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ensure equal rights for people, regardless of their background, age, sex or whatever.

The hon. member would have to admit that this is a major step forward. Even the wording of the act can be changed to strengthen it and it is certainly the intention of members of this government and this caucus to support such cases. That is the reason the committee was established and why it was mandated by this Parliament to use its judgment to see how the resolution and the charter could be improved upon.

The government, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice and I have all indicated this to organizations with which we have met. I have met with the advisory council and the national action committee, and perhaps more women's groups than the hon. member over the last two months, to discuss this matter and I indicated, that we are prepared to look at any proposed changes which would improve upon the law. But we do want to see the committee's considerations because I, for one, would not want to impose my judgment on that committee. It has a mandate from this Parliament which I respect, and I assume that it will follow through, listen to briefs put before it, then act and use its judgment accordingly. It is very important that we recognize and respect the due procedures of this House.

It would be wrong for the hon. member to try to create false confrontation where there is none because we have already indicated our interest in improving upon the charter and our interest in looking with favour upon the recommendations of the committee.

Miss Jewett: Mr. Chairman, the reason I was so conciliatory is because I am so concerned about this matter that I want the minister to give it serious attention. That is why I have been trying to talk about it in a non-confrontational way. The fact is, the minister has not read the briefs very carefully or, if he has, he has not understood them.

● (2130)

They are not contradictory. I am speaking now of the Human Rights Commission brief, the NAC brief and his own advisory council brief as well as the National Association of Women and the Law brief. All hone in on the same point so it is wrong to say that they are contradictory. They all point out very carefully that the matter is complex and that entrenchment of the same words will not do any good at all. The most recent brief points out that an examination of the two leading sex inequality cases, Lavell and Bliss, reveals that the decisions did not turn on a difference between a statutory and a constitutional standard for equality. It says that they are not at all confident that the Supreme Court will begin to interpret this clause, which is worded exactly the same as it is in the Canadian Bill of Rights, in a broader way simply because it is entrenched and that in their view these words are likely to receive exactly the same interpretation after entrenchment as before. That is the view of all of the constitutional experts who have helped these groups to prepare briefs. There is no contradiction whatsoever.

The Curr case that the minister mentioned is irrelevant. The Baines paper did discuss it very briefly because it is not relevant to the equality of women.

As to the three-year time period, Mr. Chairman, they have all said the same. The only part of the constitutional document that says this clause does not have to be enforced for three years will prevent a good deal of the inequality that now exists from being adjudicated. This is a very serious question. I am glad the minister has talked to these groups but I am sorry that he did not consult them ahead of time, particularly the advisory council. I think they would have been helpful in drawing up the constitutional proposals in a more reasonable fashion in the first place.

I am sorry that the minister has not taken up the cause more vigorously than he has to date. I would have thought that one way to do that would be to use his influence with the Minister of Justice and his department to ensure that the changes unanimously agreed upon will be made. I hope he will reconsider his rather laissez-faire attitude on a matter that I am sure concerns him as much as it does all the women for whom, in a way, he speaks as the minister responsible for women.

I have a few other questions that I should like to address to the minister, Mr. Chairman. As he knows, I have been very interested in the Outreach program particularly the Outreach program for women. I am having difficulty finding out what is happening with the program. I cannot even find out the total number of Outreach programs in existence or how many are designated as women's Outreach project. I cannot find out what the total budget is and what part of it is designated for women's Outreach projects. I am speaking now of the projects for the current fiscal year. I cannot find out what percentage increase will be forthcoming to ensure they keep pace with inflation. I have not yet heard what plans the minister has for the next fiscal year nor have any of the regional directors heard. Will they be cut back or will he be adding to them? Is he concerned or is he impressed with what they have done? I think he must be impressed.

There is a project in my constituency called "Aware" and at a meeting this summer in Vancouver which a board member attended the minister encouraged them to submit a proposal to him to expand Aware services from New Westminster to Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge and Surrey.

The minister made the request in June. In July, Aware sent a draft proposal outlining the suggested expansion. At the end of August they received a letter from the minister acknowledging the draft and stating that he would be in touch. The next word they got was to the effect that there was no money available. I wrote to the minister about this on October 16 and only today received a reply dated December 5 from the minister, stating that unfortunately the British Columbia and Yukon region and all other regional funds for the fiscal year 1980-81 are fully committed to existing projects. Yet they had got the impression that they had done so well that funds would be made available; that it would not be a matter of taking them out of the program for some other region. I wonder if the minister could answer these general questions about the