

bidden to him because of their design and of excessive rents. Although 1971 has been a record year with regard to the construction of housing for low-income families, the need for low-cost housing remains acute, not only for those families, but also for the aged and the pensioners, and it is fortunate that the government is determined not to neglect this sector.

To destroy all barriers that make for isolation, such as, as we have already stated, the main theme of the Throne Speech. I feel that it is my duty to congratulate the government for the results already achieved in two fields of importance for the future of the country, that of bilingualism in the federal services and that of the promotion of women, especially within those same federal institutions.

• (2100)

[English]

In July 1969, the Official Languages Act was proclaimed. Less than three years later, its implementation has already brought concrete and irreversible results. The Language Commissioner's report of his first year of activity is both interesting and encouraging. And the Chairman of the Public Service Commission has equally done his share to reach the goal set by the government.

The courage, one might even say the pluck, with which the Chairman of the Public Service Commission set things straight a month ago on the question of bilingualism in the federal service deserves praise. Not only did he label as a lie charges that the merit principle is being disregarded in an attempt to populate the service with French-speaking employees, but he added that the French-speaking citizens have not had an even break in the past and that they occupy at present only 18.2 per cent of top positions in the Public Service, although they constitute about 28 per cent of the nation's population. It was good to hear him repeat that the government has set a program not only of gestures but of substance, that he will not settle for token bilingualism and that the commission has a duty to reflect the dual character of Canada in the government staff. Since the commission accepts the interpretation that the Public Service should be functionally bilingual, this means that bilingualism must become an element of merit for certain positions in certain areas of Canada.

But why should someone be afraid? Only about 15 per cent of all positions are affected by the language policies and most of them at all levels will continue to be filled by unilinguals. Since proportionately few positions have so far been declared bilingual, even in the higher categories, one has indeed to use misrepresentations of facts to draw the conclusion that any significant number of promotions have been blocked. In spite of some reports to the contrary, we like to believe that the majority of English-speaking Canadians understand the real intentions of the government and that with a better training of the younger generations the task of giving a truly bilingual character to the Public Service will gradually become easier. Another barrier will thus have been removed.

No one ignores the difficulties that the drive towards bilingualism is creating here, as well as in other parts of Canada. But the purpose the government has set for itself is to make this capital a focal point of our national life not only, as the Prime Minister said recently, in a political

[Hon. Miss Lapointe.]

sense but in every sense. Those few years during which the bilingualism and multiculturalism policy has been working through the governmental services, as well as through the activities of the National Arts Centre and other institutions, have already permeated the atmosphere of Ottawa. They have given this city a different image, a different quality, which is beginning to be felt and appreciated by many of the national capital's former detractors.

On the other hand, and in answer to many requests dealing with the decentralization of federal activities, the government is contemplating the relocation of some Ottawa-based operations, the first being the moving to Winnipeg of the coin-making division of the Royal Canadian Mint. That kind of decentralization has been suggested many times. Although this will inevitably put an end to a cherished tradition and disturb some established routine, we sincerely believe it is a sound decision. In a land so vast, as I said before, there exists a feeling of isolation. Not only has it to be eradicated, but it has to be replaced with something. Especially at both ends of the country, the sense of belonging has to be stimulated. Every region should be able to develop that sense better if it is invited to collaborate in a more concrete way in the country's administrative doings.

Since its accession to power, the government has proceeded to many nominations which were well received and which indicate clearly its intention to giving larger responsibilities and higher ranking positions to women who aspire to them. Actually, there are some 46,000 women in the Public Service. While they fill only one per cent of the jobs at the executive level, 80 per cent are in the lower levels of the administrative support category. One foresees that in the next decade, more and more university-trained women will be seeking positions and demanding equality of pay and promotion. Today they represent one-third of the university graduates, and by 1980 they will form 45 per cent of the total. Why should Canada deprive itself of such talent and knowledge?

The Public Service Commission is carrying out its decision to open more senior positions to women, and it will search even more outside the service for capable women to compete for positions in the senior levels of management. However, at the lower levels and in every field of activity, women are still asking for a better supervision and observance of the law against sex discrimination. Much remains to be done in job classification as well as in hiring, firing and promoting, to guarantee the equality of status to which they are entitled under the law. This is why they are expecting the rapid implementation of the recommendations of the Bird Report.

• (2110)

Among the institutions which should lead the way in the drive for equality of opportunities, some universities are guilty of practising wage differentials between the male and female professor. Statistics Canada figures of 1969-70 reveal that male professors receive 7.9 per cent more than their female counterparts, male assistant professors 4.7 per cent more, and male lecturers and instructors 8.7 per cent more. Such a situation is no longer tolerable.

The Speech from the Throne well indicates that the government, in order to achieve its goal of full participa-