

of higher learning, there has also been a change in the types of course women enrol in at post-secondary institutions. Though most women still enter disciplines customarily reserved for them (in 1977, 84.7 per cent of the degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded to women at the master's level were in education, the social sciences, the humanities and related areas), the number of women entering the professions usually regarded as masculine is increasing.

Thus, between 1973 and 1978, the number of women among those receiving their first professional degrees in medicine increased from 18.6 per cent to 29.9 per cent, in law from 13.9 per cent to 27.7 per cent, in optometry from 14.3 per cent to 36.8 per cent, in dentistry from 6.8 per cent to 17.7 per cent and in veterinary medicine from 12.1 per cent to 29.1 per cent.

One of the newer developments in Canadian education, the importance of which is still increasing, is continuing education, sometimes called adult education. This consists of post-secondary classes in the evening or during the summer, or correspondence courses, offered by a number of institutions, in a wide variety of subjects. This program enables men and women who find it difficult to enrol in full-time courses because of family or professional responsibilities to take courses with the aim of obtaining a diploma or certificate or simply because they are interested in

the subject. In 1978-79, 60.6 per cent of the part-time students at the bachelor's level and 36 per cent of those at the graduate level were women.

Work

The most radical changes in the position of women in Canada have occurred in the working world. Between 1969 and 1979, the number of women in the labour force increased by 62 per cent.

At present, over four million Canadian women are employed. Of these, 60.7 per cent are married. Women represent 39.3 per cent of Canada's labour force, and 57.8 per cent of all women between 25 and 54 are in the labour force.

There are numerous reasons for the greater number of women entering the job market. Automation has been a major factor, lightening household chores and reducing the amount of time spent on them and, in industry, decreasing the importance of physical strength in a large number of occupations, thereby opening them to women in general. As a result, the notion, once generally accepted, that there are certain jobs suitable for men and others suitable for women is no longer as widely held, particularly since, during the two world wars, women demonstrated their skills in a great many tasks previously considered exclusively masculine. The main reason, however, has proved to be economic.