

after suggestions from the minister's office, the advisory council executive invited the minister to a meeting. He suggested regional conferences might be better than a national conference, which would bring 600 women to Ottawa just at the time the House is debating the constitutional amendments.

The executive voted 5 to 1 to cancel the conference until a later date, as the date in February might embarrass the government. A few days ago, on January 20, the entire council convened and voted to cancel. The president of the council, Doris Anderson, resigned.

We have before us, Mr. Speaker, a motion calling for the removal of the minister from his responsibilities and the restoring of the integrity to the council. Before us is a case where intentions and actions do not match. There is before us evidence of the failure of the minister to represent the concerns of the women of Canada, from a variety of sources. It is ironic that such a motion should be before the House when, in the throne speech delivered to this House, there were more references to women than there had been at any time before. These references suggested an increased commitment to women's programming and the issues in Canada which affect women.

Here in the House yesterday, during question period, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) gave the minister credit for a number of achievements in an effort somehow to support him in his ministry. Women's groups have commented to me their views on several of the points the Prime Minister read to the House from a memorandum handed to him. I would like to reflect on several of those points.

First, we were encouraged by the Prime Minister to believe that the minister's leadership was significant and that he had introduced measures to ensure affirmative action in the public service. The minister had established affirmative action in three departments. He set up a system of accountability within these departments. He has trained affirmative action counselors. He is doing further statistical studies, too, for example, comparing the success rate of the public service with the private sector in terms of upward mobility of women employed.

But, here is the other side of the coin. He has stated that it will take about four years to implement this program. Yet, south of the border in the United States, evidence shows that their compulsory affirmative action program with the private sector took merely two years before structural systematic changes were evident with regard to upward mobility. Why does the minister say it will take four years when only three departments are involved, compared with the entire private sector in the United States?

The second of the Prime Minister's affirmations with respect to the minister is that he reduced the minimum insurable hours for unemployment insurance from 20 to 15 hours per week. This is a move which merely returned unemployment insurance to the status quo. Under the last Trudeau government, the former minister of employment and immigration raised the minimum insurable hours from 15 to 20 hours. Since that time there have been many outcries from women's

groups claiming that this is unfair to part-time workers, 75 per cent of whom are female.

The third of the testimonials recited yesterday stated that the minister sponsored a \$1 million ad campaign on women's employment. I have a copy of a December 22 letter to the minister from the National Action Committee objecting to these ads. The letter pointed out that the assumptions in the ads were, first, that women's work is trivial and, second, that women are a reserve army of labour and, third, that most employers are unaware of or have forgotten about women workers. The minister has not yet responded to this letter. We have also been told that the minister received strong complaints from the Canadian Labour Congress regarding these ads, through his affirmative action program in CEIC.

I would like to mention another item from the litany of the Prime Minister yesterday in praise of the minister responsible for the status of women. It is that the minister started a review of unemployment insurance to remove discrimination, among other things. The fact is that the minister did not start this review, but he continued the review which was in progress under his predecessor.

● (1600)

The minister did give the mandate to a task force, which will not be reporting until the spring of this year. So changes will not come into effect in the year 1981-82. The recommendations will be reviewed by Parliament. Women's groups suggested to me that, as a result, changes will not be ready for the fall deadline for inclusion in the 1982-83 fiscal year. Possibly the changes will be here in time for election year.

As I have consulted women's groups and talked with others about their disaffection with the minister responsible for the status of women, I have heard it rumoured that the minister has never yet visited his office at Status of Women Canada, which is symbolic of where his priorities lie. His predecessor met three or four women's groups per week in the Status of Women office.

Women's groups have expressed dissatisfaction with the minister's unwillingness to meet with them. When he does meet with such groups, one source says that he assumes the role of an instructor on women's issues, often correcting them.

A second small but telling comment is the apparent lack of support by the minister for striking government translators who were requesting improved maternity benefits. One women's group tells me that when the minister was asked to speak on their behalf to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) he refused. The minister was unable to produce from External Affairs a female diplomat or any woman knowledgeable in women's issues to attend in an advisory capacity the UN Mid-decade Conference for Women in Copenhagen this year. The minister did not attend the constitutional presentations of the advisory council, of the National Action Committee or other women's groups which have gone before the constitutional committee.

In recent weeks there has been much alarm over the introduction of a multimillion dollar program by the Minister of