

*Adjournment Debate*

for women in the Public Service by saying the PSC was outside their jurisdiction. These are the same people who tell us we should worry more about women in the private sector and the inaction of provincial governments.

New Democrats are advocating economic equality for all women. If the federal Government cannot ensure equality for its women employees, it is in no position to provide leadership to the provinces and the private sector. It seems that the Liberal motto is: Practice what we preach, not what we do.

One of the most glaring deficiencies in the Public Service affirmative action program is its focus on women in senior management positions. What about the majority of women workers who are concentrated in clerical job ghettos? When will the Government act to provide measures such as bridging positions and comprehensive skills training for these lowest paid Public Service workers? Women want to see action and concrete programs, not more paper promises, such as were made in committee by the Minister last week. I am very concerned that there is no target date in the new Womens' Program Centre for the extension of the Womens' Career Counselling and Referral Bureau Services to clerical and secretarial staff. This service is now available only to senior women.

The time has long passed for the Government to rectify the inadequacy of its affirmative action program. The Minister recently said that by the year 2000 the program would produce the kind of results that are necessary. She tells women to wait over 15 years for equality when this same Government's Official Languages Act produced equality for Francophones in the Public Service within three years. Why can she not do this for women? Where is her credibility?

The record is dismal. Four years after the implementation of a pilot project, women held fewer than 6 per cent of management positions, but fill over 80 per cent of the administrative support jobs in the federal Government. Approximately 63 per cent of those who have been laid off due to privatization and reorganization have been women. Things are getting worse for women rather than better under an ill-conceived Liberal program.

● (1825)

I question the Minister's understanding of the fundamental principle of affirmative action which is systemic discrimina-

tion. Both the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the President of the Treasury Board have insisted that there was no intention to have layoffs affect women more adversely than men. However, the exact point of affirmative action is to ensure that unintentional discrimination is also removed. Claiming that there is no deliberate discrimination is no answer. Any practice which has a discriminatory effect, intentional or not, impedes women's struggles for economic equality. I urge the Government to revise its own affirmative action program as a model for other employers to provide concrete opportunities for women. The time to do this is now.

**Mr. Michel Veillette (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member may be aware of the Public Service Commission's announcement of the establishment of a Women's Program Centre on May 29, 1984. The centre will be part of the Operations Directorate, Staffing Programs Branch. I am confident that the Women's Program Centre, a centre which evolved out of the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women, will exert even greater influence on the operational processes relating to the recruitment and staffing of women.

I am particularly pleased that the commission will be offering a series of 16 noon-hour sessions that will be of particular interest to women in the administrative support category. These sessions begin this month in the National Capital Region. In addition, one-day information sessions on such subjects as part-time work, job sharing and the impact of microtechnology on women public servants are planned for later this year. Increased career counselling services will also be available through the commission's regional offices. I would like to point out to the Hon. Member that these programs are specifically designed for women at junior and intermediate levels of the Public Service.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault):** The motion to adjourn now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 2(1).

At 6.28 p.m., the House adjourned.