

ans of the present status of women in this country. It is also a time for every person to consider his or her own attitudes. It is evident that legislative change alone would be a hollow victory for women, for if laws change and attitudes do not, women's position in our society will remain unchanged.

The discrepancy between law and practice is illustrated by the wage gap between women and men which continues to exist despite the fact that in all provinces but one, discrimination in employment is now prohibited by law. Back in 1962, a man working a full year in Canada was earning an average of \$5,014, and a woman working a full year was earning \$2,634. What progress has been made? Well, in 1971 the average woman's salary for a full year's work was \$4,755; for a man the figure was \$8,513. In 1971, women were still earning 44 per cent less than men. Recent data on salaries indicate this disproportionate gap is not narrowing.

● (1520)

In this connection, it is interesting to note that figures for Sweden indicate that in 1965 women were earning 75 per cent as much as men, and that by 1970 this had risen to 80 per cent. There may be several factors involved, particularly the fact that in Sweden, for instance, well over 50 per cent of women are in the labour force and many more are found in the higher paying professions than they are in Canada. But the facts still are there for everybody to see. Women have not yet achieved equality in Canada, and it is for this reason that International Women's Year can and must provide the impetus for change.

In 1967, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women began its hearings across the country, providing a forum for public opinion and an opportunity fully to investigate women's status. When the commission's report was tabled in the House in 1970, it included 123 recommendations which fell within federal jurisdiction. I am happy to report that a large proportion of these recommendations has either been implemented or is in the process of implementation. However, there are still some areas where the changing role of women has not been recognized. It was for this reason that my predecessor, the present Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), introduced the omnibus bill on the status of women approximately one year ago. The election prevented the passage of the bill and it is for this reason that we are dealing with it today on second reading.

Before proceeding to a detailed examination of this bill, I should like to set it in the context of the government's program for International Women's Year, since, once again, legislative change is only one facet of the government's initiatives in this area. As I have mentioned, it is apparent that one of the major needs of this country is to inform Canadians on the status of women. The media campaign launched for International Women's Year Secretariat in January of this year was designed to that end.

While "Why Not!" may have been criticized by some, it generated a great deal of interest and support both in Canada and abroad. In fact, today more than 75,000 individual requests for information, posters and buttons have been received. This figure does not include the many

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hundreds of bulk orders handled by my office. About 150,000 buttons have been distributed. Lately, I have been wearing with great pride the one that I am wearing today. It is hand-made by Indian women in British Columbia. These women are very active with regard to women's rights, and the revenue from the sale of these buttons helps them in fighting for equality. In fact, we have started a small cottage industry at the same time as a public education campaign.

A second major part of the national program for 1975 is now launched in all the provinces and the territories. Each province and territory chose from a number of options the program which it was felt will best meet the needs of the people in that area. Eight provinces have decided to have mobile information centres. These will be travelling throughout each of the provinces and the Yukon during the summer months, distributing information on federal and provincial programs of interest to women as well as information on services and laws relating to women. Some of the provinces opted for conferences either on a province-wide or a regional basis. These would provide a forum for discussion of different issues concerning women and also a basis for determining future action.

The main thrust of the government's program is designed to bring the changing role of women clearly before all Canadians, for the equality of men and women will only come about when each person in this country sheds those attitudes that encourage inequality in fact if not in law.

To this end, amendments have already been made to the pension plan to provide equal treatment of men and women under the Canada Pension Plan and those changes became law on January 1. My colleague, the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner), has also brought before this House amendments to the Citizenship Act to ensure equal treatment under the act regardless of sex. Another measure related to equality before the law which the government announced in the Speech from the Throne is the human rights legislation. All these bills involve legislation eliminating those instances of bias in favour of women as well as those favouring men.

[Translation]

Furthermore, this bill is another step towards the achievement of the government's objective, that is the implementation of most of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which had already advised the government to enact some of the changes provided by the bill. As to the other changes which are put forward, they have been incorporated in the bill following the very useful and constructive recommendations made by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, many agencies and individuals.

Before coming to the details of the changes provided under Bill C-16, I would like to mention that it is my predecessor as minister responsible for the status of women, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), who took upon himself the responsibility of drafting the bill presented to the House today on second reading, and that he advised the government to prepare this omnibus legislation. I would be remiss if I did not emphasize the support we, my predecessor and myself, have received from our