

MANPOWER

MEASURES TO PROVIDE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy-Royal): We will try another minister, Mr. Speaker. May I direct a question supplementary to that of my leader to the minister of manpower. As more women worked both from economic necessity and also in order to pursue their goals yet their unemployment rate has been steadily increasing, as a matter of fact from 8.4 per cent in February last year to 9.8 per cent this year, what special measures can the minister announce to ensure that women in the labour force, or those who are not even able to be part of this dismal statistic, can have equal employment opportunities?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his expression of concern. It is too bad that he is just now catching up to the government and that it takes a demonstration on the Hill to get this question finally into the House.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): We have been asking you about this for years.

Mr. Alexander: Don't throw out red herrings.

Mr. Cullen: In point of fact, speaking of my own department, to which the question was directed, the government has initiated the LIP program for example, and 41 per cent of the jobs created by the LIP program went to women, which is about 4 per cent above their percentage of the labour force, and I think that was a good move. Our Canada manpower industrial training program makes provision for numbers in that category to be trained. Under our Canada Works Program I assume the percentages will be equivalent, hopefully the same or even higher than they are under LIP. Under the Canada manpower programs—perhaps we should call them person power programs—we are trying to do our best.

PROGRAMS TO END DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, the demonstrations may have awakened the opposition to raising some serious questions; unfortunately they did not awaken the government or lead to giving serious answers. Given that unemployment consistently runs higher for women than for men, last month's figures being 9.8 per cent for women and 8.7 per cent for men, does the Minister of Manpower and Immigration say that the two aspects of his own department's program to which he just alluded constitute the government's total program to end discrimination between men and women in employment?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): No, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about my own department; I did not even spell out the affirmative action program, which is part and parcel of the initiatives my department has taken in

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this area. There is a responsibility resting on both levels of government and private enterprise to provide amenities like day care centres, in order that women can leave the home and enter the work force. Women must overcome certain handicaps and difficulties before entering the work force. Perhaps the initiative should be taken by some of the larger companies, and perhaps by the federal government. We shall need to examine this area and determine to what extent the taxpayer should bear the cost, or to what extent private enterprise should bear it if we are to remove that particularly significant barrier which stands in the way of women who want to enter the work force.

SUGGESTED ADOPTION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the government could take some initiatives on its own in this regard. It should not have to wait for the private sector to do it. Given the example of the government of Manitoba and certain governments in the United States, which have introduced affirmative action programs within government agencies, will the minister undertake to make a commitment to the House that the government will undertake an affirmative action program designed to upgrade the skills of women, and to qualify them for executive positions, now, inasmuch as fewer women than men now fill such positions on a proportionate basis?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will undertake to give careful consideration to the hon. member's representations.

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ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM

EFFECT OF CONTROLS ON EARNING'S GAP BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my final supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. Since one of the negative results of the controls program has been that it has widened the dollar earnings gap between men and women in the labour force, can the Minister of Finance tell the House what the government plans to do in order to redress this evil while the controls program remains in effect; or, how does it plan to close this widening gap after controls end?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the controls program right from its commencement contained specific exceptions to permit greater increases for women.

Mr. Broadbent: In how many cases were they applied?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Of course, the initiative in this regard rests with the collective bargaining representatives of the women in question. The delegation which was here at the