

same fate he traditionally met every time he was approached for any leadership position.

This having been said, I will turn to what I would like to say in this debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. I will have an opportunity to talk about the steps my department intends to take in the area of health and social security reform on different occasions during this session since we will have an opportunity to debate certain bills which were already introduced for first reading. But I wanted to take this opportunity to participate in the debate on the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne to point out some of my concerns as well as some of the projects I am considering in my new capacity as minister responsible for the status of women.

As you know this government is strongly committed to the principle of equal opportunity and freedom of choice for all Canadians. At the same time we recognize that the current status of women in Canada does not always lend itself to this principle.

I am honoured to be given the responsibility of guiding government policy in this area and I intend to give a great deal of time and effort to bringing about the necessary changes in our laws and in society so that women and men will both be able to participate fully in all activities of life.

As stated in the throne speech, the government is committed to introducing wide-ranging legislation to bring about equality for women before the law. We are also planning a number of initiatives for International Women's Year in 1975.

During the last session of Parliament, my predecessor as minister responsible for the status of women, outlined the steps we were planning to take at that time. Unfortunately, we were not able to complete our program before that session came to a sudden end. Those measures which we had begun, namely, the amendment of the Canada Pension Plan to provide equal treatment of men and women and the correction of discriminatory provisions in a number of other acts through the omnibus bill on the status of women, have already been re-introduced. It is my hope that these two bills will be speedily passed.

● (1450)

In addition, a new Citizenship Act has been introduced. This bill, among other things will enable children to derive Canadian citizenship from either their mother or father. Under the present law, Madam Speaker, children in most cases take their citizenship from their father only. Other changes providing for equal treatment of men and women will also be made.

Of great importance in our attempts to bring about an end to discrimination will be the establishment of a human rights commission. My colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) will be introducing a bill to this effect before the end of this year. The legislation will set out the principles and procedures under which the commission will operate and will provide the necessary powers of enforcement. I am also pleased to announce that the government intends to recognize on this commission a large representation drawn from women.

The Minister of Justice will also be introducing amendments to the criminal code regarding trials for rape and

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other sexual offenses. We are all aware that the present law needs changing and updating to provide more protection for the innocent victim of rape. The amendments planned by my colleague would ensure that the details of an alleged sex crime and the name of the victim would not be used in the public press; encourage the greater use of the change of venue or location of the trial. In addition, they would also encourage exclusion of the public from the preliminary inquiry and the trial or portions thereof, and prevent, except in certain limited circumstances, the defense from attacking the moral integrity of the victim.

I should like to take this opportunity to bring you up to date on two other items that were mentioned in the previous Speech from the Throne. As these did not require legislative action, the government was able to carry out its intentions as outlined at that time. Specifically, the various regulations setting out the terms and conditions of employment in the public service have now been amended so that all discriminatory provisions have been removed. Moreover, I am pleased also to announce that a cabinet directive was sent by the Prime Minister to all Crown corporations last May requesting them to undertake positive action to encourage the assignment and advancement of more women into responsible positions and to inform the minister responsible for the status of women of their progress in this respect. We have already received replies from many of the corporations and they indicate a very favourable response. In this respect, it was learned last week that a task force on the status of women which has been set up by the management of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation would table a preliminary report as early as October 18. It is my intention to get in touch shortly with other Crown corporations to assess what progress has been made as a result of the Prime Minister's letter of last spring.

Another item I should like to refer to is the question of coverage under the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans for spouses who are not in the labour force. This matter is presently being studied by the Canada Pension Plan Advisory Board and the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. I hope to have their reports this fall and will then want to discuss their proposals with my colleagues, the provincial ministers of welfare. I am sure the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs will also be interested in studying these reports. I can assure the house that it is a problem which has my close attention and I am working hard to find a solution that is acceptable to all.

I am also very concerned about the provision of child care services. As Minister of National Health and Welfare, even before I assumed the added responsibility of directing the thrust of government policy concerning the status of women, I was very pleased to announce that as a result of amendments to the Canada Assistance Plan Regulations in 1972, the full operating costs of day care services became shareable, including costs of equipment and supplies, and rent or depreciation on capital.

For all other welfare services, shareable costs are restricted to salaries and related staff costs. Thus, we participate further in the provision of day care than we do for any other social service that we cost-share with the provinces. We have also approved policy guidelines for