

Adjournment Debate

strategy for the entire province of Manitoba has not even been defined.

However, my primary concern tonight is that this Outreach project is, at worst, facing a total cutback or, at a minimum, months of red tape, cataloguing, evaluations, reviews, reports, and countless battles with departmental officials who do not understand the need for women's employment services let alone the need for affirmative action.

This Manitoba project is a microcosm of the entire Outreach program established in 1974 which has had a very difficult and rocky history—and for that only the Liberal governments, past and present, can take responsibility. Let me mention just a few of the problems:

1. In 1978, it was declared that "women" and "youth" were no longer a priority or special needs target of CEC or Outreach. This began the cutbacks which reduced the 22 projects to 10. This occurred despite the fact that of all the special programs established by CEC which could particularly benefit women, Outreach had the greatest potential.

2. Opposing cutbacks and pleading for additional funds has been a tremendous waste of time for Outreach workers. Since 1978, the New Democratic Party has defended the right to exist of many Outreach projects and raised questions in this House about cutbacks to AWARE in B.C., Women in Society Today, in Saskatchewan; Womanpower, in London; Times Change, in Toronto; Womens Career Counselling Service, in Ottawa, and now, Affirmative Action Outreach in Winnipeg.

3. Outreach projects are mistakenly considered to be placement offices and are therefore evaluated on a purely statistical basis. While many Outreach projects have higher job placement rates than Canada Employment Centres, their purpose is much broader. They specialize in providing in-depth supporting counselling and assertiveness training; they work to change attitudes and hiring practices of employers, and they help women to help themselves by providing support services as well as information on educational and vocational opportunities.

4. Reviews of Outreach projects are carried out, often in secrecy, by CEC officials who have negligible contact with the projects, are unfamiliar with the special needs of women, evaluate projects primarily on a cost-benefit basis and wrongfully compare Outreach services to those of CEC.

● (2215)

I hope that my doubts about the new minister's renewed commitment to Outreach are unfounded. I would therefore appreciate receiving answers to the following questions. First, of the 12 women's Outreach projects cut back by the Liberal government, how many have resubmitted applications and how many are being reinstated? Second, what portion of the \$9.7 million which the minister says has been allocated to Outreach will go toward women's projects? Third, will the funding for Affirmative Action Outreach in Winnipeg be continued? Fourth, what criteria are being applied in the evaluation of both new and existing programs? Fifth, are all of the minister's officials aware of his intentions to restore Outreach funding and of his apparent commitment to special employment services for women?

I urge the government not only to make good on its promises but also to work toward an expansion of this necessary service. At a minimum there should be one women's Outreach project in every Canada employment district. Such a program is

central to the development of any employment strategy for women and the key to removing the economic and sociological barriers faced by women in their search for decent and rewarding employment.

[Translation]

Mr. Robert Bockstael (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, in 1977-78, there were 22 Outreach projects categorized as women-oriented projects. Of that number, only 17 in fact provided services exclusively for women. So, to meet the situation, five projects were restructured to orient them toward more appropriate target groups, in this case people nearly always unemployed, inmates and former inmates, isolated communities. I point out that out of the five projects, four are continuing.

There are now 14 Outreach projects offering manpower services exclusively or principally to women and thus falling in the category of women-oriented projects.

Furthermore, we are now considering another project for women in Truro, Nova Scotia, which would bring the total of projects in this category to 15. The hon. member asks if those projects will continue. The answer is yes, until the Canada Employment Centres in each of the communities where a women-oriented Outreach project is ongoing can efficiently provide the necessary services. This is one of the basic objectives of the Outreach program: the integration of experience and acquired skills and, one day, the takeover by the local CEC of the services being provided. In this way, we get the most out of even the most modest amounts.

To extend the Outreach projects, there must therefore still be a need for the services provided, the objectives and the contract commitments must continue to be met, and Parliament must continue to authorize the funds required. I mentioned earlier the basic relationship between the Outreach program and the CECs. I should add that women's Outreach projects are not the only means available to the commission to provide employment services to women. Indeed, since 38 per cent of manpower counsellors in the CECs are women, there is no reason to believe that—

Miss Jewett: It is not the same!

Mr. Bockstael: —there is no reason to believe that women who prefer to deal with a woman counsellor cannot do so. Moreover, more than 42 per cent of the users of the Outreach program are women, because those women who cannot make effective use of the CECs can benefit from the services of an Outreach project as much as men.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 10.20 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.