

Government we are concerned about the questions raised in the report. The actions which have already been taken indicate the determination to take prompt remedial action in this field.

The debate on the report has been and is one of great significance. The contributions made by Senators Casgrain, Belisle, Fergusson, Quart, Benidickson, Inman, Connolly and Sullivan have reflected the concern of this chamber. I trust that I have been able to impart to you something of the Government's determination to act in respect of the commission's recommendations.

Speaking in this place early in February, our colleague Senator Fergusson concluded:

Women are not only demanding consideration because they have resented the discrimination from which they have suffered in the past, but they want equal rights to use their potentialities for the betterment of the country and of the world. If they are restricted to subordinate positions, as has happened so often in Canada in the past, they are unable to make the maximum contribution of which they are capable, and the country is poorer because it has not made the best use of all its human resources. Women want—as human beings—to enjoy equal rights and share equal responsibilities with men.

I might add that not only do women want to enjoy equal rights and share equal responsibilities with men, but it is the desire of the Government and, I am sure, of all honourable senators that they should do so. I am confident also that it is the desire of most people in this country.

Senator Fergusson could not have stated the Government's position with respect to the status of women in our society more succinctly than she has in the words which I have quoted. It is my hope that the country will see fit to move with the times and ensure that Canada makes full and equitable use of all the talent at its disposal, and that the graciousness and charm and warmth of women will not have to be sacrificed on the battlefields of a new extremist movement.

Honourable senators, the Bird Commission has reported, and the Government has established the necessary machinery to examine the practicalities of implementing the recommendations of the royal commission as they affect the federal Government. It is our responsibility to give this report the consideration it deserves. I have examined the record and I believe that the first legislative body in Canada to address itself to the consideration and study of this report is the Senate of Canada.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.