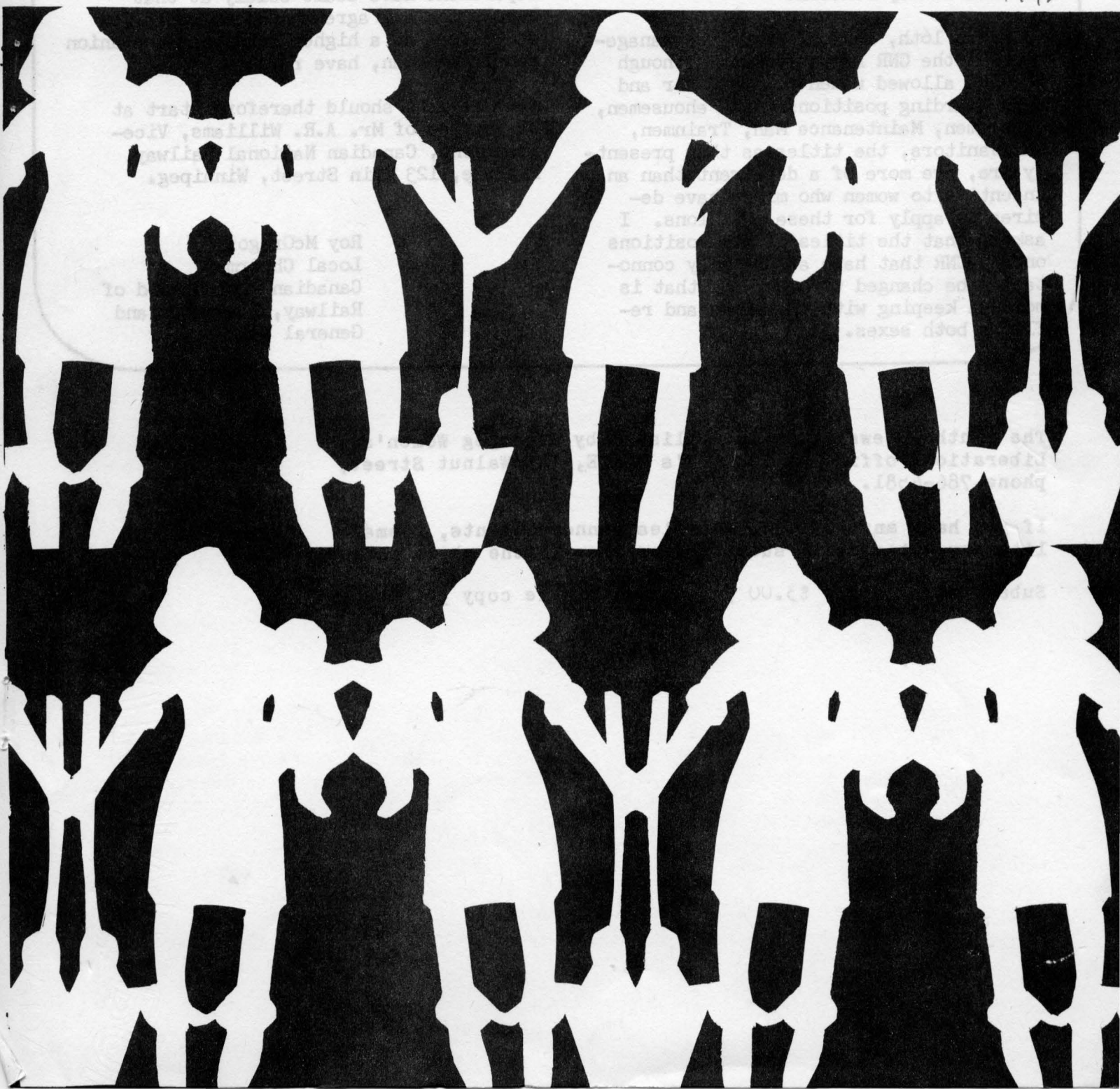


Winnipeg Women's Liberation Newsletter / June

1975



# LETTERS

Letters to the Newsletter Collective must not exceed 300 words. Opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily reflect the policies of this newsletter.

Women's Liberation  
143 Walnut Street,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

To Whom It May Concern:

On March 16th, 1975, I wrote the management of the CNR Express, that although the CNR allowed women to apply for and were awarding positions of Warehousemen, Garagemen, Maintenance Man, Trainmen, and Janitors, the titles as they presently are, are more of a deterrent than an incentive to women who might have desires to apply for these positions. I asked, that the titles of all positions on the CNR that have a male only connotation be changed to something that is more in keeping with the times and reflects both sexes.

The company refused my request. Because of this refusal, I ask your organization to get involved. I, as an unpaid union worker for the employees of the Express Department have dealt solely at that level, for our agreement does not allow me to deal at a higher level and the union people who can, have refused.

Your efforts should therefore start at the office of Mr. A.R. Williams, Vice-President, Canadian National Railway, Prairie, 123 Main Street, Winnipeg.

Roy McGregor,  
Local Chairman  
Canadian Brotherhood of  
Railway, Transport and  
General Workers.

The Monthly Newsletter is published by Winnipeg Women's Liberation, office at A WOMAN'S PLACE, 143 Walnut Street, phone 786-4581.

If you have any letters, articles, announcements, poems, literary articles to submit, send them to the above address.

Subscription price \$3.00 per annum; single copy price 25¢

# Abortion and Morg

## JUNE

1	2 Newsletter Mailout	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Soccerball at Assiniboine Park 7pm. East Gate WPAQ. Q Lib/ MAOSW	10	11 8pm. Shirley Williams. on "greenpaper" on immigration	12	13	14
15	16 2-5 7:30-10 Public Hearings on Immigration Northstar Inn	17 9-12 cont'd.	18 New Women get-together	19	20	21
22	23 8pm. Business Meeting	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Newsletter Mailout	<u>NB</u> All meetings are open, & all women are welcome.				

You would not have received this newsletter without the hard work of:

Pam Atnikov, Sara Berger, Bev Coy,  
Pat Cavanaugh, Ellen Kruger,  
Phyllis Olin, Julie Paquette,  
Sharon Corne, Brigette Sutherland,  
Kathy Taylor, Linda Taylor, Marion  
Yeo.

The Print Shop and A Woman's Place

# Abortion and Morg

"We believe that motherhood should be voluntary. We believe that Canadian women should have freedom of choice. Those who are not prepared to bear a child, despite the alternatives to abortion that society offers, should be able to have their pregnancies terminated safely and without delay. We believe that medical facilities where abortions can be performed in maximum safety should be available to all Canadian women, even if they are poor, even if they are young. A law which provides access to abortion only to a few and only in some locations, is unjust. We ask that Dr. Henry Morgentaler be released, and that other professionally-qualified doctors and nurses who have been performing abortions in order to help women, no longer be harassed. We ask that support be given for planned parenthood programmes. We demand that abortion be removed from the Criminal Code."

## BACKGROUND

In 1967, Dr. Morgentaler publicly confronted Canada's anti-abortion law for the first time when he presented a brief to the federal government urging that "abortion on request be available in the first three months of pregnancy". Since then, growing numbers of women have demanded repeal of the present restrictive abortion law. Dr. Morgentaler has emerged in the forefront of this repeal movement. His increasingly vocal campaign to win women the right to safe, legal abortion has made him a well-known figure in Canada. Faced with the growing publicity he was attracting for his outspoken views, the Quebec government decided to act.

On June 1, 1970, Dr. Morgentaler was arrested on two charges of conspiring to perform and of performing abortions. His case has been lengthy, with several appeals to the Supreme Court. Faced with these delays in convicting Morgentaler, the police laid new charges early this year. He was charged with performing an abortion on a woman who was forced by police to appear in court to testify against him. She stated she had suffered no pain during her abortion, and that she had no regrets about it. She decla-

red that every woman should have the right to choose safe, legal abortion. She could not identify the doctor who performed the abortion even though Dr. Morgentaler was present at the time. On the basis of this 'evidence' he is being brought to trial again this fall.

On March 16, 1973 at the second cross-country conference of the Canadian Women's Coalition to Repeal the Abortion Laws, Dr. Morgentaler publicly announced the existence of his abortion clinic in Montreal. He affirmed that over the course of five years he had performed some 5,000 abortions without a single death or serious after-effect.

In a letter dated March 27, 1973, to Quebec Social Affairs Minister Claude Castonguay, Dr. Morgentaler demanded that the provincial government authorize his clinic to perform legal abortions. The clinic would grant an abortion to any woman who wanted one.

On its program W-5, CTV presented a film in which Dr. Morgentaler performed an abortion at his clinic. As part of the escalating campaign to silence this outspoken opponent of Canada's oppressive abortion laws, the film was seized by police. Justice Minister Jerome Choquette has promised new charges will be laid on the basis of this latest 'evidence'.

# entaler

"I AM MORE FIRMLY CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT THE LAW UNDER WHICH I AM NOW BEING TRIED IS UNJUST, CRUEL AND DANGEROUS TO WOMEN."

Dr. Henry Morgentaler

As a result of the publicity after I had become the first president of the Humanist Association of Canada, many women started coming to my office in Montreal. They would say to me: "Doctor, I have heard your views. I am in trouble, can you help me?"

I realized that I could do nothing for these women and that there was no help available except for those who could travel to Japan or to England. At that time there were no competent reputable doctors in Montreal or Canada to provide assistance to these women. I used to excuse myself saying that I could not aid them because it was against the law; that, if I did help, I could go to jail for the rest of my life; that I had to think of my wife and children: and so on. I watched these women drift off in despair, many of them to go to back-alley butchers, when they would risk death and injury at the hands of incompetent people. Many of them aborted themselves, or, in some cases, went on to give birth to unwanted babies.

As the abortion campaign intensified, the stream, and finally the flood, of women seeking abortions made me realize the magnitude of the problem. I became painfully aware that there were thousands of women in Canada denied basic human rights. They were forced to risk their very lives when seeking an abortion because a law, based on ignorance and religious prejudice, would not allow them to obtain the help of safe medical abortions and permit doctors to offer this help.

It became clear to me that unjust laws create victims and that, in this case, the potential victims were all women of child-bearing age subject to unwanted pregnancies, an accident of normal sexual activity; not the result of any crime.

I realized that it was not enough to fight for repeal of these barbarous laws; it was also imperative to help the victims of these laws who could not wait months or years until the law could be changed. Their plight was real; they needed help NOW.

I had a choice: I could continue to hide behind a screen of legality and refuse help while denouncing these laws as cruel, unjust and dangerous to women, or else I could defy these laws and offer help to women in order to protect them. After a great deal of soul-searching I mustered enough courage to choose what I believe to be the only morally defensible course: to offer a helping hand in spite of the law.

I am glad I had enough strength to make this decision and to bear the stress resulting from it.

Two conditions had to be met in order to make such a decision valid and consistent with my philosophy and my conscience: 1) the operation had to be done competently, under the best, most modern, and safest medical conditions; 2) the fees had to be reasonable and adjustable downward even to zero, so that no person would be denied this service because of inability to pay. Both of these conditions were fulfilled.

And now I wish to share with you tonight a secret widely known in Montreal, Quebec and by many people across Canada. I wish to make public that I have been doing abortions in my clinic in Montreal for the past few years and I am proud of having helped a few thousand women to obtain safe medical operations. I am convinced that, by doing so, I have saved many from death and many others from injury, disease and tremendous anguish. I am more firmly convinced than ever that the law under which I am now being tried is unjust, cruel and dangerous to women, and unnecessarily restrictive.

You are well aware that I am now before the courts of the country on three charges under the Criminal Code: Conspiracy

to perform an abortion (mark well 'conspiracy'. Apparently it is a crime still for a woman to ask a doctor to perform a safe abortion and, if he agrees, the two of them are apparently engaged in a criminal conspiracy); as well as two other charges of having performed illegal abortion. For obvious reasons I cannot go into details of the cases. But I can tell you that I intend to fight these cases as a major challenge to the very laws under which I am being tried. I do not believe that doing medically safe abortions is a criminal act. On the contrary, I feel very strongly that denying women safe abortions and exposing them to death and injury is criminal.

I am firmly convinced that all who oppose the liberalization of the Canadian abortion laws and those who have the power to act to change these laws, yet do not do so, have a moral, perhaps more than a moral, responsibility for the deaths and injuries of women who have died and continue to die or be injured as a result of self-inflicted or botched incompetent abortions, because these women were denied by the law access to safe medical procedures.

It would take too long to tell the story of all details of my out-patient abortion clinic. I just want to stress a few highlights because I believe that my clinic can serve as a prototype for similar ones across the country. For this to come about all that is needed is to remove abortion from the Criminal Code and have it done by doctors with appropriate medical facilities.

Advantages of out-patient clinics such as mine are: -

- It permits use of the Vacuum Suction Technique which is the safest; it has the lowest rate of complications.
- There is no necessity for hospitalization; the average stay is one hour.
- There is very little blood loss and no damage to tissues; recovery is immediate.
- No vitally needed hospital beds are taken up.
- There is an overall reduction in costs — compared to hospital abortions — to the taxpayer.

But I want to stress the fact that the above-described method is good only up to twelve weeks of pregnancy. After that time the mortality and morbidity of abortion goes up 4 times, i.e. it becomes 4 times more dangerous to have an abortion after 12 weeks. One of the most pernicious effects of the current Canadian law on abortion is that it forces women to wait many weeks before their legal abortion can be allowed. Because of this enforced waiting, the abortion law, as it now stands, endangers women by exposing them to unnecessary risks.

Here are some preliminary statistics from a paper which I am busy preparing; it describes my technique and experience:

- Out of a total of nearly 5000 cases not a single woman has died.
- Only 27 were hospitalized — about one half of one per cent.
- There were 6 cases of hemorrhage, 17 of fever over 102 degrees, 13 of incomplete abortion with retained tissue and 2 uterine perforations.
- Not one of my patients has required a hysterectomy; all of the listed complications were successfully treated.

I claim that this is a very good record; it compares very well with the best clinics in the United States and is much better than many hospitals around the world. So, on the strength of these statistics and my experience I claim that any patient coming to my clinic for an abortion is as safe, if not safer, than when using any other medical facility. Indeed, one of the greatest satisfactions and joys of my work is to watch women walk out of the clinic smiling, content, healthy, and enormously relieved. When comparing this state of healthy aftermath with the sordid and dangerous circumstances of incompetent abortions, the contrast is almost staggering.

I believe that it is important for the Canadian people to know that clinics such as mine do exist, that they are safe and of benefit to women seeking abortions, and that they would be the ideal solution to the abortion issue in this country — providing specialized facilities and ease of access to all those in need of them and at low cost under Medicare.

# ACTION !

On May 7, 1975, a group of women met at A Woman's Place to take action on the Morgentaler issue. Several good suggestions were made:

- a) people go from door to door collecting signatures on a petition pro the release of Morgentaler and the removal of all references to abortion in the Criminal Code, which would then be sent to the respective MP of each district;
- b) deluge newspapers with letters re the above;
- c) send a letter of support to Dr. Morgentaler signed by many people and groups and forward a copy of this to the government;
- d) hold a teach-in on abortion and the present law;
- e) prepare a fact sheet on abortion for public distribution;
- f) post leaflets on the above in laundromats, Clinic, Mt. Carmel, and various other places where people would see it; and
- g) send a petition, demanding the release of Dr. Morgentaler and the removal of all references to abortion from the Criminal Code, to various women's groups, the Y, the Psychiatric Assoc., unions, etc., soliciting their endorsement of the petition which would later be sent to the government.

The last suggestion was the one decided

upon as a first immediate step, and the wording of the petition and plea for support drafted up. The wording reads as follows:

"We demand that all reference to abortion be removed from the Criminal Code so that Canadian women will have access to safe, legal abortions by choice."

"We further demand that Cabinet immediately order the release from prison of Dr. Henry Morgentaler, declare him not guilty, and drop all charges".

The mailing of this was held on Wednesday, May 14, 1975. We hope to form a coalition among the various groups who endorse the petition with a view to holding a press conference later on.

All of the suggestions were good ones. Writing letters to the newspapers, MP's and Dr. Morgentaler are also actions that we as individuals can and should do. Remember: the anti-abortionists are organized and much better than we are. This high degree of organization gives them strength although their actual support in Canada hovers at 31% of the population. At the end of May, they will be presenting an anti-abortion petition, signed by 1,000,000 people, to PM Trudeau, who, as we all know, is himself anti-abortion and receptive to the "pro-lifers". We, as a group and as individuals, must step up our efforts to prevent our abortion law from becoming even more repressive.

THE FOLLOWING LETTER WAS SENT TO  
PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU, HIS CABINET,  
AND THE WINNIPEG FREE PRESS AND  
WINNIPEG TRIBUNE (it was not published  
in either paper).

Dear Sir:

Winnipeg Women's Liberation is appalled at the recent verdict of the Supreme Court in the Morgentaler case. Dr. Morgentaler is a dedicated man who has given of his expertise, time and energy to

help the people of Canada change an unjust and outdated law. Even John Diefenbaker has called for the release of Dr. Morgentaler, since at no time has a court of appeal reversed a jury's verdict of not guilty, and imposed its own verdict. The Gallup Poll in October, 1974 found that 2 out of 3 Canadians believe that the abortion laws should be repealed. You have, in the past, stated that there was no clear consensus of opinion in Canada on the issue. This is nonsense. Since when are law changes made in this country on the basis of consensus?

I realize that, in spite of the numbers of women helped in my clinic and by similar facilities, there are still in this country thousands more who are deprived of this type of help because of the restrictions of the law. I feel it is shameful that women from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, P.E.I., New Brunswick, the whole of Quebec, and some parts of Ontario still have to travel to clinics such as mine in Montreal. They have to suffer not only the normal anxieties which accompany abortion but, on top of that, they must take long trips by car, train, bus, or plane of distances up to 1500 miles. I firmly believe that such medical facilities should be available locally, in all major cities and all towns across the country.

In its recent historic decision on abortion the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled against restrictions similar to those which are part and parcel of our Canadian laws, namely the stipulation that abortions must be done only in accredited hospitals and only after approval by a three-man Board in such hospitals. The Supreme Court of the U.S. considered such restrictions unnecessary, liable to increase the distress of women and limit their access to safe abortions. It has been proven now beyond any reasonable doubt that abortions, up to two weeks of pregnancy, can safely be done in out-patient facilities. By adding the experience of my clinic, I wish to support this contention.

The requirement of a three-man Board, and this in a restricted number of hospitals, severely limits access to legal abortions. It makes them difficult to obtain for the majority of Canadian women desiring them. This provision is contrary to the Canadian Bill of Rights; it violates the fundamental right of privacy recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court. It is high time the Canadian Government followed the example given by the U.S. Supreme Court.

I have reason to believe that I was probably the first doctor in Canada to pioneer the use of the Vacuum Suction Technique. The Vacuum Suction Method, in conjunction with local anesthesia, is a relatively recent technique, not yet widely known to many doctors. Many hospitals in Canada even now are not aware of

the best equipment necessary; nor do they have trained personnel to deal with conscious, non-anesthetized patients and to use this technique.

Most Canadian hospitals still use general anesthesia for the majority of abortion cases, thus increasing the danger, causing greater blood loss, longer hospital stay, and increased costs.

I hope, therefore, that the time will soon come when birth-control clinics, including out-patient abortion facilities, will be established across Canada, when women in need of abortions will be allowed to have them without legal hindrance and under the best and most modern medical conditions. I hope that my own medical experience, as well as my campaign for safe abortions for women, will contribute to this end.

In the meantime, I pledge to continue the fight for this fundamental human right. Looking back on the last few difficult years I feel a great sense of accomplishment. I feel that this providing of safe abortions for women in an atmosphere of compassion and understanding has been the most important and gratifying thing I have ever done in my life.



If laws are to be just, then all Canadians must have access to equal treatment under the law. If indeed, abortion is a woman's right when the pregnancy "would or would be likely to endanger her life or health", then all women should have access to medical care should such conditions prevail. This law is ridden with faults:

1. Only 260 out of 1300 accredited hospitals in Canada have set up abortion review committees.

2. Many women in rural or isolated areas do not have access to "accredited hospitals" and are therefore denied their rights to good care.

3. Abortions can be more efficiently and economically performed in properly equipped clinics, rather than accredited hospitals.

4. The lack of available information on doctors performing abortions, and the hospital committee system are causing unnecessary delays for women, increasing the risks to their health, and often necessitating more arduous methods of abortion to be used.

5. Committees are interpreting the law in different ways; in many areas much too strictly because of intimidation and pressure by Otto Lang, denying equal access to many women.

6. The decision to grant an abortion too often rests on whether there are hospital beds and/or a doctor whose quota of abortions has not been reached.

7. The woman is not represented before the committee, nor has she the right of appeal.

Many prominent groups and concerned individuals have demanded repeal of the law for years. These groups include: the Canadian Medical Assoc., the Canadian Psychiatric Assoc., the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the Canadian Labour Congress, and even the Liberal Party of Canada.

Statistics Canada reports 43,201 legal abortions in 1973. Estimates put the actual number of abortions in Canada at

100,000. It is obvious that this law is not preventing most illegal abortions and is preventing the needs of Canadian women from being met.

New York City, since repeal of the abortion laws, has seen a 44% decline in the number of spontaneous and incomplete abortions admitted to hospitals (i.e. women admitted to hospitals after illegal abortions and their complications).

You are quoted in Time magazine saying, it would be "premature to reopen the law to further amendment, pending further experience with the provisions of the current law". This is obviously a pass. What "experience" is your government studying—other than the "increasing" abortion rate? Your own political party appointed a group to follow up the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women's report on abortion, and concluded that abortion should be removed from the Criminal Code.

Canadian people no longer want to hear the moral debates about the issue. We have a serious social problem in our society which must be solved. Canadian women are denied the right to choose abortion as an alternative on the one hand, and on the other, are also denied adequate economic advantages and support for the good rearing of their children.

Women's Liberation has always recognized the mother's role in our society as an all-important one, and has continually been demanding that our society support the family by providing strong equal pay and equal opportunity legislation. We have also struggled for quality child care centres for the best development of children and to allow women the right to work to better support their families, if that is their choice. We are not advocating abortion as a method of birth control. We are stating that every woman must have the right to choose whether or not she will bear a child. Access to abortion is necessary to ensure that right.

We demand that a bill be introduced at the next session of parliament to repeal the abortion law and free Dr. Morgentaler. We are sick and tired of irresponsible politicians skirting the issue for fear of

defeat in the next election. This fear certainly shows the importance of the issue to the Canadian people.

Your government has pledged to make some important legislative changes during International Women's Year. For true equality and liberation, woman must first have control over her own body. Let's make repeal of the abortion law the first and foremost change for a more just life for Canadian Women.

Sincerely,

Ellen R. Kruger  
for Winnipeg Women's  
Liberation.

"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"

by Karen and Brigitte

The plot of this movie is so ordinary that it borders on a cliché; it is the impact of Ellen Burstyn's acting that involves you with Alice. Widowed at 35, her attempts at redefining herself as an independent person bring out her gutsy humour and strength. The quick-pace dialogue and skillful camerawork show her life so convincingly that it is impossible not to identify with her struggles. Alice is confronted with alternatives which are realistically hard for her to deal with, but she survives. At the end, her choices are her own.

Altogether an exhausting and satisfying experience.

## MOVIE REVIEWS: TWO OPINIONS

"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"

by Joanne Richardson

Martin Scorsese's film Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore may be broken up into four parts: Monterey, Secorro, Phoenix and Tucson. I would like to make it clear at the outset that this is a political rather than an artistic review. I will make little attempt to comment on acting or film technique but will restrict myself to discussing the actual content or (as is more often the case) non-content of the film.

Monterey: The strains of You'll Never Know gush from the screen — the scene is stereotypically rustic (an old cabin, an old bridge set in the midst of gently rolling hills) and everything is suffused in a warm orange glow. The most cloying sentimental romanticisms ooze over the audience as the eight year old Alice enters the scene wearing a "cute" white dress and clutching a doll. At this point, just as one is convinced that one has been tricked into viewing a grandiose advertisement for Harlequin Romance, Alice speaks. Her speech is confident, strong and defiant as she voices her

determination to become a singer, and one feels totally for the outraged spirit which is imprisoned in the false, sugar-sweet world of traditional heterosexual girlhood. Thus it is with hopeful anticipation that we wait to see what will become of the young Alice as the film proceeds to skip twenty-seven years.

Secorro: In her early thirties Alice is trapped in a painfully stereotypical housewife-mother role. Her husband is indifferent to the point of overlooking her existence and her son is too involved in the juvenile delights of being irresponsible and perfecting practical jokes to bother viewing either of his parents as people. The position of Alice at thirty-five is very similar to the position of Alice at eight — she is still witty and outspoken and she is still bound up in a societal role which severely limits her potential. The chains of traditional childhood have been traded in for the chains of traditional wife and motherhood. However, whereas one is inclined to view the eight year old Alice with hope and enthusiasm one tends to

view the thirty-five year old Alice with impatience bordering on annoyance. Alice is portrayed as being more than intelligent enough to see through the bullshit of being trapped and remaining in a marriage that is oppressive and unfulfilling — yet she makes no attempt to assert herself. In fact, so far from asserting herself she channels her energy into pathetic efforts to gain approval from her husband, i.e. cooking his favorite food, forcing an interest in the TV programs he watches etc. only to be either rebuffed or ignored. Events carry on in this fashion until her husband has the decency to get himself killed in a trucking accident.

With her husband dead Alice decides to return to Monterey and embark upon her originally desired and much delayed career as a singer. She aptly voices her feeling for her past life as they cross the New Mexican border and she cautions her son: "Don't look back or you'll turn into a pillar of shit". Now, one thinks, Alice will finally begin to make some progress.

Phoenix: In Phoenix, Alice manages to get a job as a singer in one of the local lounges. It is here that she manages to get herself involved with a man whose come-on is so juvenile and assinine that one cannot help but be nauseous with disgust. Although Alice begins by telling him that she does not wish to have anything to do with him she soon relents (of course everyone knows that when a woman says no she means yes) and event leads to event until she actually ends up sleeping with this cretin. The moral presumably being that any man is better than none. After one or two weeks of this perfectly demeaning affair Alice is visited by (guess who) the man's wife, Mrs. Eberhart. Mrs. Eberhart is a totally broken and cowed woman who apologizes to Alice for showing up in the first place and stammers out a pathetic story about her husband not working since his newest affair and her desperate need of the money to pay for her son's ear operation. In the midst of this scene (which could have been lifted straight from *As The Stomach Turns*) Ben Eberhart crashes in upon the two women, literally kicks his wife out the door and proceeds

to threaten Alice with a knife. Alice, with remarkable perceptivity, decides it is time to leave Phoenix and head for Tucson.

Tucson: Arriving in Tucson Alice finds employment at Mel and Ruby's cafe where she meets Dave. She goes through her usual infuriating pattern of first refusing and then submitting to Dave's overtures and soon ends up being a frequent visitor at his ranch. During one visit Alice is in the kitchen (where else) and Dave is attempting to teach her son how to play the guitar. The screaming argument which ensues between Dave and Tom is almost an exact replay of a previous scene which occurred in her husband's household. Progress does not seem to be Alice's strong point. However, she storms out of the ranch-house saying that she has made up her mind to leave Dave. Of course, by this time one is hardly about to put much faith in Alice's pronouncements. And sure enough, the next day Dave comes by the cafe offering his apologies and after a preliminary argument (just to show how liberated Alice has become) she accepts his apology and the movie ends with her deciding to stay and pursue her singing career in Tucson where she can be with her man.

In conclusion, Alice Does't Live Here Any-more is exactly the type of garbage one can expect from a patriarchal movie industry whose only interest in the women's movement is to exploit it for as much profit as possible. Movies of this type are doubly enraging and insulting because they are presented as depicting women seeking and finding the path to liberation and yet the mainstay of their lives is always a man. Who is Alice but a confused woman who finally finds happiness when the right man comes into her life? In the words of Jill Johnston:

"Proceeding from the premise that women are oppressed by the heterosexual institution, that women are an oppressed class, that from this point of view the man has become (if he was not always) the natural enemy of women, it follows that the continued collusion of any woman with any man is an event that retards the progress of woman."

## What's a girl good for?

Greta is 19 years old and entering her third year at university. She is attractive and intelligent. Last June Greta sat in her mother's living room with large tears rolling down her cheeks and sobs wracking her slim young body. She is afraid she won't be married; that no one will take her out. She has been six months without a boy friend, and her best friend who wears a large and glittering diamond on her left hand has been giving her some advice that runs contrary to her parents' expectations. The best friend has told her that she is working too hard at school, that the boys are not interested in her because she sounds too smart, that she ought to hold back, be more feminine.

I can't think of anyone more feminine than Greta. She is, as I have said, attractive. She dresses well according to the habits and manners of her group. Her skin is fresh and clear, her figure excellent by any standards; she is cheerful, usually, that is, and outgoing. Her parents have assured her that in due time the right man will come along, someone who will, as they do, appreciate her brains as well as her face and figure. They also try to tell her that she would be living a lie if she tried to be what she is not in order to be popular, and that any man she would entangle with the lie would not be the one she really wants. Greta doesn't believe them. She knows that all her girl friends are either engaged or going steady, that she has sat home for six months of Saturdays while others less attractive and more wily about disguising their intelligence are busy in the social whirl.

What have we done at school to reinforce Greta's feelings of her own unworthiness? What have we done to reinforce her -- and her friends' beliefs -- that overt intelligence in a girl is a handicap?

We have, for one thing, exposed girls over the years to textbooks that either fail to mention women at all, or picture them only in submissive and service roles. From the sleeping beauty who awakens to the prince's kiss to mother always in the kitchens of primary readers the girl is seldom, if ever, given as a model of behaviour women who are taking an active part in the world outside the home. And when an active model does appear she is glamorous: the movie star, the airline stewardess (who is seldom depicted as an airborne waitress and bartender). Even Florence Nightingale, when she occasionally makes her way into a book, is the Gentle Lady with a Lamp, not the woman who fought red tape, governments, and the whole military establishment to get her way.

What is less obvious than the content of textbooks and of "girls' books" in our libraries, is the fact that in the school system itself the girls rarely see a woman in authority. Principals, superintendents, deputy ministers are always -- or almost always -- men to whom their women teachers defer.

In the secondary school most of the teachers are men. It is not fair to generalize as I must do in so brief a statement, but the fact remains that many men teachers in the high schools don't really think of their girl students as potential doctors, engineers, accountants, bank managers, presidents of company boards. They tend to think of them as bright and preferably beautiful young things who will make hearts happy. Not that secondary men teachers intentionally put down their girl students; unconsciously they don't have the same expectations of the girls as they do of the boys. After all, the boys are going to go out into the business or professional world and support families and become the pillars of government, aren't they?

Counsellors, too, in their need to be "realistic" about the future of their female students, often point out the hazards of

the traditionally male trades and professions, the difficulties women have in entering them and in obtaining employment. With the best will in the world they don't give the same advice to girls scoring high in mechanical reasoning, for example, as they do to boys. How can they, they say, and be fair to the girls?

It's little wonder that girls, who at ten and 12 write that they would like to be Indian chiefs or knights on horseback or stallions riding wild and free on the open prairie, by the time they reach 15 or 16 settle for wanting to be secretaries or cocktail waitresses or better still, wives to handsome men and mothers of flawless children. No one tells them along the line, or if someone does they don't listen, that even as wives and mothers they will be spending the greater part of their lives in the working world, and that, married or single, they will, unless the world changes more rapidly in the next ten years than it has in the past ten, be earning less money, holding less fulfilling jobs, and remaining longer if not forever on the lower steps of the job ladder on which they take the first step.

I was sorry for Greta, weeping in her living room. I was -- and am -- angry that we in school help contribute to a situation that made her cry.

SYBIL SHACK

### Selected Study Papers Available From Advisory Council on the Status of Women

- Feb. 1975 "ACSW Recommendation concerning the Inclusion of Housewives in the Canada Pension Plan".
- Aug. 1974 "Background Notes on Areas of Federal and Provincial Jurisdiction in Relation to Family Law", by Henri Major.
- Dec. 1974 "Background Notes on Matrimonial Property Rights", draft (#2) by Marcia H. Rioux.
- Mar. 1975 "Background Notes for Discussion on Birth Control", prepared by Mary Pearson.
- Aug. 1974 "Notes on Federal Jurisdiction in Relation to Employment", by Henri Major.
- Jan. 1975 "A Preliminary Review of Appointments within the Power of the Federal Government to Boards, Commissions, Councils, Committees, and Corporations" by Marcia H. Rioux.
- Apr. 1975 "When Myths Masquerade as Reality: A Study of Rape", A discussion paper prepared by Marcia H. Rioux.

# Women in the Civil Service

By Diane Butler

Sex is the single most important factor in predicting the salary of the Manitoba Civil Servant, according to a Government study undertaken two years ago by staff in the Planning Secretariat of Cabinet. The major results of the study were published in the Task Force Report on Equal Opportunities in the Civil Service.

As the M.G.E.A. is bargaining a new contract, the information contained in this study is important.

## Distribution of Men and Women

- women comprise about 45% of the civil service.
- 49% of women are in Clerical jobs, 13% of men are
- 17% of women are in Technical jobs, 33% of men are
- 16% of women are in Service jobs, 13% of men are
- 7% of women are in Professional jobs, 25% of men are
- less than 1/2 of 1% of women are in Managerial jobs, 6% of men are.

Looking at the distribution another way,

- 75% of Clerical jobs are held by women
- 49% of Service jobs are held by women
- 29% of Technical jobs are held by women
- 18% of Professional jobs are held by women
- 4% of Managerial jobs are held by women.

It is clear women dominate the lower occupational levels of the Manitoba Civil Service.

## Occupational Segregation

Of the 287 classifications comprising the Civil Service in 1972, 214, or about 75%, were either exclusively male or female classifications. As well, there were, and are, many classifications with only "token" male or female representation.

Seventy-one percent of male employees and 68% of female employees occupy sex-typed jobs, e.g. clerk, clerk-steno, public health nurse, draughtsman, labour inspector, computer operator. The cases of Nursing Attendants and Aides, Housekeeping Aides and Institutional Servicemen and Cleaners and Caretakers illustrate how the classification system has been used to differentiate between

men and women to the misfortune of women when there are few, if any, real differences.

## Salary Levels

Women are heavily concentrated in the lower levels of the salary hierarchy. In 1972 seventy-five percent of all female employees earned an annual salary of less than \$7,000. Only 25% of \$7,000. The median annual salary range for women was \$4,000-\$5,499, for men it is \$8,999-\$9,999. The situation hasn't changed substantially.

Even in cases where men and women are in the same job classification they don't receive equal remuneration. In general men predominate in the higher levels of any particular job classification, and earn higher salaries. Even in the traditionally female-dominated occupation of Cook and Nurse, men on the average earn considerably more than women.

## Qualifications

The median educational level of men is only slightly higher than that of women. Sixty-three point three per cent of men have either completed secondary school and post secondary diplomas or degrees, as compared to 62% of women.

Female university graduates are under-represented in the Civil Service when compared with the number who are graduating in Manitoba and Canada. While female employees absolutely outnumber men in the categories of diploma and secondary school completion, women are considerably under-represented in the higher levels of both Administrative Support and Technical positions where university education is not a factor.

## Turnover Rate

One of the arguments most frequently used to justify hiring men in preference to women is that women are more likely to leave their jobs. Although statistics bear this out, the differences are not significant.

In 1971-72 the turnover rate for men was 12.2% and for women, 20.6%. However, the data shows the rate varies dramatically by income group. The lowest in-

come groups have the highest turnover rates. In other words, the fact women are more likely to leave is not necessarily attributable to their sex, but possibly to the fact they dominate the lower income levels of the Service.

## Leaves

The difference in amount of leave taken between men and women was only slight. In the year (1971-72) 2.41% of women took sick leave, 2.25% of men did; 2.17% of women took leaves of absence, .69% of men did. The difference can probably be accounted for by the fact that the responsibilities of home and children are more likely to fall on women when no adequate alternate child-care arrangements are available.

## Conclusions

The study has been tested by a statistical analysis of the effect on an employee's status of work-related variables such as education, age, tenure, marital status and sex. The results showed there are not significant differences between the average levels of education, tenure, or marital status of male and female employees.

The study concluded that "If we consider two Civil Servants, a man and a woman of the same age, education, and number of years of experience in the service, it is very likely that the man will have a significantly higher salary than the woman. In other words, even when we standardize the factors that pertain to competence and experience, the Manitoba Civil Service still pays higher salaries to men than to women."

The study also concluded that "employer's beliefs about differences in the capability and performance of men as compared to women may be a more important determinant of the differential between male and female employees than any real differences."

In a future issue of the CONTACT we will present the recommendations from the study and the Task Force Report. In the meantime, get a copy of the Task Force Report from the Civil Service Commissioner's Office in the Legislative Building and READ IT!

The Government of Canada has well demonstrated that it has no intentions of making the fundamental changes that are required to partly alliviate the oppression of women in Canada by its refusal to deal with such issues as equal pay for work of equal value, Universal access to quality child-care, removal of abortion from the criminal code, safe and effective birth control for all, etc.

Instead the government is spending \$5 million on an advertizing campaign dealing with attitudes, only a symptom of women's oppression, and on conferences which are not action oriented.

This attitude of the Government was well reinforced at a meeting I attended last week.

The Saskatoon Women's Centre was represented at a Consultation meeting regarding the World Conference of the International Women's Year to be held in Mexico in June 75. This Consultation meeting was held in Ottawa on May 2nd.

The Saskatoon Centre was the only Women's Centre there. 38 groups were present, including such groups as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Catholic Women's league, the Girl Guides of Canada and to the left, the National Farmers Union.

This meeting was called on very short notice, none of the representatives had received the working papers, the two Mexico delegates did not stay for the entire meeting, the Canadian World Plan of Action has already been written and published.

The meeting was headed by Sylva Gelber, director of the Women's Bureau and delegate to Mexico. Ms. Gelber spent sometime in her introductory remarks in explaining that socialist countries are more oppressive to women than We in the West. When asked to specify which countries she was referring to, she refused to answer on the grounds that she was making a general statement.

Also heading the meeting was Colleen Campbell, MP replacing Lalonde and head of the delegation to Mexico. Ms Campbell left immediately after her opening remarks. Ms Gelber had the decency to stay a while, she left after the workshops.

The discussions centered mostly around 'attitudes', words like abortion and

# SASKATOON WOMEN'S LIBERATION

"IWY a Farce"  
(flash!)



working class were never used. The term "non-middle class" was used a few times. The Government decided not to get involved with Item 8 of the agenda which reads: " The involvement of women in strengthening international peace and eliminating racism and racial discrimination." It is felt by our government that this Item is too controversial. When asked if Canada

will state what is still left in front of us for the liberation of women, we were answered that we never talk about controversial issues. Our government is perpetuating this image of Canada being the cream of the crop. In it's world plan Canada makes recommendations such as no discrimination on the basis of marital status which is not in effect in Canada and several others which have not been yet implemented in this country.

Some of us at the meeting were experiencing difficulties in formulating suggestions for international action when so little has been done on the national level. When this was expressed it was received by a gasp.

It was pointed by myself and the woman from the B.C. Federation of Women that the cause to women's oppression is economic and the obstacles to women's liberation are economic ones. This statement was received with a frown and not discussed any further.

This meeting was a gesture as all the other activities of the International Women's year program.

We would like very much for your group to take action with this matter.

You could write to: Status of Women, Social Policy Secretariat  
Privy Council Office  
Room 146- East Block  
Parliament Buildings, Ottawa

They organized this meeting. We will be in touch with you again before the Mexico conference.

Yours in Sisterhood

  
Lucie De Blois

P.S. By the way Secretary of States is making \$5,000 available for non-governmental organizations representatives to go to Mexico. Again an indication of the lack of seriousness of government in regards to grass-roots participation.

## REDLIGHT THEATRE

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WHAT GLORIOUS TIMES THEY HAD will be presented in Winnipeg June 2nd, 3rd, and 4th at 8:00 PM at the Manitoba Theatre Workshop, 160 Princess Street.

Ticket prices: \$2.00 for adults  
\$1.00 for students

Limited seating - so reserve seats or come early!

WHAT GLORIOUS TIMES THEY HAD is about the women's struggle for the vote. Set in Winnipeg from 1912 to 1916, they play concerns Mrs. Nellie McClung and other members of the Political Equality League and their battles with Sir Rodmond Roblin, the Premier of the Province and a firm believer that the woman's place was in the home.

## DIMENSION: A SPECIAL WOMAN'S ISSUE

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To mark International Women's Year, Canadian Dimension has published a special women's issue of their magazine, bringing together a collection of original articles written by Canadian women. These articles provide a diverse outlook on matters of importance to the women's movement. Contributors include: Gwen Matheson writing on Nellie McClung; Kay Macpherson comparing the movement in the 50's, 60's and 70's; Claire Culhane describing her experiences in Vietnam; Dorothy Livesay on women as poets; and Margaret Randall on the situation of women in Cuba.

Copies will be available from A Woman's Place, 143 Walnut Street, Winnipeg at \$1.00 per copy.

odds 'n' ends !

## WOMEN & SELF-DEFENCE

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If any women are interested in taking a two-month course in basic self-defence, this will be offered from mid-June to mid-August.

Exact time and place will be determined depending on response. Please call Joanne at 943-8780 or Nancy at 957-0588 if you are at all interested.

P.S. If you happen to have enough space available to hold a class, we would be most grateful.

A quote from Rosemary Brown  
N.O.P. Leadership candidate:

"Indeed to suggest that to be a feminist is a liability to a leadership candidate, surely is to fail to understand that feminism is a revolt against decaying capitalism, surely is to lack the vision to see that feminism, like socialism calls for a new human community. The question then must be — is it possible for the leader of a socialist party not to be committed to feminism, not to see as one of her or his priorities the examination of the position of women in Canadian society, and the eradication of their oppression. The answer to this question must surely be "NO".

Feb. speech to U.B.C. students.

If you wish to support Rosemary Browns campaign, sent donations to IIII Commercial, Vancouver



