

for several reasons, one of the most unfortunate of which is society's refusal to offer to all Canadians an opportunity to participate and to contribute to the extent that they are capable and to the extent that they desire. This refusal reflects a variety of circumstances -- sometimes prejudice, sometimes nepotism, sometimes indifference, sometimes economic fallacy. Whatever the circumstance, however, society suffers and Canada is less than it might otherwise be.

Measured on the scale of human history, society has been slow in identifying these factors and even slower in moving to overcome them. Active programs to combat discrimination on a variety of grounds have gained widespread acceptance only in recent years.... Concern about the plight of the unemployed and the under-employed has a much longer history in the Western world, but even so there has not been sufficient thought given to some of the basic conditions of human activity. The industrialized states are only now coming to grips, for example, with questions about the appropriate use of a person's time; with the unnecessary inconsistencies between employment for economic gain, on the one hand, and occupation for human or social benefit, on the other. There is still another, and even broader, area of human activity which until recently has been almost ignored in this country and, as a result, has denied to countless numbers of persons adequate opportunity to contribute to Canada as they are capable of doing. This area of activity affects personally at one period or another in their lifetime fully one-half of our population. Every woman in Canada possesses skills, competence, energy, knowledge, warmth, and abilities which are of immense value and yet which are often under-utilized because they are all too often either channelled thoughtlessly and automatically or are underestimated in their importance.

So long as these circumstances continue, we are denying to our society benefits which we can ill afford to lose.

I am convinced, however, that those circumstances will not be permitted to continue. I say this because, in my view, one of the most heartening and exciting aspects of our age is the willingness and the desire of people, and especially of young people, to look at old problems in different perspectives and to approach conventional wisdom and attitudes with a refreshing and questioning candour. This challenge to convention is apparent in many areas; it is, for example, causing us all to reconsider the manner in which we regard the role of women in a modern community. It should cause us to question the social effects and liabilities of traditional attitudes.

I think it can be said with certainty that our society would not now be as it is if, in the course of the last half-century, women had occupied a large number of positions of influence and decision in government and industry. Would we, for example, be experiencing today the same threat of environmental pollution, which is largely attributable to a male-dominated technology? Would it have taken so very long for governments to have become aware of the need for extensive protection of the consumer? One might even conjecture that policies in the broad areas of administration of justice, correction of offenders, and criminal rehabilitation would now evidence more compassion and, perhaps, more success in their aims, had women's special qualities been introduced and utilized by the community. In short, would we as a society have laid greater emphasis upon quality as a factor in the lives