

PRIORITIES

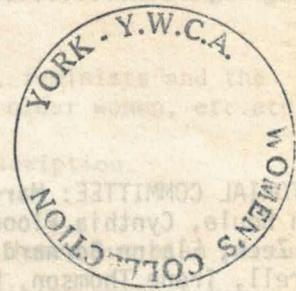
VOL. VI No. 8/9 AUG.-SEPT

50¢

78



PROPERTY OF
CENTENNIAL COLLEGE
WOMEN'S STUDIES



A FEMINIST SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE

A PUBLICATION OF THE
N.D.P. WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorials.....3
 Letters.....4
 A Question of Principle.....5
 Wages and Inflation, Part 2
 - Ruth Houle.....7
 Chairwoman's Report
 - Margaret Birrell.....11
 A Medical Perspective on Rape
 - Doreen Rutka.....12
 Sharing the Tax Benefits.....15
 We Are Not Giving Up
 - Joan Woodward.....20
 Political Cowardice
 - Cynthia Flood.....21
 Human Rights Action.....23
 Rally for Choice
 - Hilda L. Thomas.....25
 Women Talk About Power
 - Brig Anderson.....26

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: Margaret Beardsley, Ruth Houle, Cynthia Flood, Doreen Rutka, Roz Zech, Elaine Bernard, Margaret Birrell, Irene Thomson, Hilda Thomas, Marion Poggemiller, Jan Taylor, Joan Woodward, Marilyn Charney, Judy Steves, Edith Thomas, Norma Paterson, Norna Horner, Joy McInnis.

Priorities is published monthly by the Standing Committee on Women's Rights of the B.C. New Democratic Party. Its intent is to provide a means of communication and discussion for NDP women in order to further the interests of the women's movement and of democratic socialism.

Publication Date: the 15th of each month

Copy Deadline: one week prior to publication

Subscription: \$5.00 individual per year
 \$10.00 institutional per year

12 issues prepaid

Single issue: \$.50

Priorities welcomes submissions from its readers. All such submissions must be signed, although names will be withheld on request. Where necessary the editorial committee will edit for clarity, brevity and taste.

Correspondence and subscriptions to:

Priorities

517 E. Broadway

Vancouver, B.C.

V5T 1X4

All unsigned articles are the collective responsibility of the Editorial Committee

"The issues and demands raised by the Women's Liberation Movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist society. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the women's liberation movement and commits and NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands.

(From the B.C. NDP policy on Women's Rights)

Priorities has been typed and laid out by volunteer labour and is printed by Press

Gang Publishers Ltd. 603 Powell Street, Vancouver, V6A 1H2

EDITORIAL

For those of you who were not fooled by our sneaky date on this month's cover and still want to know what happened to August: During the summer, we took a steely-eyed look at our costs, funds and resources. The terrible inflation that is causing us all to suffer, has, of course, hit Priorities, too. Given our present number of subscribers, it is costing \$1.00 to print and mail each copy of Priorities. We had to decide either to increase the subscription rate, something we really did not want to do, or reduce the number of issues. We have decided to print ten issues rather than twelve. With the \$5.00 subscription rate, donations, and occasional benefits, we should be able to manage financially. We are concerned, however, about the drop in numbers of subscribers. If you believe that Priorities is still an important feminist socialist publication, let us know and please help us to improve by:

1. Signing up new subscribers -- we could have 200 more subscribers without greatly increasing our costs.
2. Writing for us. The topics are endless -- women and power, feminists and the family, violence, pornography, economics, the third world, older women, etc.etc.
3. If you can afford it -- make a donation -- give a gift subscription.

This month's cover is unusual not only because of the peculiar date, but also because we have one woman's photograph on the cover. By the time Priorities reaches you, Mercia Stickney will be well into her campaign in the Richmond Federal By-election. We urge all Lower Mainland feminists to offer their time, talent, and money to Mercia. We certainly need a strong feminist in Ottawa. Contact Mercia's campaign office.

Mercia Stickney Campaign Office
3819 Chatlam
Richmond

Telephone: 271-1512

LETTERS

Dear Sisters:

I wish to advise the many friends I have made through Priorities and women's caucus meetings at conventions that we have moved from Kamloops to Yellowknife, N.W.T. where my husband will be employed for one year.

I enjoy living here. We live on the 6th floor and have a panoramic view of the city. Planes coming and going to the north land on the arm of the lake that circles the city. It is a city of many flags flying from the high rise office buildings. The red and white Canadian flag beside the N.W.T. white polar bear on a blue background. People are friendly. There is a shopping mall here owned by a Chinese family but no chain stores except The Bay and McLeod's, a small I.G.A. store and Simpson Sears order office and no MacDonalds.

I will be looking forward to Priorities each month. Enclosed is a contribution to help out. Perhaps I will meet some one here who would be interested in a sub to Priorities.

Joyce Harrison

Dear Priorities

Have just completed reading every word of the March issue of Priorities. As usual I find the content most stimulating.

We have formed a Women's Center in Faro, within the last few months, and have offered a diverse program of topics, such as Labor Standards, Breast Cancer, Gardening, Consumerism, Bottle Babies, Women and Religion, Nutrition and Fitness, Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Diet for a Small Planet, and Coping with Stress,

to our community. A great deal of energy is being tapped and our interpersonal relations are becoming much stronger.

I noted your plea for a logo design for T-shirts and buttons, so have included a suggestion. With a little work by someone with artistic skills, you may make something of it.

Dina Hanson

feminists unite!

help elect

MERCIA STICKNEY

in the Richmond Federal By-election on
OCTOBER, 16

Mercia's Campaign NEEDS:

MONEY: Make cheques payable to:
New Democratic Party
517 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.

WORKERS: Contact Mercia's Campaign
Office at 3819 Chatlam,
Richmond, B.C.

CANVASSERS URGENTLY NEEDED

A Question of Principle

As an outgrowth of the Steering Committee meeting of June 25, and of discussions current at the Provincial Convention, certain issues have arisen which need to be circulated, discussed, and eventually resolved by the women in the Women's committee.

At the convention, the people involved resolved these issues as best they could; but now that they have been defined it would be the better practice to set up guidelines for future conventions.

1. The first, and perhaps simplest problem, arose on the floor of the convention, when Margaret Birrell, candidate on the Women's Committee Half Slate for Federal Council Delegate, found herself in the position of running against Svend Robinson and Ron Anderson. It was apparent that Margaret and Ron would split the "left" vote, and that for this reason Margaret ought to consider stepping down in favour of Ron. There were two other forceful reasons for her to consider doing so. One was that Ron had always shown himself to be particularly supportive and understanding where women's rights were concerned. He had earned the respect and support of most of the members of the committee. Furthermore, the day before, he himself, as the democratically elected candidate of the Open Caucus, had stepped down at short notice to avoid running against a Women's Committee candidate and so splitting the vote. He had done this without being able to consult with his caucus, and his action had excited admiration and appreciation from everyone in the women's committee. Thus he had an extra claim on our support.

On the other hand, the women had

- by Ellen Godfrey and
Lois Vickery

decided in open meeting to run a full half-slate and Margaret had agreed to stand. If she, unilaterally, stepped down, she might be seen as going against the instructions of those who had nominated her, failing to be accountable, and failing to uphold policy decided upon by the entire caucus.

For this reason Margaret did not feel able to decide for herself. She gathered together as many members of the caucus as she could from the convention floor, a vote was taken, and Margaret let her name stand. This method was the best available to her at the time, but it obviously was not very good. Many members of the women's caucus wished that they had been able to vote on this issue, but they had not been aware that the vote was being held. Time was too short to give notice so a proper meeting might be held.

Thus the questions to be resolved are as follows:

Can members of the women's half-slate unilaterally decide to step down if they see that they may split a vote and thus indirectly contribute to the defeat of any candidate favourable to us? Could policy be worked on on this issue in advance?

Some points made at the Steering Committee meeting:

-The women must run a complete half-slate and to stand down for any reason would defeat this

-If it were policy never to stand down it would be possible for our opponents to manipulate us by nominating like-minded men or other very capable and suitable women and so splitting our

vote and defeating us

-If nominees decide on their own the merits of the particular case, they may be going against Caucus policy to work out such things at open meetings

This entire question needs full and open discussion so appropriate policy can be worked out in advance.

2. The other issue which arose out of the convention which needs discussion is more complex. The quandary followed from the Caucus' decision to endorse only candidates who had been democratically elected to some slate. It was definitely agreed upon that this meant that any candidate whose name appeared on the "Official" or "Regional" slate was thus categorically excluded from being on our half-slate or from receiving our endorsement.

Thus, at the convention, we found ourselves unable to support an eminently qualified candidate, Pat Blight, who, under other circumstances we would have been extremely pleased to endorse. The fact that Pat allowed her name to stand on the so-called "Regional Slate", a slate which was chosen in a mysterious manner without open input from constituencies, regions or open meetings, disqualified her from receiving our endorsement.

Not long after this difficult and unpleasant decision was made, the women's caucus found ourselves in the equally unpleasant position of considering Rosemary Brown's position as nominee for Participation of Women representative. Rosemary had been democratically elected by the Legislative Caucus, at her insistence, and this was all to the good. But she had also allowed her name to stand on the "Official" or "Regional" slate, the very same position for which we had rejected Pat Blight. At a heated meeting Rosemary failed to explain why she could not withdraw her name from the official slate, and asked us instead to support her because she

was deserving of our support.

This put the Caucus in an extremely difficult position. On the one hand there was no doubt that Rosemary had our hearty support as one of the most effective, consistent, and courageous voices on women's issues. She also had our emotional support and our affection and loyalty. On the other hand she was asking us to go against policy decided upon democratically, after long discussion which embodied one of the central principles of the women's committee.

Some points to consider:

-from a practical point of view the caucus had no wish, politically, emotionally, or practically, to fail to support Rosemary

-the caucus was asked to do for Rosemary what they had failed to do for Pat Blight

-a distinction was made between "endorsing" a candidate, which is what is done in the case of the labour candidates. Is this a valid distinction? Can we fail to oppose, for example an 'anti-feminist' labour candidate and then question endorsing someone like Rosemary

-what happens when a strong feminist who has earned our loyalty and respect, such as Rosemary, demands we bend our principles without giving us a satisfactory reason for doing so? On the other hand, what would be the personal and political repercussions for the feminist movement as a whole, if it failed to back loyally and wholeheartedly its most visible and effective spokeswoman?

At the convention the women supported Rosemary. But the vote was close, and the voters on both sides were torn and anguished. It was an unhappy moment, and a difficult problem. Further discussion might clarify the issues and prepare the ground to help us avoid being again put in the position of having to choose between bad and worse.

??

??

WAGES and INFLATION

PART 2

- by Ruth Houle

Canadian workers receives "flak" from two angles; they are criticized for causing high prices at home, they are condemned for pricing our products beyond the ability to compete on the world market. Socialists often find it difficult to argue against the accusations that wage gains cause inflation. The following article offers a look at some of the fallacies related to the wage-inflation spiral theory.

Canada's foreign trade picture provides a convenient starting point for anti-labour critics who like to blame all economic problems on the work force. Are Canadians undersold by the labour-cheap products that flow into the country from Taiwan and other places? Take food for instance. How do the prices of foreign food products compare with similar Canadian goods? A comparison of some items might indicate a pattern of price differentials between the "cheaper" foreign product and the expensive Canadian one. The following is a list of canned fruits and vegetables priced on August 15th at a large Safeway Store. All prices listed are for the 14oz. size can in fancy or choice quality.

<u>Green Beans</u> - Ma Ling Brand (from People's Republic China)	.55
Royal City (Packed in Canada)	.57
House Brand (No country stated-probably U.S.A.)	.49

<u>Tomatoes</u> - 4 Star (Taiwan)	.53
Royal City (Product of U.S.A.)	.53
Hunts (Product of U.S.A.)	.53
House Brand (prob. U.S.A.)	.52
<u>Peaches</u> - Royal City (Packed in Canada)	.59
Ardmona (Australia)	.57
House Brand (Prob. U.S.A.)	.49
<u>Pears</u> - Royal City (Packed in Canada)	.53
Ardmona (Australia)	.59
House Brand (prob. U.S.A.)	.53
<u>Apple Sauce</u> - Sun Rype (Grown and Packed in Kelowna, B.C.)	.43
House Brand (prob. U.S.A.)	.42

The above chart provokes a further question: if labour is so cheap in other countries why is there such a small price spread between brands?

Two reasons: government tariffs and super profits for monopoly capitalism. The fruit and vegetable industry is dying in B.C. and the rest of Canada, because Canadian wages preclude the super rate of return on investment to be realized from poor Asian or Mexican women and children who work for even less than Canadian agricultural workers. NDP agriculture critic, Barbara Wallace, reported to the Legislature in June of this year that, in 1965, 15 companies wholesaled fruit in B.C. Now, only 5 do so; the others have moved their operations to places like Mexico and

Taiwan. Wallace noted that Ontario could grow all of Canada's tomato requirements yet produces less than half, the balance coming almost exclusively from Taiwan.

If the federal government were really seriously concerned about inflation they would insure these imports were sold at a price reflecting a reasonable rate of profit or bar entry to Canada of foods that can be produced here, thus enabling the Canadian industry to grow and process many of its own food products. By its policy the government kills agricultural enterprise, allows imports into Canada that often sell for the same price as domestic products, although produced more cheaply, and the Canadian worker gets the blame for inflation.

Now when the government does move and provide tariff and quotas protection to domestic products sometimes the situation is equally as bad for the public. At present sections of the Canadian clothing industry are exercising monopoly control over the prices of domestic clothing and textiles and the import quotas from outside. This situation costs B.C. residents up to \$12 million a year in extra clothing costs according to the Vancouver Sun (Aug.17/78,p.B6) Whether the articles are tomatoes or jeans, labour costs shrink to insignificance in relationship to the selling price - monopoly capitalism charges all the market will bear. Since big clothing outlets are able to manipulate supply, demand and price the measure designed to stimulate domestic business is turned on its head and the consumer pays equally high amounts for Montreal and Hong Kong jeans.

Recently, Canada's balance of payments deficit resulted in devaluation of the dollar. The devalued dollar means higher prices for Canadians and lower prices for our goods abroad. One

effect of devaluation was the purchase by the U.S. of large numbers of Canadian beef cattle at good prices. This move created a scarcity in Canada and, consequently, the retail price of beef jumped approximately 33 to 50% a few months ago. In addition all imported products went up for Canadians merely by the stroke of the pen that ordered devaluation. Not one Canadian worker was involved in this decision.

While still on the key question of food, which, remember, never was under price controls, other inflationary factors should be examined. The recently revealed wholesalers' kick-back scheme with B.C. supermarkets further exposes the alleged responsibility of labour for high food costs. Not one worker bled the consumer in this plot either. Wholesalers simply bribed supermarkets with undisclosed sums of money in order to insure up front displays for their products; a practice that can add up to 15% more to weekly grocery bills according to Vancouver Sun reports this Spring. When the supermarket "rip-off" was disclosed in May the three NDP members on the ten member select committee on agriculture (the other seven are Socreds) demanded that public hearings be held immediately to investigate the allegations. Committee Chairman, Len Bawtree, (SC Shuswap) side stepped the issue by stating that a government report on the practice was being prepared and would provide adequate information. The government said that, if supermarkets had, indeed, broken the Combines Investigation Act by this practice, it was a federal matter. A standard trick to evade the issue and counter Norm Levi's (NDP-Van-Burrard) demand for an investigation. In the meantime, as we wait for the report the price of food continues to rise thanks to one form of monopoly practice.



Another factor affecting food prices concerns the function and value of marketing boards. The argument for Milk, Egg and Broiler marketing boards claims they maintain an orderly method of production and distribution while providing a guarantee of sale to hard pressed farmers. The original good intentions have been circumvented by the most powerful groups among them. In reality what happens is government dispensation of privileges to a few producers - those with cash - so they can buy a "quota", the cost of which is passed on to the consumer. Milk marketing board fees levied to producers adds 7¢ per quart to the price of milk in B.C. according to a study quoted by Liberal leader, Gordon Gibson. Seven cents per quart added to the price of this valuable basic food by monopoly practice and, yet, the agricultural worker in Canada is usually the lowest paid section of the work force.

The second, over-priced necessity for Canadians is shelter. Many people are vaguely aware that real estate fees, builder's profits, mortgage interest rates and land speculation are important ingredients in the housing cost spiral that started during the early seventies and still continues at a slower pace. They often don't realize the above mentioned components are the key inflationary factors - not the wages of workers who build houses or manufacture materials to build them with.

In a study initiated by Alberta's ministry of housing and public works, W.I. Yurko, last year, a comparison was made between the cost of building a 1,080 square foot, three-bedroom bungalow in Alberta and one in Montana. (Information obtained from Sun "Weekend Magazine" article April 1978). Some startling facts were revealed. Number one: some B.C. lumber sells for less in Seattle than in Vancouver and this was so even before the devaluation of the Canadian dollar. For example, cedar

siding that cost \$490 a thousand in Seattle sold for \$535 in Vancouver. It is certainly surprising that the lumber corporations can afford to sell for \$45 a thousand less in the U.S. if wages are an inflationary factor in production. Common sense would indicate a higher price in Seattle than Vancouver because the expense of teamster or railway workers' wages must be added to the price. When big business wishes to manipulate prices to cater to the American market the cost of shipping disappears.

Number two: of the difference between the price of the house in Alberta, \$60,170, and that in Montana, \$42,250, only 23% was accounted for by construction materials and labour or a total of \$4,121. In fact the difference in the cost of labour between the two countries was only \$980 for costs of \$9,340 in Montana and \$10,320 in Alberta.

Number three: the biggest factor in the price difference was the cost of land, \$8,400 in Montana and \$20,670 in Alberta or a 246% difference as opposed to a 10½% difference for labour costs. In fact, in every province except Quebec land costs account for the highest share in Canada's housing costs. The average price of a house has increased 80% in the last four years, the price of the lot has gone up 235%. And yet almost no labour power is applied to a bare lot to service it and effect this increase. There are many factors effecting the high price of land in Canada chief of which is land speculation. Secondly, getting raw land ready for development is more costly due to higher interest payments and taxes paid while awaiting government approval which takes much longer in Canada. Interest rates and taxes are indirectly related to labour costs through the wages paid to the staff of government and financial institutions but even here they are not as significant a cost factor as big business would have us believe. If wage



increases are the big factor in inflation then the rise in mortgage and loan interest rates in the seventies should be attributable to huge wage concessions to bank and loan company workers. These organizations are notorious for their "tight-fisted" anti-union attitude with employees, a stance that is now being assaulted with some success by SORWUC in the attempt to organize the bank workers. Interest rates on mortgages are one of the biggest single expenses for housings, an expense directly the result of speculation in land, super profits for Canada's monopolized financial institutions not super wages for their predominantly female staffs.

Another mounting cost for the family budget is gas and oil. Fuels also were not covered by AIB and, as a result, have continued to rise drastically in price in the last few years out of all proportion to the costs of production. The oil and gas industry is not labour intensive; wages are not a key factor in calculating costs, in fact, crude oil can be produced for a few cents a barrel. Again the oil and gas monopolies in the Middle East and the West are grabbing superprofits at the consumer's expense. High fuel costs push up the price of almost every other product because gas and oil run the machines that make them. Again the worker-consumer pays the high prices they have little part in creating.

Needless to say, food, shelter and fuel form the three things people cannot manage without. Canadian workers are a "captive audience", so to speak, to the spectacle of big business' inflationary manipulation of prices to maximize profits; they are the victims of international capitalism's inflation-recession economics. The preceding survey skims the question only: perhaps some of the questions raised and investigated will give better insight into the inflation-wages discussion and stimulate interest in further reading in order to fight the wage increases cause inflation myth.

Next month: Unemployment: The Trudeau Answer to Inflation

PLUMP BERYL SUGGESTS YOU FAST!

- by Ros Zech

Do you remember Beryl Plumptre? How could you forget the pearls of wisdom that flowed from her mouth and pen as Chairwoman of the now defunct Food Prices Review Board.

But never fear, Marie Antoinette Plumptre was recently appointed to the board of directors of Dominion Stores, one of Canada's leading super market chains, and in an interview printed in the Vancouver Sun, was still ready with handy tips for the harried housewife. "If they don't like the price of cabbage", she said, "they should buy something else".

Personally I have never been overfond of cabbage anyway, I still have memories of the soggy mass of overcooked green, lumped on my plate at school in England. Her advice did not end here. "Celery", she continues, "has been at about \$1.20 a pound, but you don't have to eat it". How true, who needs celery? Full of vitamins it may be but we can always tighten our belts a notch and do without the luxury of celery. She then moved on to meat, "We don't have to eat steak every night, what's wrong with a pot of beans once in a while." Well, I am sure anything would pall as a steady diet, but I have difficulty in remembering the last time I bought steak for dinner; however, if a director of the board of Dominion Stores eats beans for dinner, I will give it a try, it will make a change from hamburger. In her summing up a useful tip for the housewife trying to stretch the housekeeping dollar until next pay day, "Buy only what you need, don't hoard", and a final word to the working mother with time on her hands, "shop carefully and compare prices, avoid buying convenience foods".

Thanks, Beryl, you have been a great help.

B.C. N.D.P.

Women's Right's Committee

Chairwoman's Report

- by Margaret Birrell

By the time you receive your copy of Priorities the Steering Committee will have met in Vancouver. For that meeting an attempt will be made to update our mailing list. If you wish, to be added to, or deleted from, the list please notify me at Provincial Office. Although the Steering Committee has a full agenda it is hoped that they will finalize the dates and places for our Political Skills Workshops.

We are now in a Federal By-election period and Mercia Stickney has been nominated for the riding of Burnaby Richmond Delta. Mercia was endorsed by the Women's Rights Committee, therefore, it is important that we follow through on our support with donations of labour and /or money. Cheques should be sent to the N.D.P. Provincial Office and workers should contact Joyce Nash at 271-1412 or 879-4601.

The International Council of Social Democratic Women will be meeting the week prior to the Socialist International. If you wish to be an observer at this conference write to the Federal Women's Organizer, Judy Wasylcyia-Leis, 301 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa - - it is a case of first come, first served. The conference opens at 10:00 a.m. October 31st, 1978 for two days at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. Planning for the conference is in the final stages and the Women's Committee is hoping to hold a reception for the women delegates. Look for further information in the next Priorities.

The Lower Mainland Women's Committee has drawn up its fall programme. They have planned a series of panel discussions and workshops. The meetings will be held on the last Monday of every month at 517 East Broadway, Vancouver. The

September 25th meeting will be on the question of "Violence Against Women". The quest panelists are Rosemary Brown, Gene Errington (Director, Women's Research Centre), Margaret Sigurgierson (Transition House), and a staff member from Rape Relief. The panel, which will start at 8:30 p.m., will be preceded by a short business meeting at 7:30 p.m. The October panel will deal with the area of pornography and censorship.

Finally, Roz and I would like to thank those women who contacted us with their ideas for the Political Skills Workshops.

CONT. FROM PAGE 19.

federal candidate from Burnaby Edmonds, spoke to the issue: the role of young people in the N.D.P. I was very pleased to hear Robinson speak strongly in support of feminism and the Women's Rights Committee. He effectively drew comparisons between the Y.N.D. and the Party in terms of the role of women and I think made many of us aware of just how much work is left to be done. Robinson spoke in support of hiring quotas for women and expressed his concern about the predominantly male Y.N.D. executive. Also present for this discussion was Helen Pinsky, a feminist lawyer in Vancouver. She gave examples of the discrimination she had experienced in the educational and legal systems and the positive strides slowly being made in these areas. Pinsky reiterated the point that "eliminating sexism is an educational process involving awareness and action."

Generally it was a productive discussion and this issue is one I will be encouraging the Y.N.D. to continue to address.

A Medical Perspective of Rape

- by Doreen Rutka

Of all crimes perpetrated against women rape is the most brutal and demeaning. Not only is it a physical assault, it is a violation of our right to freedom of movement.

The statistics collected by police and medical personnel show that a rape occurs every seventeen minutes. As a woman, I find this makes me really angry and I determined to investigate the issue of rape from a medical perspective.

To find out just what happens to a rape victim who seeks medical attention I visited emergency wards at the Royal Columbian Hospital and the Vancouver General Hospital and talked with head nurses. I also talked with representatives of Rape Relief and to a general practitioner.

Legal Ramifications Dehumanize Treatment

Due to the legal aspects of rape, all hospitals adhere to a standard routine for examination of the victim and collection of specimens for possible evidence. The victim must first sign a form consenting to the complete physical examination which can be carried out by a qualified doctor or pathologist, not an intern. A Registered Nurse must be in attendance to act as a witness and "to give the victim the moral support of a woman being present." (VGH and surrounding Vancouver hospitals have a full time police doctor who deals with the majority of rape cases.)

The actual examination is very thorough and involves a complete physical plus a mental assessment of the victim. During the exam specimens may be collected for possible evidence. These include such things as vaginal washings, finger

nail scrapings, pubic hair combings and the victims clothing, all of which are labelled according to legal requirements.

Cultures are taken for G.C. and usually antibiotics are administered as prophylactic treatment. Victims are advised to return to their own physician for follow-up checks for V.D. and a blood test for syphilis. If pregnancy is a possibility the victim is advised of available alternatives. Also a tetanus shot may be required. A follow-up exam may be done 24 - 48 hours later to check for excessive bruising.

Little Emotional Support Available

I inquired as to what emotional help was available for the victim of a rape and if social workers were on duty. Unfortunately most rapes occur at night and most hospital budgets don't stretch to 24 hour social worker service so it depends upon how busy the nursing staff is as to how much attention they can spare a victim. The nurses phone family, friends or Rape Relief workers. (All rape victims are given a Rape Relief pamphlet.)

The nursing staff feel they must remain objective and can't afford emotional excesses.

The G.P. emphasizes the importance of adherence to the required legal procedure while being alert to any physical problems requiring treatment. His own personal opinions are not recorded since it is up to the courts to determine whether or not a rape has occurred.

My fourth source of information was Rape Relief. A small number of paid

workers (6) and about 30 devoted volunteers carry on a 24 hour service for rape victims, and manage to deal with all aspects - the legal, medical and emotional. They will accompany victims to the police, hospital or talk with and give emotional support to those who don't wish to report rapes.

In summary, I feel that the manner in which hospitals and physicians deal with rape victims is largely dictated by the confines of the law and the narrow legal definition of what constitutes a rape.

The medical examination, while necessary, is a further violation of the victims body. One emergency nurse expressed what I thought was a positive suggestion - to have specially trained female examiners for rape victims. After being brutally assaulted by a male, the last thing a victim needs is a physical examination by a male doctor, often a stranger.

I concluded that the physical problems of a rape victim are efficiently dealt with, but that emotional support is practically non-existent in hospital emergency wards and as long as rape is viewed as a crime against the state property (women) and not as a physical assault on a person, medical personnel have little choice except to follow the legal regimen.

Without the dedicated workers of Rape Relief many women would be pretty much on their own to cope with a rape situation.

What Women Should Know In Case of Rape

The Medical Examination

1. Doctor checks for bruises, red marks, wounds, ALL over her body, and particularly in the vaginal area.
 - * s/he treats if necessary
 - * photos, or drawings should be made of any of these findings
2. Doctor takes samples from vaginal area.
 - * several swabs and cultures are taken to use in determining presence of semen, and even sperm.
 - * samples are labelled, and signed

by the doctor; then given to the police - police do the lab work

3. Doctor should note down on his/her report the victim's emotional state
4. Advice should be given as to VD and pregnancy follow-up (this is often forgotten)
5. If not already done by the police, the victim's clothing is confiscated, and put into separate bags, also initialled by whoever handled them.

Follow-Up

1. Veneral Disease: the best time to go for a check-up is about 6 weeks after the rape; at this time a VDRL will be done (blood test for syphilis and a culture and smear from the vagina for gonorrhea)
2. Pregnancy: if the woman was not using any form of birth control when she was raped, the alternatives open to her are:
 - a/ Morning After Treatment (MAT)
 - by prescription
 - There are at least two kinds on the market: the one containing DES has potentially carcinogenic effects on the female offspring.
 - b/ Menstrual Extraction: a removal of the period by a tube that is inserted into the uterus (not done commonly in Vancouver)
 - c/ Waiting and perhaps having an Abortion: (especially if the woman is not in a fertile period in her cycle, this often may be most advisable)



The Real Issue

AT VICTORIA RAPE RELIEF

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to the editorial by Darry McDonell about the "real reasons" why Rape Relief isn't getting the support they need from Greater Victoria.

Mr. McDonell's basic theme is that there are lesbian activists in the group who represent "a threat to the very worthwhile aims of its general membership." He goes on to suggest that women ought to get rid of these "extremists" who are allowed to waste the committee's time by involving them in long arguments about feminist politics at meetings, and therefore Mayor Couvelier is doing them a favour.

Mr. McDonell's article shows clear signs of illogical, foggy thinking and a total confusion of priorities. The presence or lack of them, in Rape Relief, of lesbians is irrelevant. The kind of arguing which goes on among the women there about feminism is irrelevant too. The only important question is whether Rape Relief is doing a good job and is deserving of support. The police say they are. The schools were they go have never suggested that they do anything there but worthwhile work in helping girls learn how to deal with Rape. Any woman who has ever been alone, frightened, humiliated, and in a state of shock and fear after having had the brutal experience of rape says they are. This is the real issue of Victoria Rape Relief. To bring up their internal political arguing in committee is totally ridiculous. No one would criticize municipal politics and say we should stop paying our taxes because they wrangle and waste time at Council meetings.

As a minor point: it is not for outsiders to say how individual groups should conduct themselves, how much democracy, freedom of expression, or time they need to reach consensus. In women's groups in particular, where women find it difficult to speak out in public, and are accustomed to stop talking at the slightest put-down, it has been found helpful, supportive, and more efficient in the long-run to allow everyone to have their say. Women consider this to be true democracy. They value it. In any case, this style has not hurt Rape Relief who continue to be valued by everyone in the community who has had any dealing with them.

McDonell's column is a red herring. It would be trivial if only it didn't put one more burden on an already beleaguered and threatened group, so desperately needed by so many women.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen Godfrey,
Chairwoman, Lower Island NDP Women's
Rights Committee

Editors Note: Copy of letter sent to
Monday magazine in Victoria.



Sharing the Tax Benefits- Canadian Style

Condensed by Irene Thomson

Recently Priorities came across an article in an issue of the Metropolitan Council of the United Church Newsletter. The article, "A Report by the National Council of Welfare on Taxation and the Distribution of Income", is full of vital information, and we feel that some of the more interesting highlights should be shared with our readers. The article shows how some of our Canadian Benefit packages are designed to keep the low wage earner at the bottom of the pay-out scale, while charging them more in tax dollars. The report stresses inequalities which condemn three million Canadians to lives of poverty in the midst of widespread affluence.

The lowest-income twenty percent of Canadians receive barely 4% of the total national income. The highest-income twenty percent, in contrast, receive more than 40% - a share ten times as great. That income gap between rich and poor Canadians has grown so dramatically over the same years in which Canada was constructing an elaborate multi-billion dollar income security system may come as a surprise. However it isn't hard to explain in light of the fact that so much of the welfare system consists of programs providing equal benefits to rich and poor alike. Sending the same family allowance and old age security cheques to wealthy and poor alike only maintains the gap at the same size. All of the rhetoric about the welfare state notwithstanding, our welfare system has had little effect in tempering the overwhelmingly unequal income distribution of the market place.

However, one last mechanism remains for reducing income inequalities and altering the distribution of actual spending power among Canadians -- the supposedly leveling effects of the tax system.

For most people, the tax system means the personal income tax. This tax represents 40% of all federal and provincial revenues. With combined federal and provincial rates that begin at 9% on the first \$760.00 of taxable income and rising in steps to 62% on any taxable income over \$91,000, it might be expected that this tax would dramatically change the income shares of the various groups. In fact, it changes them hardly at all, as the following table for 1975 indicates:

	Share of Total Income Before Income Tax	Share of Total Income After Income Tax	
Bottom 20%	4.0%	4.6%	+ .6%
Second 20%	10.6%	11.5%	+ .9%
Middle 20%	17.6%	18.2%	+ .6%
Fourth 20%	25.1%	25.1%	0
Top 20%	42.6%	40.6%	- 2.0%

The poorest 20% of families and single persons had their after-tax share of total income increased by a mere six-tenths of one percent --- from 4.0 to 4.6%. Only the top 20% of family units saw their share lowered because of personal income tax -- and this was limited to 2%. They were still left with almost 41% of total disposable income -- nine times the amount available to the lowest income 20%.

The tax system, of course, includes a great deal more than just personal income tax. There are also federal and provincial sales taxes, corporate income taxes, excise taxes, import duties and property taxes. Some are not even designated as taxes, although that is precisely what they are, the most notable "taxes-under-another-name" are provincial health insurance premiums, contributions to the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, and premiums for Unemployment Insurance.

The best known Canadian study of the relative tax burden borne by various income groups was done for the Economic Council of Canada in 1972. It found that - "while government expenditure programs may contribute to the distribution of income the tax system as a whole does nothing to contribute to this goal. Indeed, over the lowest portion of the income scale, the system tends to contradict the ability-to-pay principle by taxing the poor at a higher rate than those who are better off. The effect of the few taxes . . . that are progressive (progressive taxes are those that increase with increasing income. The more income you have the more taxes you pay) is completely offset by the remainder of the taxes in the system." Federal taxes, the study concluded, were mildly progressive (the percentage of income collected in tax increased as income rose) except for the lowest income group. What progressivity there was resulted from the personal income tax. All other federal taxes were either proportional or regressive, (regressive taxes are those that are the same amount no matter what your income. Therefore, a person with a low income pays a much higher proportion of her/his total income than someone with a higher income). Provincial taxes imposed their heaviest burden on the lowest-income group and were basically proportional for all other groups. Personal income tax was the only progressive part of the provincial tax systems. The other parts were either proportional or regressive. Municipal taxes, based primarily on the property tax, were sharply regressive. Some taxes, which placed their heaviest burdens on upper-income persons -- estate taxes, succession duties, and corporate income taxes, have been reduced or eliminated. Most importantly, a host of new exemptions and deductions have been introduced into the income tax which give no benefit whatsoever to those too poor to pay tax, only modest benefits to lower and middle-income persons, and the greatest benefits to those with the highest income.

REGRESSIVE TAXATION: MAKING THE POOR PAY MORE

A person's ability to pay tax is clearly dependent on his/her income. A poor person has virtually no ability to pay, s/he needs all of his/her inadequate income just for survival. As income rises however, an individual acquires a modest ability to pay tax. The greater the income, the greater the ability to pay. No government would argue against these statements. Indeed, federal finance ministers and provincial treasurers regularly give assurance of the central role these concepts of equity play in their decisions on taxation. Yet both levels of government impose taxes directly contradicting these principles.

Major parts of the Canadian Tax System are regressive. They place their heaviest proportional burdens on the poor. The clearest and most surprising examples are the taxes used to fund social insurance programs - the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance and health care.

CANADA/QUEBEC PENSION PLAN

The Canada/Quebec Pension Plan is funded through a payroll tax. Each employee must contribute at a rate of 1.8% of their earnings. The first \$1,000. earnings are exempt from tax and the maximum earnings on which contributions are collected is \$10,400. Employers must match the contributions of their employees. The C.P.P. tax is calculated at a constant percentage of earnings. The maximum tax the contribution required from anyone earning \$10,400. or more is \$169.20. No matter how much a person's income exceeds \$10,400., s/he still pays only \$169.20. This fixed amount of tax is a decreasing percentage of income as earnings rise.

This is only the first part of what makes the C.P.P. tax regressive. The other is the fact that C.P.P./Q.P.P. contributions are deductible in calculating income tax. Deductions increase in value as income rises. A \$100. deduction, for example provides a tax saving of \$25. to a person in a 25% tax bracket, but a \$60. saving to a higher income person in a 60% bracket. To estimate the real amount of C.P.P. contributions subtract the tax saving from the required contribution. See Table below:

Net Contributions to the Canada Pension Plan for 1978

<u>Earned Income</u>	<u>Required C.P.P. Contribution</u>	<u>Tax Saving from Deduction</u>	<u>Net C.P.P. Contribution</u>	<u>Pension Entitlement</u>
\$ 6,000.	\$ 90.00	\$ 0	\$ 90.00	58%
8,000.	126.00	0	126.00	77
10,000.	162.00	41.99	120.01	96
12,000.	169.20	46.29	122.91	100
15,000.	169.20	51.17	118.03	100
20,000.	169.20	60.91	108.29	100
25,000.	169.20	68.22	100.98	100
50,000.	169.20	87.71	81.49	100

Amazing is the fact that while the largest contributors are workers earning \$8,000. a year, all these workers get in return is a pension credit to about three-fourths of a full C.P.P. retirement pension. Workers earning \$12,000. a year, pay \$3. less in net contributions and get a credit entitling them to a full pension. In fact, while someone earning \$8,000. must pay \$126. to get their three-quarters pension entitlement, a \$50,000. a year earner pays only \$81. to get a full entitlement.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Unemployment Insurance also involves a payroll tax. The tax rate is 1.5% of earnings with an insurable limit of \$240. a week. Payments to the U.I. are compulsory and employees are allowed to deduct these premiums in calculating income tax.

The maximum on insurance earnings and the deductability of premiums is another regressive tax.

Everyone earning above the maximum insurable level pays the same amount of tax, but once again, this decreases as a proportion of earnings as income rises, while the deduction goes up in value as a person moves into a higher tax bracket. The 1.5% tax rate charged to a minimum-wage worker earning \$6,300. a year decreases to a .75% rate for a \$25,000. a year earner.

Incredibly, low-income workers pay the highest rates and get the lowest coverage. An \$8,000. a year worker pays \$120. net U.I. premiums to buy coverage which guarantees him/her \$103. per week if he loses his job. On the other hand, a \$25,000. a year worker pays \$112. in net premiums for coverage worth \$160. per week. See table on following page entitled - "Net Contributions to Unemployment Insurance for 1978".

HEALTH INSURANCE

The Federal government is responsible for Unemployment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan, but the clearest example of an ill-conceived tax is the health insurance premiums, a provincial levy. Many people may not think of these as taxes, but they are. A health insurance premium, after all, is a fee charged by a government to pay for a government service --- the basic definition of a tax.

British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario have chosen to take advantage of this form of taxation. Quebec funds its health insurance program through a payroll tax. All other provinces fund theirs from general revenues, sales and other taxes.

In Ontario, a family of four must have earnings of less than \$8,900. to be exempt from premiums. If their income is between \$8,900. and \$9,900. they pay premiums at the rate of \$264. a year. Once their income reaches \$9,900. they pay the full premiums of \$528. a year and those premiums stay the same no matter how much their income exceeds \$9,900. Compare this to a family of the same size with earnings of \$25,000. and you can see how unfair the insurance tax becomes.

The situation in Alberta and British Columbia is similar. Both provinces have lower premiums than Ontario, they also have lower cut-offs for reduced-cost health insurance. In Quebec, health insurance contributions are collected through a 1.5% payroll tax which has an exemption for the lowest income workers. The table below compares the contributions and premiums charged to a four-person family at different income levels in the four provinces.

<u>Earned Income</u>	<u>Quebec</u>	<u>Ontario</u>	<u>Alberta</u>	<u>British Columbia</u>
\$ 5,000. or less	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 22.50
6,000.	40.00	0	0	112.50
7,000.	98.63	0	0	225.00
8,000.	112.73	0	0	225.00
9,000.	126.83	264.00	93.60	225.00
10,000.	140.78	528.00	183.60	225.00
12,000.	169.43	528.00	183.60	225.00

The citizens of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Atlantic provinces pay for health and medical services through the provincial income tax. While provincial tax is between 38.5% and 46% of basic federal tax in the provinces that charge premiums, it is between 50% and 58% in the six provinces that do not. Because of the progressiveness of income tax, costs of health services are apportioned on the basis of ability-to-pay. Thus lower income families pay a smaller burden than those with higher income.

This illustrates that governments do have choices in apportioning the tax burden. The objective of equity in taxation can be achieved while still raising the revenues needed to pay for vital programs. This will only be accomplished when governments become concerned about their tax policies on every income group.

Net Contributions to Unemployment Insurance for 1978

<u>Earned Income</u>	<u>Required U.I. Contribution</u>	<u>Tax Saving from Deduction</u>	<u>Net U.I. Contribution</u>	<u>Weekly U.I. Entitlement</u>
\$ 6,000.	\$ 90.00	\$ 0	\$ 90.00	\$ 76.92
8,000.	120.00	0	120.00	102.56
10,000.	150.00	38.88	111.12	128.21
12,000.	180.00	49.25	130.75	153.85
15,000.	187.20	56.61	130.59	160.00
20,000.	187.20	67.39	119.81	160.00
25,000.	187.20	75.48	111.72	160.00
50,000.	187.20	97.04	90.16	160.00

B.C. Young New Democrats.

a discussion of feminism within the party

- by Jan Taylor

On the weekend of August 18-20, 1978 the B.C. Young New Democrats held our first annual summer camp at Yale, B.C. Various educational activities were planned for the weekend including a list of speakers to give presentations on specific topics. A representative from the Women's Rights Committee was asked to attend and speak to the topic - Feminists in the N.D.P. - is the priority feminism or the Party? Unfortunately due to a misunderstanding no speaker from the Women's Rights Committee was able to attend. However it was decided to hold an open discussion group on this topic with feminists in the Y.N.D. facilitating. Discussion was interesting and lengthy and Y.N.D. President Kim Manning called this discussion "the highlight of the entire camp." The following then encapsulates some of the points raised and it is hoped that by examining these points the reader will have some conception of the state of feminism or feminist awareness within the Y.N.D.

Considerable discussion centred around the issue of reverse discrimination. Should there be closed (to men) Women's Committee meetings? How do these meetings serve to educate men? Does the N.D.P. need a Men's Rights Committee? (My comment here is that the N.D.P. is a Men's Rights Committee). I was disappointed to find that there was still a need for discussion of the reverse discrimination issue. However, several of the young men seemed to understand the need for women to meet and work together in a supportive environment to learn the skills necessary to function within the Party as a whole. One young man realized that men in meetings have a tendency to "tell" as opposed to "ask" women about women's rights issues.

We also discussed the "perfect candidate" as being male defined (ie) traditionally,

stereotypically male characteristics are seen as those characteristics desirable in our candidates. There was discussion about the process involved in educating both Party members and the public to accept candidates that do not portray these "male" characteristics as being desirable candidates as well. It appeared to us that the choice for the Party is - Do we accept losses while we educate or do we convince all of our candidates to represent these male defined characteristics in an effort to ensure success?

The direction and purpose of the Women's Rights Committee was investigated and the feeling, very definitely, of the group was that the Women's Rights Committee's original purpose or intent was to make and pass policy. There were criticisms of the Committee for extending that purpose to include any other activities (ie) the Women's Rights Committee should only make and pass policy and if any other activities are required different committees should handle them. Frankly, I think this suggestion indicates a considerable lack of understanding of the limited resources of the Women's Rights Committee.

I was concerned that few of the women participated in the discussion and pointed this out to the group along with addressing the very male dominated structure of the Y.N.D. executive. I am not sure how to encourage young women to participate more actively within the Y.N.D. but I think one constructive suggestion might be to provide role models and in this connection a closer association between the Y.N.D. and the Women's Rights Committee would be helpful.

In the afternoon Svend Robinson, the

CONTINUED ON P. 11

We are not giving up - says S.O.R.W.U.C.

- by Joan Woodward

The United BankWorkers section of SORWUC has decided to stop negotiations with the banks of B.C. For the time being they will concentrate on building a stronger organization. In this statement the U.B.W. explained the reasons for this major change in strategy announced July 31st:

"Our union is not yet strong enough to take on the banks and the Canadian Labour Congress together. But, we are not giving up! When thousands of bankworkers in B.C. are organized, we will have enormous bargaining power. But to do that, we will need the support of organized labour and especially the support of other women workers. The United Bank Workers section in B.C. will continue to build our own organization within SORWUC, as well as, helping to organize workers, in other industries, so that we will have the strength to compel the banks to sign the kind of union contract that bank workers deserve."

Major Accomplishments

Our union has achieved major accomplishments towards our goal of a union in the banking industry. Almost two years ago we applied for first certification of a B.C. bank branch. At that time we were told it was illegal to join, that it was against the Bank Act. We established the legal right of bank workers to organize. There are now bank employees throughout the province who have experience in organizing, negotiations, and fighting Unfair Labour Practices.

In Saskatchewan, where we do have the support of other unions, the United Bank Workers Saskatchewan section, is continuing to negotiate with the Royal Bank in Melfort and the Toronto Dominion Bank in Regina.

But It Costs

In B.C. we do not have the money to continue negotiations, and we are not strong enough among bank employees to be able to win a good contract. Negotiations with the banks have been a farce. They are holding anti-union meetings in the branches, withholding benefits and wage increases from certified branches, and firing union members. The banks encourage division among bank workers by portraying the union as a third party. They encourage bank employees to "wait and see" if the union will be successful, realizing that as long as the union is a minority of the province's bank employees we do not have the bargaining power to win a good contract.

The C.L.C. Campaign Against SORWUC

To organize such a large unorganized industry we need the active support of all trade unionists. The Canadian Labour Congress has been actively campaigning against our union. C.L.C. representatives vetoed support from local unions who had given us support previously.

"The lack of support from the C.L.C. has hindered our campaign as much as the anti-union actions of the banks," said Jackie Ainsworth, U.B.W. vice-president. "As long as most unions in B.C. continue to cower to the C.L.C. executive, thousands of workers will remain unorganized. The C.L.C. and its affiliates must take responsibility for that."

SORWUC Struggles On

In the meantime, the union will continue to defend bank employees against

CONTINUED ON P. 22

POLITICAL COWARDICE

- by Cynthia Flood

I've received a few anonymous letters in my time, and dealt with them by placing them in the garbage; they deserve no better treatment. I was shocked on my return to Vancouver late this summer to find that such a letter had been printed in Priorities in response to my article, "Who Against What?" in the June 1978 issue. In the past, Priorities has indeed protected the names of women who have entrusted their life-stories, personal problems, etc. in articles sent to the magazine accompanied by a request for anonymous publication. But never have we given this magazine's protection to someone who wants anonymity simply "because I work with prominent feminists(?sic) who read your journal" - - in other words to a political coward, who is plain chicken about defending her/his views publicly. I think a bad precedent has been set by printing the Coward's letter and that we should not publish any would-be-anonymous material unless its author is known to at least one of us. We make ourselves vulnerable to political abuse otherwise.

I am thus in a difficult position. I wouldn't have answered this letter or agreed with the decision to print it. Since it has seen the light of print however I suppose I must take up what it has to say; not easy, since the Coward has misquoted, misspelled, miscapitalized and otherwise doctored up my sentences, and also appears to be utterly deficient in a sense of humour.

The Coward is upset to think that I may feel insufficient respect for Woodsworth et al. (Marx's name seems odd-man-out in the list, but however.) Please be assured I never laugh at them publicly. However, if they were to or had formed groups called Middle Income Earners

Against Poverty or Whites Against Racism, I certainly would.

I know, Coward, that liberal organizations have their place. They do indeed, far too large and influential a place. I wish all their members were socialists instead. I wish all the intelligence and energy going into their useless and counter-productive activities were directed at the roots of the problem instead. As for chivalry, which Coward gets all weepy over: Go back to the roots of the word. Men on horses. Up High. Helping/saving those below. Being nice when they had all the power.

On the racism/black civil rights movement analogy I drew: Coward has rewritten much of the history of the 1960's with the remark that only in SNCC "were whites excluded." An interesting way to put it. I should think its members would have been likely to call it an "all-black group." Does Coward then disapprove when specific groupings of the oppressed band together? Does he think that women should be able to join Men Against Sexism? Or whites join native Indian groups? Or management join unions?

Coward seems unblushing in her/his willingness to throw democracy to the winds for tactical reasons, when "it seems necessary." And who, O Coward, shall declare when/if the mystic moment of necessity has arrived? You? A clue may be found in the sentence beginning, "And it is a tactical question." The categories rank-and-file, female, and poor speaker appear on one side of the equation, and professional, male, and good on the other. I see

And on the word "sexism". Sorry, Coward, I don't care if you like using what you admit is a "label with fuzzy edges" in your political work. You shouldn't. I shouldn't. Everybody shouldn't. I think we should all try, very hard, with one-syllable words if necessary, to be Clear. If that is elitist and hypocritical to you, that is your problem.

Now on the matter of Brother Irwin. Oh non-sexist Coward, why do you define it as a "slanderous slur" to be thought gay if you are not? Is it also an s.s. to be thought heterosexual if you are not, O Coward?

One last word, Coward. Come out of your political closet. Brave those mean old "prominent feminists" and declare yourself publicly. Things do get rough out here sometimes, but at least the air smells clean.

CONT FROM PAGE 20

employer harassment, and to defend their right to organize. Leafleting and other organizing activities are also continuing in the effort to build province wide units in each bank. If you wish to help contact the union at: #1114 - 207 West Hastings or telephone 684-2811.

Feminist Arts Festival and Victoria and UVIC Conference



To be held Friday, October 27 and Saturday October 28, 1978

University of Victoria, Maclaurin 144

Sponsored by the Status of Woman Action Groups

AGENDA:

Friday 7:30 p.m. : Nancy Morrison, Guest speaker from the Family Court, North Vancouver.

Saturday 9:00 a.m. :WORKSHOPS:

- *money beyond the grocery budget
- *dealing with aggression
- *Participating in politics

*Health - What too many of us don't know

* Dealing with sexism

DISPLAYS and INFORMATION EXCHANGE

PREREGISTRATION ONLY

\$7:00 by October 19, 1978

Contact Shirley Nordstrom
1429 Monterey Ave.
Victoria, BC
598-6485

FREE DAYCARE and BILLETING

Human Rights Action!

This month's Priorities is printing summaries of a number of Human Rights' cases involving sex discrimination. The Human Rights Branch has been one of the most effective agencies we have for combatting sex discrimination. It is important that women know that, with help, they can effectively fight discrimination and win. It is also necessary to recognize how important it is for the Minister of Labour to appoint Boards of Inquiry.

I CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT DISCRIMINATION CASE

In August, 1976, Gail Jewsbury filed a complaint that the Capital Regional District refused to hire her because of her sex for a job as a waste water monitoring technician.

Although the Human Rights Branch made great efforts for two years to settle the case, a settlement was reached only after the Labour Minister set up a Board of Inquiry.

Gail Jewsbury received:

- 1) \$2000.00 immediately
- 2) first refusal of the first available waste water monitoring technician's job, either part-time or full-time
- 3) should she refuse a part-time job, she would still be offered the first full-time job
- 4) the Capital Regional District confirmed that it will operate in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of the Human Rights Code.

This settlement was reached May 17, 1978, the day before the Board of Inquiry was to start a hearing.

CONSENT ORDER IN SEX DISCRIMINATION CASE

Marilyn Toms was referred by Canada Manpower, Nanaimo, to a summer job as a landscaper with Van Deleur Constructing Limited. She alleged that when she phoned the employer, she was told "I do not hire girls." Canada Manpower referred two other women to the job, also both of whom, when contacted by the Human Rights Branch, stated that they would not be hired because they were female.

Marilyn Toms succeeded in obtaining other work for the summer as a waitress.

Efforts by the Human Rights Branch to settle Ms. Toms' complaint against Van Deleur Contracting Limited were not successful and the Minister of Labour referred the case to a Board of Inquiry. Prior to the date of the Hearing, a settlement Agreement was achieved which became a Consent Order of the Board of Inquiry. By Consent, the Board ordered:

1) "That Van Deleur Contracting Limited shall offer its employment opportunities to all persons in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia and in particular, shall select persons for employment on the basis of ability to perform.

2) That Van Deleur Contracting Limited shall forthwith pay to the complainant, Marilyn Toms, the sum of \$150."

\$50,000 SETTLEMENT IN EQUAL PAY CASE

In February 1978 six women signed a complaint form alleging discrimination in pay on the basis of sex. The women were employed as "cleaning assistants", a position held only by women. The

women alleged that they performed substantially similar work as "cleaners" a position filled only by men. Two of the men in the cleaner position were required at times to wash floors and bale garbage, duties the women did not do. However, neither did the other men in the cleaner position do these duties, yet received the higher rate of pay.

A Human Rights Officer was appointed to investigate the complaint and as part of his investigation, spent two nights in a row observing the functions of the cleaners and the cleaning assistants. The Officer's investigation indicated that the complaint was valid and a settlement was reached with the company whereby:

- 1) The company gave a written commitment to adhere to the provisions of the Human Rights Code
- 2) All 19 women in the cleaning assistant position were given equal pay with the male employees and received \$48,000 in backpay
- 3) In addition, three female employees who had left their job were sought out and given the \$2,000 backpay to which they were entitled. It was not possible to track down a fourth female employee.

B.C. DIRECTORIES

The Human Rights Branch has received complaints at different times concerning city directories. These directories in British Columbia and the western provinces are published by B.C. Directories, 100 East 4th Street, Vancouver. The complaints alleged:

1) Discrimination on the basis of sex and marital status

The Directories were based on a discriminatory, male-only view of the world and married women, in particular, were treated as inferior and unimportant human beings. For example, in an ad promoting the city directory,

"Typical Questions Your City Directory Will Answer", it states that the directory will give you all kinds of useful information about an individual - where does he live, does he own his home or rent, what does he do for a living, where does he work, is he the "head of the house" or a resident, does he own a business, is he a member or officer, etc. If the individual was a woman, however, the only information considered relevant was "is the woman single, married or a widow?" In the directories, the name of a married woman was simply listed in brackets behind her husband. For example, -

"Parker John S (Mary) Rtd h 360
Gordon St"

2) Exploitation of widows

In the case of a widow, B.C. Directories asked for and listed the deceased husband's name.

3) Invasion of privacy

People were listed in directories even when they themselves had given no information to the directory and did not wish to be listed in the directory.

The system followed by B.C. Directories clearly re-enforced discriminatory attitudes toward women as less than equal citizens. As part of its educational work, the Human Rights Branch entered into discussions with B.C. Directories in an endeavour to persuade them to treat women in an equal manner. Some progress has been made:

1) Discrimination on the basis of sex and marital status

- Information concerning a married woman is now listed, if she so wishes. However, the married woman's name is still appended to the husband's listing and she is then listed separately on her own. For example,

CONTINUED ON P. 28



Rally for Choice

- by Hilda L. Thomas

Over 500 women, children, and men turned out for the march and rally on Friday, July 28th, in support of the slogan "Abortion: Defend a Woman's Right to Choose".

The rally, organised by the Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion, was endorsed by a wide range of organizations from the B.C. Synod of the United Church and the YWCA, the B.C. Federation of Medical Women and the AMS (UBC) to the Gay Alliance Towards Equality and the Greater Vancouver Union of the Unemployed. The CCCA and the rally had received NDP endorsement at the Provincial Council meeting in June.

The march from QE plaza to St. Andrew's Wesley United Church was orderly, militant, and high-spirited. At the meeting which followed, a generous and supportive audience heard speaker after speaker attack the anti-abortion campaign as reactionary and anti-woman, and essentially anti-life. Concluding speaker Rosemary Brown put the feelings of the assembly succinctly when she said, "These people call themselves pro-life. I resent that very much. I am pro-life." Rosemary and the many speakers who preceded her (including representatives from the YWCA, SORWUC, and AUCE, the Vancouver Status of Women, and the United Church) received repeated ovations for their insistence on a woman's right to decide if and when she shall bear children, and their refusal to accept the efforts of a reactionary pressure group to restrict that right.

The issue of the Vancouver General Hospital Annual Meeting is no longer the focus of attention, since Health Minister R. McLelland on August 11th appointed a single administrator to take over the powers of the Board of Trustees and the membership of

VGH. But the issue of a woman's right to a safe, legal abortion is by no means resolved.

In mid August the CCCA learned that the anti-abortion group was mounting an attack on Lion's Gate Hospital in North Vancouver. In the space of a few days, CCCA managed to sign up several hundred members to attend the LGH Annual Meeting, to be held on Wednesday, September 27, at Carson Graham Secondary School at 7:00pm. The CCCA intends to continue its efforts to defend B.C. hospitals against this kind of pressure, and to educate the public and build support for a woman's right to choose.

N.D.P. policy at both provincial and federal levels states that abortion is a matter to be decided between a woman and her doctor. This policy has been debated many times in convention, and has been repeatedly affirmed by the membership. It will take the determined action of women and men in the party to achieve our goal of freedom of choice - and thus freedom from harassment, suffering, and inequality - for all women who find themselves pregnant against their will.

The Women's Committee has prepared an information kit on the subject of abortion to assist our federal candidates. We urge all women to take up the issue during the forthcoming federal election, and to make sure that all N.D.P. candidates take a firm stand on our policy.



Women Talk About Power

by Brig Anderson

Power as a personal and political tool was redefined for the over sixty women who attended the Women's Studies Institute workshop on women and power at Simon Fraser University in August.

Introducing the Conference, Liora Salter, assistant professor in Communication Studies and co-founder of Co-op Radio, said she wasn't sure whether the conference was about why women were excluded from power, or about those who have already achieved power in their relationship to the world, or whether it was about organizing to take control. The integration of these concerns was the goal of the conference, she said. Women feel insecure, perhaps unnecessarily, when their peers are more successful, or when they are singled out for public attention as a name rather than as a person.

SARA DAVID

The weekend was divided into formal and informal sessions. Sara David, a psychologist and feminist now in private practice, discussed ways of working with power that release blocked energy in women, allowing them to function with increased competence. She saw power as the ability to analyze situations in a political way. Feelings of powerlessness change to competence when women organize collectively with others.

Self-doubt was another great power-robber, Sara David said; the issue is not between personal and public power, but between power and powerlessness. Once having achieved personal power, it can be developed and channeled outward while still validating and affirming one's self.

Avoiding stereotyping of masculine/feminine species." Women's most significant role

skills means accepting one's self as a balanced individual who can achieve a synthesis that will allow women to achieve maximum mental health. Sara David feels that women have a special ability, not necessarily natural, for developing their spiritual power. She defined it as loving without demand, meditating on strength and moving out into the world with authority and trust.

JILLIAN RIDDINGTON

Jillian Riddington, co-chairperson of the Women Against Violence Subcommittee of the B.C. Federation of Women, and vice-president of the Vancouver Status of Women, talked about transition houses and rape crisis centres where women regain their power. She gave vivid examples of wife battering and incest; unless all women have the choice not to be in the home, they are at risk. Riddington linked the problem of violence with economic, social, and political factors, and showed how governments do not provide adequate support and funding.

SHELAGH DAY

Job segregation, segregation by sex, unequal pay, lack of unionization are only a few of the ways women are discriminated against, said Shelagh Day, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer for the City of Vancouver.

She said that men in positions of authority still held sexist and racist beliefs. When Robert Jackson gave his annual report to the Ontario Legislature on declining school enrolment, he showed pictures of women holding white babies as "beautiful examples of that rare and endangered

still seems to lie in their reproductive function, and in their ability to maintain racial superiority. All these myths, Day said, still have to be fought.

Women who finally manage to be appointed to public positions like Shelagh Day's, however, are still put into inherently contradictory positions. Change for those who suffer inequality involves change in the system itself. Since that is unusual in an institution, it can cause suspicion, fear and uncertainty. No one seems to want changes that cost money and that require political change. Women cannot deal with these issues if they are not elected to positions of political power. Even there, they have become disaffected because of their Party's failure to carry out promises made.

During the discussion that followed, Shelagh Day got a lot of support for her criticism that a newspaper columnist like Doug Collins can publicly destroy the work she is trying to do. The audience was shocked and disgusted to learn of Collins' character assassinations against Shelagh Day, and of the extent of his influence.

PAULINE JEWETT

On Saturday the conference continued with Pauline Jewett, president of SFU, giving a lighthearted account of her rise to a position of power. She described her ambivalence about not playing power games or manipulating people, a necessary part of a politician's life.

The question of creating a separate Women's Party arose several times; Jewett said it was not practical, involving too much time, effort and money while still not guaranteeing fundamental change in society.

Among other abilities women must, Jewett said, develop their management skills further by attending courses such as those offered at Western. Women must be helped to gain access to administrative and managerial jobs, she said, and SFU should do more than just offering MBA courses. Women in hierarchies need support from other women. At the moment, women don't yet feel they are the correct sex, whereas men don't feel any such complications. "Sex is by far the most significant variable in our society," she said.

GAIL BORST

Reprinted from PEAK

Gail Borst, a service, office and retail workers of Canada union worker (SORWUC), described her background of unionizing and laid to rest popular fears and myths about unions.

She said a union's power lies in its ability as a legal bargaining unit between the workers and their employer.

Unions still need much energy and money to fight old battles and start new ones, she said. She referred to the present Muckamuck Restaurant strike as an example of changing consciousnesses. She said now those workers understand how their Indian culture is owned by their bosses.

Borst said unions are engaged in a process of constant social change, and that women must find out they can "put out fingers in the hole and stop the whole works."

If their power lies in withholding services through strikes, they must learn to do that too, she said.

"There is a lot of mystification of power in attributing it to people in high places, and this creates barriers in understanding what real power is." (Liora Salter)

HILDA THOMAS

Reprinted from PEAK

Hilda Thomas, senior instructor of English at UBC and long time NDP member, gave an interesting insight into women contributing their humanity to political life.

Feelings of rage, grief, joy and pleasure were legitimate expressions when they reflected people's real experiences, she said and should not be divorced from political life. She saw women's power in the fostering of a better understanding of political life.

cont. from page 27

DOROTHY SMITH

The women and power weekend workshop ended on a positive note, with Dorothy Smith, professor of sociology at the Ontario Institute of Education and activist in the women's movement, describing power as growing more resourceful and stronger. She quoted Mao Tse Tung, "where there is oppression, there is resistance," and said we have come a long way from discovering that we had to learn to speak out with others, to participate and become active in our struggle for a better life. The movement had linkages throughout the country, and its network of communication and support makes this a reinvigorating time for her.

Smith said the crisis of capitalism has also put women into a crisis. The political emptiness of the movement grows as basic issues of unemployment and unequal pay deepen and continue. As women rediscover how their personal lives involve political risk-taking they rediscover their oppression.

Masses of women are learning to see how they get hired and fired disproportionate to men. As long as women are surplus in the labour market, they will be dependent on men. Women must start asking "Where are we now?" and start with small immediate changes to improve lives, then address major issues like building up political strength and finding community in struggle.



"Nichols Dennis R & Joanna S;
studd h 630 Murray Park

Nichols Joanna S Clk Fed co-op
Ltd h 630 Murray Park"

This system is thus still discriminatory, as well as being confusing and wasteful of space.

- For "occupants 18 years and over" in the house, B.C. Directories still treat the wife as being of no importance and include only her name and initial, which are appended to the information concerning her husband.

2) Treatment of widow

B.C. Directories promised the Human Rights Branch to delete "deceased husband's name, if widow". The only change in the form this year, however, is to say "deceased husband's name, if widow - optional". B.C. Directories have now promised that this information concerning the deceased husband will not be printed, if supplied, and that on the next printing of the form, the request will be deleted all together.

3) Invasion of privacy

B.C. Directories have stated that they will include in the directories only information that is supplied by the people involved themselves and will not obtain information from other parties. They have said that anyone who is presently listed in a directory and wishes not to be, can write to them and will then be excluded.

Until B.C. Directories do treat women in an equal manner, we can only suggest that those who are offended by the discriminatory treatment refuse to provide any information or be listed in the directories at all.

The foregoing material was provided by Kathleen Ruff, Director Human Rights Branch

Fostered "Star" Mentality

Reprinted from Upstream - July 1978

By Pat Daley

Take 50 supposed experts on "Canadian women", \$16,700 from the Secretary of State Women's Program, and some futuristic thinking and you're supposed to end up with a view of the status of women in the year 2000. But the Western Women's Conference, held in Ottawa at the end of May to plan strategy for the future of the Canadian women's movement, left more than one delegate disappointed.

"The purpose of the conference was to bring together 50 of the top women experts on women from across the country in a think-tank situation to look at the future of women", said conference chairperson Eileen Hendry in an interview from Vancouver.

It was the first national conference organized by the seven year old Western Conference Opportunities for Women Committee. The Committee, which is unstructured, without a society or membership, has held three previous conferences in the western region.

"We meet and decide what we think needs to be done next", Hendry said.

MEMBERS NOT REPRESENTATIVE

Women attending the conference were not representative of groups but were hand-picked by the organizers for their presumed abilities in a think-tank situation. The conference was closed to everyone else.

When word of the conference got out, some local women were disturbed about the structure and the use of government funds.

"We don't think that the Women's Program should be investing money encouraging

a star mentality in a grassroots movement", said Sheila Gilhooly of the Ottawa Women's Centre policy committee. "Even if we should be allowed to share the secret contents of the conference, we are not sure we would feel particularly interested or informed because it represents only the findings of a bunch of middle-management women".

"People can criticize us, but those were the terms of our conference", Hendry said. "We were looking for women who had been in the business of working for women for a number of years and had expertise". She said they were drawn from government industry, the private sector and women's groups, with an attempt to get someone from every province.

"If other women want to put on a conference that's representative, they can do what we did". What they did was get a grant of \$16,700 from the Secretary of State Women's Program.

Hendry said discussion on the most recent gathering started "well over a year ago" when they realized that the United Nations decade for women was coming up and "a new initiative needed to come up".

There was a fear, she said that because women have too much work to do on a daily basis--getting caught up in issues like day care and rape--that "unless we start imagining what life is going to be like in the year 2000 we might get left behind".

Women's Program director Sue Findlay said she wasn't bothered that women attending the conference were not representative of women and women's groups in Canada.

"They were invited on the basis of their long term involvement, particularly in the areas of planning and policy making", she

said. "That's why it included quite a few women from provincial governments and advisory councils".

"I think there's room for both kinds of conferences. It depends on what you want to accomplish. The Western Conference group wanted it closed to have it as a working session".

Although Findlay attended the conference, she would not discuss it saying, "It's not up to us to comment on whether the money was used effectively".

WHAT WENT ON?

In fact, finding out exactly what went on at the conference was almost impossible. Monica Townson, chairperson of the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women, joined Findlay in not commenting.

When asked what was decided, Eileen Hendry said she didn't feel she could answer "because there might have been 80 items that were all important and we didn't have time to make them priority issues".

Stating that "the implication that Canadian women's lives are being planned is too grandiose an idea", she said no policy was decided.

"What we tried to get to was strategies to get it done. We'll have to wait until we sift through mounds of material to see if there was a new direction".

She said a report on the conference is being written and will be made public so women can learn about the process of a conference that was not organized by government or anyone else but women.

"What was new was that this was a conference put on by women for their own initiative. Instead of looking at the result of the conference, look at the whole concept". But the search for results continued.

CONFERENCE DISAPPOINTING AND FRUSTRATING

Nola Landucci of Ottawa said she found the conference disappointing.

"I was on a personal and on a feminist level really pleased to see a lot of people whose work I was impressed with", she said. There appeared to be a consensus on the strategies to take, but "I was very disappointed that it didn't seem able to bring it together".

Stating that she thought many women left the conference feeling frustrated, Landucci said, "I don't think that there will be much come of it. On an individual basis, great things could come of it. But I don't expect that an awful lot will come of the conference. It wasn't really able to harness those people and their commitment into any long term stuff".

Another word on the Western Women's Conference comes from Esther Shannon, active in many feminist services in Ottawa. "Eileen Hendry says we should be glad that women are initiating these things. Indeed we can be glad. But it is worth considering that if the output of this initiation is denied to women as a whole then we are in a peculiar situation. We find ourselves running about full of gladness, yet we are without the least idea in the world of why we are glad, or to what ends our gladness serves, or whether we should indeed be glad, or maybe gladder, or perhaps even gladdest!"



MAUDE RAWSON
TRUST FUND
July Priorities
c/o Mr. Richard Brail
305-217 West Hastings
Vancouver, b.c. V6B 1A7

meetings

EDITORIAL MEETINGS:

Tuesday, October 3rd, 1978

Tuesday, October 17th, 1978

WORK WEEKEND:

Friday, Saturday, Sunday
October 20th, 21st, 22nd, 1978

AT:

517 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.

Priorities needs your contributions:

an article, personally screaming, a
book review, a movie review, comment
and your viewpoint on your union/or
workplace/or situation

COME TO AN EDITORIAL MEETING OR WORK
WEEKEND!!!!!!!!!!!!

Contributions: deadline October 17th
meeting

Subscriptions and letters please.

SUBSCRIBE TO PRIORITIES !

If you haven't yet subscribed to Priorities or if you want to take out a gift
subscription, enclose \$5.00 cheque or money order payable to Priorities and
send with this form to Priorities, 517 E. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1X4
The commercial rate for institutions is \$10.00.

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ subscriptions to Priorities.

Name _____ Name _____

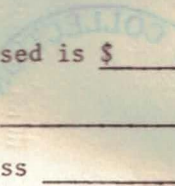
Address _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Riding _____ Phone _____ Riding _____

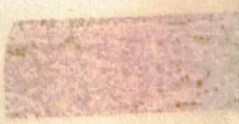
Renewal _____ New Sub _____ Renewal _____ New Sub _____

THANKS

- Elisabeth Weigola - Alert Bay BC
- Ethel Hare - Burnaby
- Jane Erickson - Cobble Hill BC
- Jacie Boyes - Vancouver
- Angela Page - Port Moody
- M. Headley - Burnaby
- Eileen Elmy - Toronto
- Jacque Boyer - Pt. Coquitlam



Handwritten notes in blue ink:
Name: [unclear]
Address: [unclear]
Phone: [unclear]
Riding: [unclear]
Renewal: [unclear]
New Sub: [unclear]



WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 21, 1978

DEAR SISTERS,

THE B.C. WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE WILL BE HOSTING A RECEPTION FOR WOMEN ATTENDING THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, FROM 7 TO 10:30 PM, AT THE DEVONSHIRE HOTEL.

IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND THIS RECEPTION, OR IF YOU KNOW OF OTHER NDP WOMEN WHO WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND, PLEASE REQUEST AN INVITATION BY WRITING TO MS. MARGARET BIRRELL, CO-CHAIRWOMAN, B.C. WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE, C/O PROVINCIAL OFFICE, 517 E. BROADWAY, VANCOUVER, NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 15TH. IN THE EVENT OF A POSTAL STRIKE, PLEASE TELEPHONE YOUR REQUEST TO PROVINCIAL OFFICE BY THAT DATE (879-4601).

MB/HLT

IN SISTERHOOD
M. BIRRELL

WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 21, 1978

DEAR SISTERS,

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WOMEN WILL BE MEETING IN VANCOUVER ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31ST, AND WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, AT THE HYATT REGENCY HOTEL.

CANADA IS ENTITLED TO SEND ABOUT TWO HUNDRED WOMEN AS OBSERVERS TO THE COUNCIL MEETING. THESE WILL BE SELECTED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND THE COUNCIL AS AN OBSERVER, YOU SHOULD SUBMIT YOUR NAME AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE TO MS. JUDY WASYLYCIA-LEIS, FEDERAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZER, 301 METCALF, OTTAWA, K2P 1R9.

THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WILL MEET ON THURSDAY AND FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND AND 3RD. CANADIAN OBSERVERS WILL BE SELECTED BY LOTTERY. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE LOTTERY, SEND YOUR NAME TO MR. ROBIN SEARS, FEDERAL SECRETARY, AT THE SAME ADDRESS.

YOU MAY FIND IT CONVENIENT TO USE THE FORM LETTER BELOW.

IN SISTERHOOD

M. BIRRELL

C)-CHAIRWOMAN

PER HLT

MS. J. WASYLYCIA-LEIS
FEDERAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZER