

REMARKS

BY

HONOURABLE BILL MACEACHERN

MINISTER OF SOCIAL SERVICES

AND

MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATUS OF WOMEN

FOR A
PUBLIC MEETING
SPONSORED BY
NOVA SCOTIA WOMENS' ACTION COMMITTEE

HALIFAX REGIONAL
VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 1977
8:00 P.M.

I APPRECIATE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE CONCERNS AND
VIEWS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN.

I THANK THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING IT, AND I
COMMEND THEM AS WELL FOR ORGANIZING THIS FORUM AND
MAKING IT AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AND TO ELECTED
OFFICIALS, AS A VEHICLE FOR EDUCATION, AND AN EXCHANGE OF
VIEWS. THE FORUM IS ESPECIALLY VALUABLE FOR US WHO
ARE HERE, AND FOR OUR AWARENESS AND
CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING.

TIME IS LIMITED AND I WOULD LIKE TO GET DOWN TO CASES
RIGHT AWAY TO SET THE SCENE, AND MENTION A FEW THINGS
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO THINK ABOUT, AND PERHAPS GIVE
US SOME ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON.

WE'VE HAD THE REPORT AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN FOR ALMOST A YEAR. AS A FIRST STEP, FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF THAT REPORT, WE SET UP, WITHIN GOVERNMENT, AN INTERIM OFFICE TO CONTINUE THE PUBLIC INFORMATION, FUNCTION, LIAISON AND INITIATIVES STARTED DURING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR.

COINCIDENTAL WITH THE RECEIPT OF THE TASK FORCE REPORT, THE PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVICE HAS HAD AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMME IN OPERATION FOR OVER A YEAR NOW.

THE RECENT COMPLETION OF A SECOND SURVEY ON WHERE AND HOW MANY WOMEN AND MINORITY GROUP PERSONS ARE EMPLOYED WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT RANKS -- WHEN COMPARED WITH THE FIRST STUDY IN 1975, SHOWS US THAT NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED. THE AVERAGE SALARY DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYEES IS STILL OVER \$6,000.

NEITHER HAS THERE BEEN ANY REAL INCIDENCE OF INCREASED UPWARD MOBILITY, IN TERMS OF MORE QUALIFIED WOMEN SEEKING AND ACHIEVING SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS.

HOWEVER, ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, THERE HAS BEEN A SOLID INDICATION OF MOVEMENT BY WOMEN INTO SOME OF THE MORE NON-TRADITIONAL JOB AREAS, FOR EXAMPLE:

AGRICULTURE

DRAFTING

FOREST TECHNOLOGY (THE GOVERNMENT RECENTLY APPOINTED ITS FIRST FEMALE FOREST RANGER)

ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION (WHERE THERE ARE NOW FOUR WOMEN, WITH THREE MORE GRADUATING THIS SPRING INTO FULL TIME POSITIONS, COMPARED WITH ONE FEMALE IN 1975)

COMPUTER SYSTEMS

AUDITING,

AND SIGNIFICANTLY MORE AND MORE WOMEN IN RESEARCH FIELDS.

IN TERMS OF ATTITUDES, THERE SEEMS TO BE A MORE REALISTIC CONSIDERATION OF WOMEN FOR JOBS ACROSS THE BOARD. THE NEW APPLICATION FORMS, TOO, MIRROR THIS NEW AWARENESS WITH THEIR INCLUSION OF RELEVANT HOMEMAKING AND VOLUNTARY SKILLS AS PART OF A PERSON'S OVERALL SUITABILITY FOR A JOB.

YOU KNOW, JUST THE OTHER DAY IN THE HOUSE, ONE OF MY OPPOSITION COLLEAGUES, IN FACT, THE NDP REPRESENTATIVE WHO SHARES PART OF MY NAME AND WHO IS WITH US THIS EVENING, CALLED FOR AN END TO RUG-RANKING FOR SECRETARIES EMPLOYED WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN UNDERWAY SINCE LAST AUGUST, AND THE INITIAL TARGET DATE IS JUNE, 1977. THUS FAR, OVER 650 SECRETARIES AND STENOGRAPHERS HAVE BEEN SURVEYED TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT TASKS THEY PERFORM ON THE JOB. THESE LISTS ARE NOW BEING COMPILED AND EVALUATED BY A SPECIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE WHICH MEETS WEEKLY.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THIS COMMITTEE IS A TRULY REPRESENTATIVE ONE, WITH PERSONNEL ON IT FROM BOTH UNION AND MANAGEMENT, THE CLASSIFICATION DIVISION OF THE COMMISSION, AND CLERICAL WORKERS THEMSELVES.

AT THEIR FIRST MEETING, IT WAS DECIDED THAT EVERY SECRETARY INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY WILL BE INTERVIEWED SO THAT DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN DOWN AND WHAT IS ACTUALLY MEANT CAN BE IRONED OUT FOR MAXIMUM BENEFIT TO THE EMPLOYEES.

ANOTHER POSITIVE STEP ALREADY UNDERWAY IS A REVIEW OF THE TRANSFER SYSTEM, WHEREBY EVERYONE WHO HAS APPLIED FOR A TRANSFER OVER THE PAST YEAR WILL ALSO BE PERSONALLY INTERVIEWED, TO DETERMINE THE POSITIONS FOR WHICH THESE EMPLOYEES ARE PRESENTLY QUALIFIED -- AND ANY PROSPECTIVE TRAINING REQUIRED FOR FUTURE CAREER PLANS.

WHILE THIS TRANSFER REVIEW APPLIES TO ALL POSITIONS WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE, ITS MAIN FOCUS, INITIALLY, WILL BE ON THOSE IN THE CLERICAL FIELD.

WHAT THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION WOULD APPRECIATE HEARING FROM GROUPS LIKE YOURS, IS ADVICE ON HOW TO ATTRACT QUALIFIED WOMEN SO THAT THEY WILL APPLY FOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS WITHIN GOVERNMENT.

NOW, WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE? WHAT OTHER INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STRUCTURES ARE NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE NECESSARY ATTITUDINAL AND PRACTICAL CHANGES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF EQUALITY?

IN NOVEMBER, 1976, WE SET UP AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE, WITHIN GOVERNMENT, ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, WHICH I CHAIR. TWENTY DEPARTMENTS, AND AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE OFFICE OF THE PREMIER, ARE REPRESENTED ON THIS COMMITTEE BY VERY CAPABLE PEOPLE, WHOSE POSITIONS RUN THE GAMUT OF EXPERIENCE -- FROM SECRETARY TO THE DIRECTOR LEVEL, FROM ECONOMIST TO SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR.

I MUST SAY, I AM VERY PLEASED WITH THE REASONABLE AND REALISTIC APPROACH THIS COMMITTEE HAS TAKEN TOWARDS RESOLVING INEQUITIES IN THE SYSTEM. EVERY DEPARTMENT HAS REVIEWED THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO ITS OWN JURISDICTION, RESULTING IN THE FIRST LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN.

THIS PACKAGE WILL BE PRESENTED AS AN OMNIBUS BILL DURING THIS SITTING OF THE HOUSE, AND WHILE THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE SOME SKEPTICISM, PERHAPS EVEN CYNICISM FROM THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS, IN TERMS OF ITS CONTENT AND HOW MUCH REAL CHANGE THIS BILL WILL EFFECTIVELY BRING ABOUT IN THE STATUS OF NOVA SCOTIA'S WOMEN, I WOULD POINT OUT THAT THIS IS ONLY PHASE ONE OF A THREE-PART PLAN WHICH THE COMMITTEE HAS AGREED UPON.

PIECE BY PIECE, THEY HAVE EXAMINED AND LAID OUT THEIR STRATEGY FOR CHANGE, REALIZING ONCE THEY DID THEIR HOMEWORK, THAT MANY RECOMMENDATIONS WILL TAKE MUCH NEGOTIATION -- NOT JUST BETWEEN THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF

GOVERNMENT -- BUT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THAT IS, PRIVATE INDUSTRY AND THE UNIONS.

AND, ALL THIS TAKES TIME -- FOR ONE CANNOT REALISTICALLY HOPE TO ERADICATE CENTURIES-OLD PRACTICES IN "ONE FELL SWOOP".

HOWEVER, I AM OPTIMISTIC -- AS ARE MY CABINET COLLEAGUES.

RECENT EVENTS, SUCH AS THE INCLUSION OF TWO ITEMS IN THE THRONE SPEECH PERTAINING TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN, AND THE PREMIER'S PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IN SYDNEY IN MID-FEBRUARY, OF OUR INTENTION TO BUDGET FOR, AND SET UP, A PROVINCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL FOR 1977-78, HAVE LED ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT AND THAT OUR COMBINED APPROACH (AN INTERNAL COMMITTEE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, AND AN ADVISORY COUNCIL WITHIN THE PRIVATE SECTOR) IS ALSO RIGHT.

THE PROVINCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL, TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS, MUST HAVE A CLEAR AND FORCEFUL MANDATE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE:

1. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF REPORTING SIMULTANEOUSLY , TO THE PUBLIC, THROUGH THE MEDIA, WHENEVER IT MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT.
2. DEVISING A PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAM ON THE ISSUES.
3. ENSURING CONTINUOUS REGIONAL INPUT.
4. MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN.
5. FOLLOWING UP ON THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF STATUS OF WOMEN -- BY ENSURING INCREASED REPRESENTATION BY QUALIFIED WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY.

(A PRELIMINARY STEP IN THIS DIRECTION HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN; A SPECIFIC INVENTORY IS NOW BEING COMPILED TO PROVIDE THE GROUNDWORK NECESSARY FOR AN AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN TO GET MORE QUALIFIED WOMEN ON PROVINCIAL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.)

WE ARE NOW IN THE PROCESS OF WORKING OUT THE BASIS ON WHICH THE ADVISORY COUNCIL WILL BE APPOINTED, AND THE TERMS OF REFERENCE UNDER WHICH IT WILL OPERATE.

IN THIS REGARD, WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY COMMENTS AND ADVICE YOU MAY HAVE, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS OF QUALIFIED CONADIDATED FOR APPOINTMENT TO THIS ADVISORY BODY.

WE PROPOSE TO ENSURE REGIONAL INPUT ON THIS COUNCIL, ON A CONTINUING BASIS, AND I HOPE TO BE IN A POSITION SHORTLY TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC DETAILS ON THIS POINT, AND OTHERS RELATING TO THE COUNCIL.

THAT IS WHERE WE ARE NOW.

THERE ARE THREE AREAS IN WHICH THERE MAY BE PROBLEMS, WHERE THEY MAY BE A DIFFERENCE IN VIEWS BETWEEN THOSE OF US WHO ARE AT THE HELM OF GOVERNMENT, AND THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE IN THE VANGUARD OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE EQUALITY OF STATUS FOR THE SEXES.

1. MINISTRY -- HERE, I BELIEVE, THE DIFFERENCE IN VIEW IS FAIRLY CLEAR CUT AND BASIC. WE HAVE EXAMINED THIS RECOMMENDATION OF THE TASK FORCE EXTENSIVELY, AND IT HAS BEEN DISCARDED.

IT IS OUR VIEW THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE MINISTRY -- INVOLVING AS IT INEVITABLY WOULD, A LARGE BUREAUCRACY -- WOULD NOT BEST SERVE THE OBJECTIVES WE ARE STRIVING TO ATTAIN.

THE CONCERNS, AND THE REQUIRED CHANGES, CUT ACROSS DEPARTMENTAL LINES, AND WE BELIEVE THAT RATHER THAN SET UP A NEW BUREAUCRACY, THERE SHOULD A COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF ALL DEPARTMENTS, AND ALL MINISTERS, TO WORK INDIVIDUALLY AND COOPERATIVELY, TOWARDS THE DESIRED OBJECTIVE.

IN OUR VIEW, THE JOB THAT HAS BEEN ENVISAGED FOR THE SEPARATE MINISTRY CAN BE CARRIED OUT JUST AS EFFECTIVELY AND EXTENSIVELY BY THE MACHINERY WE HAVE SET UP, AND ARE IN THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP.

THE TEST, OF COURSE, WILL BE IN THE PROGRESS WE MAKE AND THE RESULTS WE ARE ABLE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE APPROACH WE HAVE DECIDED UPON.

THIS, I BELIEVE, SHOULD BE THE TOUCHSTONE. OUR JOB NOW IS TO SHOW YOU THAT OUR APPROACH WILL WORK AND WILL ACHIEVE TANGIBLE AND MEASURABLE RESULTS.

THE SECOND AREA OF CONTENTION RELATES TO THE CONCEPT OF EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE.

I DON'T BELIEVE WE HAVE ANY FUNDAMENTAL PHILOSOPHICAL DIFFERENCES ON THIS POINT.

I ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE, AND I BELIEVE MY COLLEAGUES IN GOVERNMENT DO; THE FACT THAT A PARTICULAR JOB IS BEING PERFORMED BY A MAN OR A WOMAN SHOULD HAVE NO BEARING ON THE REMUNERATION FOR THAT WORK, OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT.

THE QUESTION IS HOW DO WE BEST ENSURE, LEGISLATIVELY,
THAT THE PRINCIPLE BECOMES THE PRACTICE.

AS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS CONCEPT, OUR CONCERN IS
THAT WE, THAT IS, GOVERNMENT, DON'T WANT TO INTERFERE
UNDULY IN THE MARKET-PLACE. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS
CONCEPT CAN BE, OR SHOULD BE, APPLIED ACROSS THE BOARD.
THE INDISCRIMINATE APPLICATION WOULD DESTROY THE
INITIATIVES AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING EARNED BY
THE UNIONS.

INSTEAD, WE WOULD FAVOR LIMITED APPLICATION, STARTING
WITH INSTITUTIONS, THE LARGEST OF WHICH IS GOVERNMENT
ITSELF.

STARTING WITH OUR OWN SHOP FIRST, THE TYPES OF THINGS
WE SHOULD BE LOOKING AT WOULD INCLUDE:

- - ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT
DISCRIMINATION IN PAY AND FRINGE BENEFITS
- - ASSESSMENT OF POSITION CLARIFICATIONS AND
PAY LEVELS ON THE BASIS OF FUNCTION, NOT
SEX-TYPING.

- - RE-EVALUATION OF THE ASSUMPTION THAT WOMEN ARE SECONDARY WAGE EARNERS.

THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A SOMEWHAT BROADER APPLICATION IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES. AT ANY RATE, WE ARE COMMITTED TO EXAMINING THE PROBLEM THOROUGHLY, POSSIBLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH MEMBERS OF THE NOVA SCOTIA JOINT LABOUR-MANAGEMENT STUDY COMMITTEE. - watching moves of Fed. gov. in this respect -

IN MY VIEW, THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL VALUE, WHICH CONSIDERS THE CRITERIA OF SKILL, EFFORT, RESPONSIBILITY AND WORKING CONDITIONS, SHOULD PROVIDE THE BACKDROP AGAINST WHICH EQUAL PAY LEGISLATION IS ENFORCED.

AT PRESENT, IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR PROVINCIAL ASSISTANCE, A DESERTED WIFE MUST BE DESERTED FOR A PERIOD OF AT LEAST SIX MONTHS. THE ASSUMPTION IS THAT DURING THAT SIX MONTHS, IF SHE IS IN NEED, SHE MAY APPLY TO THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT. MANY DO.

A DESERTED MOTHER, TO QUALIFY FOR PROVINCIAL ASSISTANCE, MUST SEEK SUPPORT FROM THE HUSBAND THROUGH THE FAMILY COURT. THIS IS A REGULATION AND THERE IS A PROVISION IN THE REGULATIONS THAT THE DIRECTOR MAY WAIVE THE REQUIREMENTS. WE KEEP SPECIFIC STATISTICS ON THESE MATTERS, BUT I AM INFORMED THAT, OVER A PERIOD OF A YEAR, THE REQUIREMENT IS WAIVED IN APPROXIMATELY 100 CASES. YOU SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT, OVER A PERIOD OF A YEAR, THE DIRECTOR MAY BE CALLED UPON TO CONSIDER AS MANY AS 1,000 CASES, SO THAT THE PERCENTAGE **ON** WHICH HE WAIVES THE REQUIREMENT IS ABOUT 10%.

IF AN ORDER HAS BEEN MADE BY THE COURT, THE PROVINCIAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PAYMENT IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE AMOUNT ORDERED BY THE COURT IS BEING RECEIVED BY THE MOTHER. THAT ASSUMPTION CONTINUES FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS FOLLOWING THE DATE OF THE COURT ORDER. THEN, THE SITUATION IS CHECKED WITH THE COURT OR THE RECIPIENT, TO DETERMINE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN RESPECT TO THE ORDER.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION, I WOULD POINT OUT THAT IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR, PROVINCIAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE WAS PAID TO 1,920 DESERTED WIVES, WITH AN AVERAGE PAYMENT OF \$293.25. THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF PROVINCIAL ASSISTANCE PAID TO DESERTED WIVES IN FEBRUARY WAS \$563,046.00, WHICH REPRESENTED APPROXIMATELY 12% OF THE TOTAL ^{P.S.A.} PAYROLL.

I SHOULD MENTION A PILOT PROJECT WE HAVE UNDERWAY IN CAPE BRETON.

THE PROJECT INVOLVES APPROXIMATELY SIXTY CASES. THE DESERTED WIFE IN THESE CASES ENTERS INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT WHEREBY THE DEPARTMENT PAYS THE ASSISTANCE WITHOUT REGARD TO THE MAINTENANCE ORDER AND SUCH AMOUNTS AS ARE RECEIVED ON THE MAINTENANCE ORDER ARE PAID DIRECTLY TO THE DEPARTMENT, THROUGH THE FAMILY COURT.

IN THESE SIXTY CASES, THE MOTHER LAYS THE INITIAL INFORMATION, THE DEPARTMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ENFORCING THE ORDER AND THE MOTHER RECEIVES ASSISTANCE ON A REGULAR BASIS WHETHER OR NOT THE HUSBAND PAYS ON THE ORDER.

THIS IS AN EXPERIMENT AND WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO MEASURE THE RESULTS, SOCIALLY AND FINANCIALLY. THAT MEASUREMENT HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETED AS YET IN ANY PRECISE MANNER THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO ANYONE. WE DO NOT KNOW, FOR EXAMPLE, WHETHER THE EXTENSION OF THE PROGRAM THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE WOULD INCREASE OUR COSTS. WE THINK IT WOULD.

THE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY OF SUCH A MOVE IS, OF COURSE, BEYOND QUESTION, AND THE ONLY REAL ANSWER I CAN GIVE TO THE QUESTION AS TO WHY WE DON'T EXTEND THE CAPE BRETON PROJECT, AND BOARDEN ITS APPLICATION, IS THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET THE NECESSARY FUNDING.

THE ISSUES WE THINK OF USUALLY AS WOMEN'S ISSUES -- EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, REFORM OF FAMILY LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION, PROPERTY LAWS -- ARE REALLY SOCIETY'S ISSUES; THEY MAY, IN SOME CASES, HAVE A PARTICULAR RELEVANCY TO THE STATUS OF WOMEN, BUT ALL CUT ACROSS LINES OF SEX AND GENDER.