

In discussion with other people and in my own mind I have raised the question of whether perhaps there should be a separate ministry, but we had the experience in Ottawa with the ministry of state for urban affairs, and other groups, and we found that one thing they lacked was a line department or the ability to deliver goods and services. They were simply co-ordinating agencies which did not have the large resources and personnel which could bring about changes. One of the advantages of my particular portfolio which merges employment and immigration and the status of women, is that we are able to provide the kinds of initiatives we find in Affirmative Action, unemployment insurance, new employment programs or new training programs, because it means that some minister does not have to come to me to cajole or plead. As the minister, I can respond to those initiatives and make the changes right away.

I want to make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, that I am quite prepared to meet with women's groups. In fact this afternoon I wrote a letter, which I would be prepared to read here, to the presidents of six major women's organizations. It reads as follows:

I would like to have your views on the best means of ensuring an effective advisory council on the status of women. Women's groups were the catalyst for the council and it is your views that I value as I review the recognized structural problems of the council.

To that end, I would appreciate meeting with you on February 16, 1981 at 5.00 p.m., so that together we can ensure that vital independent research on women's social, economic and legal position is available to Canadian women.

We will consult with them to see what kind of recommendations might be made to bring about those kinds of changes, and I will listen to them as I have listened to them in the past in making changes. Hon. members opposite have a legitimate point when they raise the question as to whether the council with its present structure is the best means of ensuring that information, ideas, commentaries and criticisms are being expressed. I share this concern and am prepared to act on it, as I have already done in this letter which I have sent today. However, let us not throw out the baby with the bath water, let us not run the council into the ground, and let us not so degrade it and downgrade it that there is nothing left to preserve or enhance.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say that I accept the partisan nature in which such matters are brought before the House by opposition members, but let me make one final comment, and that is that the kind of bluster, and sometimes blasphemy, we have heard, the kind of rumour and allegation that have been expressed, will not in any way deter me from what I consider to be my mandate, one in which I personally believe, which is to help this government provide greater equality for women in Canada. That is an objective for which I will continue to work, regardless of what members opposite have to say.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Adjournment Motion

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Collette: Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties concerning private members' business and the listing of various bills on the Order Paper, and it has been agreed that Bill C-303 in the name of the hon. member for Vaudreuil, will reappear tomorrow on the Order Paper printed as Bill C-256, and that Bill C-256, which is now on the order paper, will appear as Bill C-303, and tomorrow at four o'clock we will be debating the new bill, C-256.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): The House has heard the proposal of the parliamentary secretary with respect to Bill C-256 and Bill C-303 for debate tomorrow afternoon. Is there unanimous agreement to that proposal?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

● (1700)

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I believe you would have to add that the changes on the Order Paper mentioned by the parliamentary secretary will be made; I think that must be a House order.

Mr. Knowles: Whatever way it must be done, we agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Accordingly, it is agreed and so ordered.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[*English*]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): Order, please. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale)—Criminal Code—Amendments respecting euthanasia—Government position; the hon. member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine (Mr. McKenzie)—Garrison diversion—Request Prime Minister discuss project with President of United States; the hon. member for Winnipeg-St. James (Mr. Keeper)—Municipal Affairs—Request for reconsideration of cutback of Community Services Contribution Program.