well as men in diversified roles and occupations and not in restricted stereotypes. In fact, over 30 of the report's recommendations specifically call for a joint approach, that is for participation and co-operation between different levels of government. We, therefore, have included in the motion a proposal to convene a federal-provincial conference to consider the recommendations of the commission which fall within provincial jurisdiction or which are the joint responsibility of the Parliament of Canada and the legislatures of the provinces.

It is our conviction that if the report is effectively implemented it will make for a healthier and happier society. The onus is on us. We know that an extensive legislative program is not carried into effect overnight. But we suggest that there is more than the usual need for urgent, persistent and even impatient activity to implement the report. The confidence of a large part of the Canadian people in the efficacy of parliamentary institutions is at stake. There are many people, including many women, who are watching what we propose to do in this regard. This party will co-operate and even insist, in so far as lies within its power, that this report will not be pigeonholed. We urge that the report should be used as a basis for a fundamental far reaching revision of human relationships and for greater justice for women in Canada.

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal):** Mr. Speaker, a 17th century French feminist complained that "All that has been written about women by men is suspect for the men are at once judge and party to the lawsuit". I wonder if it is a valid query whether all that will be said today will be equally suspect.

• (3:30 p.m.)

I shall try to be objective as I respond to the motion on behalf of my party but I often question whether there is or, for that matter, should be total objectivity. I speak, hopefully in no way smugly, from the vantage point of

### *Status of Women Study*

watching members of my own family who in days gone by asserted their right to independent status. A great aunt was amongst the first graduates in nursing from Bellevue Hospital in New York and another was dean of women at McGill University. Their nieces, equally independent were and are part of the university scene in Canada and the United States. One, of unforgettable memory, was so anxious to avoid platitudinous farewells from people she did not particularly like that she retired from university service one year early. My sister was, almost until her death, a lawyer with a busy practice. I cite what are obviously personal references so that my colleagues will understand the perspective from which I address myself to this question. I am strongly dissatisfied with the traditional restrictions on women's role. Most enlightened males share this view and join women in opposition to the restrictions. I cannot imagine that very many people would want to close off any traditionally male occupations to competent women or condone unequal pay for equal work.

Where the agreement breaks down, suggests a note to the reader in the current issue of *Dialogue*, "is on the relative importance of biology and culture in determining the past and present roles of women in society. Has modern technology made the biological distinctions between the sexes largely irrelevant to their social functions? Or are there profound instinctual and temperamental differences that point to at least partially different paths for fulfilment?"

It is my hope and expectation that today's debate will help to answer these questions, and that the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women will be used by the government as a program for action, so that the rights and needs of women in Canada will be met. It is neither trite nor tendentious to say that Canada and the world need the special talents of women for nurture and conservation. Margaret Mead, one of America's most distinguished anthropologists, sees the liberation of women coming from a new partnership with men, rather than a struggle against them. Margaret Mead writes evocatively of the expansion of women's role of staying close to the hearth, caring for young children and preparing food. "However much later generations elaborated this pattern, with greatly extended families, complex systems of feudal inter-relationships and one-sex religious communities, this central core remained."

She went on to write:

But such was added to it. To the care of the infant and toddler was added the protection of young people through adolescence, the care of the sick and the care of the old. And a place was found for the wisdom and wider generosity of women past child-bearing, who were heavy with the memories of earlier solutions and free to care, not only for their own children—with fierce maternal protectiveness, as the young mothers did—but with a wider concern for all the children within the community. Elaborate rituals grew up around death, and it was women who straightened the limbs of the dead and washed their bodies for burial. Knowledge of midwifery grew, and it was women who attended woman in labor, washed the newborn, and wrapped him, in bark or swaddling clothes, and laid him on his first bed.

Wherever religious or social attitudes flowered in a new concern for the welfare of the poor and the sick and the