

PRIORITIES



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PERSPECTIVE

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WOMEN AND...

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...TECH CHANGE

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"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 an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."

— NDP Policy on Women's Rights

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Thanks to all the workers who have made the production and distribution of this magazine possible.

Tech change: the challenge to women

Women are on the front lines of the technological revolution. Job opportunities for women are changing radically. New skills will be needed. Are we prepared?

The first and most important step for dealing with any kind of change is to become knowledgeable and informed about the nature of that change. We, as women, need to become informed about the micro-electronic revolution, how it will change the nature of work and the workplace and what employment opportunities are likely to develop as a result of new technology. We must raise awareness of the implications of technological advances. Such things as information sessions, public meetings, discussion groups and films, etc. could begin this process.

Because many of the jobs traditionally held by women will be eliminated by

the new technologies and because those jobs that do remain will tend to be monotonous, stressful and closely monitored, women must begin to move into non-traditional occupations. We must set our sights high.

Career planning and job training programs need to be greatly expanded. On-the-job training and/or paid educational leave are pre-requisites for women who wish to develop careers. Unionization for women is more important than ever before, not only as a means of gaining more control over our workplaces, but also as a way of holding employers accountable to us, as workers. Difficulties for working women that cannot be solved through the collective bargaining process will have to be dealt with by legislation and changes in labour codes.

We must push for these changes and organize ourselves to make governments and employers responsible.

We must assume a larger social stance and question the present control of technology and the direction in which it seems to be leading society as a whole.

New technologies reduce the skill requirements of jobs. What are the implications of this for our children? What effect will it have on the educational system? How will people cope in a world with built-in, structural unemployment? What are the social costs of permanent unemployment, deskilling, electronic surveillance, wage reductions, etc.? What kind of future do we want?

These questions must be dealt with. They must be answered. It's time to stand up and be counted. ♀

CHAIRWOMAN'S REPORT

WRC activities

by Marilyn Parliament

Cathy Jones has tendered her resignation as Chairwoman of the Women's Rights Committee. We appreciate the work Cathy has done for the committee and wish her well in her future endeavours. As the present vice-chair, I have been appointed Interim Chairwoman of the Women's Rights Committee.

The Tech Change Sub-Committee has been holding forums around the province during the past three months. The Committee received many briefs from the communities which proved to be helpful in developing the final report for the Spring Convention. The Tech Change report endeavours to include all aspects suggested by the briefs and the Committee's own research. In particular, the Vancouver forum focussed on the role played by technological change in the current economic crisis, serving corporate interests rather than those of the average Canadian.

Frances Birdsell, the Women's Organizer, has been establishing Women's Rights Committee contacts in conjunction with helping the local constituencies set up the Tech Change forums. To date there have been twenty-five constituency contacts established for the Women's Rights Committee.

The Events Sub-Committee held a Film and Pub Night on March 23. On April 12 a Wine and Cheese reception was held for Dr. Henry Morgentaler at

the Trout Lake Community Centre in Vancouver.

The Outreach Sub-Committee's purpose is to strengthen and initiate connections with women working in their communities. To find out their political goals and how the NDP can help them reach those goals, the Committee mailed out over 500 packages (letter, questionnaires and *Priorities*) to individuals, women's groups, environmental groups, etc. Through this process we hope to establish contacts with these community groups to help us review and plan party policy on women's issues. The Committee is also soliciting feedback on the helpfulness of the community groups receiving handbooks on NDP policy regarding women's issues.

The Women's Rights Committee sponsored a Strategies workshop to develop a plan for ensuring that women's issues are high profile in the next election and into government. To that end the Action Sub-Committee was struck. The consensus of the committee was that attaining gender parity is the party's and not the Women's Rights Committee's responsibility. The committee recognizes the party's attempt to promote gender parity through empanelling, but continues to have concerns that this process will not accomplish affirmative action. Therefore, the following recommendations were made by the committee:

1. That a provincial fund, similar to the federal Agnes McPhail Fund, be activated in order to help finance the nomination and election of women;

2. That women candidates' regional skills development workshops be held in June 1985, financed by the NDP.

The party leader, Robert Skelly, attended the Women's Rights Committee meeting on February 16 where more specific recommendations were put forth (reported in the last issue of *Priorities*).

WRC CONVENTION PLANS

All women members of the NDP are invited to attend the WRC caucuses during the convention.

The WRC will be caucussing several times during the convention. Look for time and place announcements at convention.

There will be a WRC literature table provided to supply information to delegates on women's issues.

The Events Sub-Committee is researching the possibility of holding a luncheon for women on the Saturday of the Convention.

The WRC is looking forward to welcoming participation of all women delegates this year.

Report of the WRC Task Force on Technological Change

the difficulties inherent in the new technologies.

But much work still needs to be done. much information still needs to be disseminated and a greater empowering of people needs to take place before the goal of a humane society is reached.

It is within this context, that we respectfully submit this report to our members at this Convention.

WHEREAS,

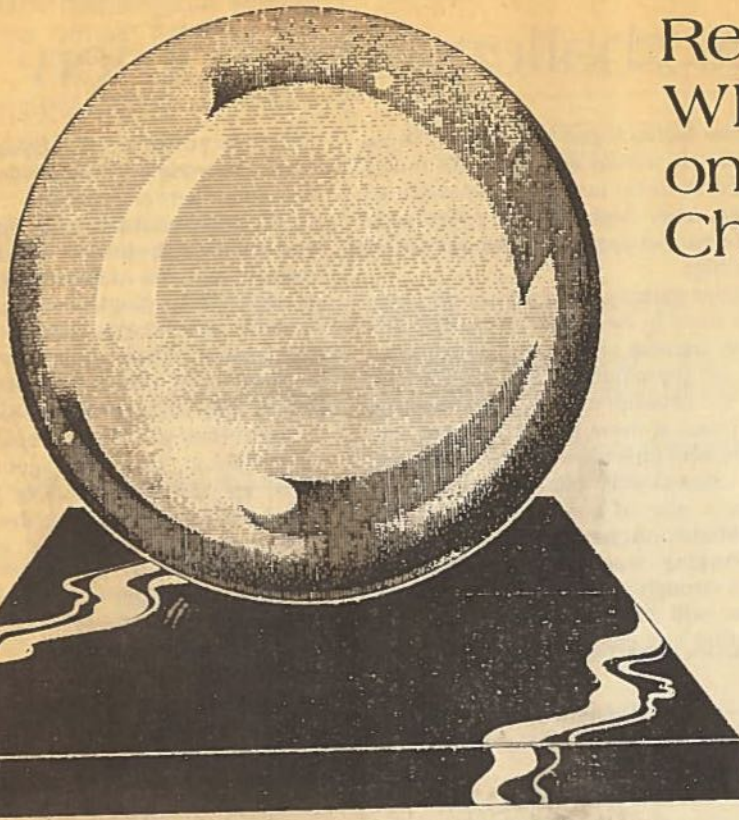
Contemporary society is in a state of great transition. It is a time of change — rapid change. The world economy is changing and all nations are involved in a life and death struggle to secure economic stability. Many governments are preoccupied with simply trying to keep up with that change; influencing and directing it is not even on the agenda yet.

This party recognizes that this is a time of tremendous change, comparable in magnitude to the Industrial Revolution, two hundred years ago. New economic processes were created. The production process was severed from any semblance of community control, causing massive upheaval and a fundamental re-structuring of society. Rigid boundaries between work and leisure were drawn. Work and non-work became compartmentalized and people became alienated from what they do. The changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution came to be understood only in retrospect, when it was too late to influence the nature and direction of the changes that occurred.

We are now involved in another revolution — the technological revolution — which will have as great an effect globally as the Industrial Revolution. We must be prepared this time!

NEW TECHNOLOGY — WHAT IS IT?

Understanding the new technologies requires some definitions. The invention of the microchip revolutionized the automation process, which began in the 1950's, and created a range of possibilities for other new advanced forms of technology. Microprocessors, robotics and information systems quickly incorporated the advances, both technical and financial, made possible by the microchip. As a result, what is possible today was unheard of ten years ago.



The TASK FORCE ON TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE is a party-mandated inquiry into the effects of technological change on society today. We have been working for three years on this subject. We have talked with many individuals and groups, read reports by other groups studying the issue, and held meetings throughout the province.

In wrestling with the topic of technological change, we quickly discovered that we were dealing with a subject of massive import, with consequences extending into every area of social, political and economic life. The weight of responsibility in reporting to this Convention had an important influence on us. As our work progressed, the implications of technological change became more onerous. How to report on a subject that touches all of our lives, that encompasses all policy areas of the Party, that affects us strongly now, and will continue to do so, became a formidable task. As we gained greater understanding of the issue, we found more questions posed than answered. The questions were fundamental to the very notion of social democracy. What kind of policy would be relevant now? What kind of policy will be needed for the future? What kind of policy can be set in place that would be meaningful to the people of B.C. who are being affected by technological change? What kind of policy would enable us to form the next government? How can we recommend a policy to our members when some of them are only just

recognizing the importance of technological change, while others are highly cognizant of the subject because they are victims of the new technologies? How can we meet all the needs of our membership?

This report attempts to point a direction, to educate and inform those of us in the Party who are beginning to deal with the economic, social and political realities of the new technologies, those of us who are overwhelmed by the knowledge we have gleaned, those of us who have felt some of the direct effects of technological change, and those of us who, both overwhelmed and affected by it, are frightened and unsure of what to do. Having gone through all of these stages, we have come to realize that knowledge is power. In assisting people who are in the process of learning and grappling with the problem, we have learned that our Party is rich in ideas and committed to the ideals of socialism, that many of our Party members are knowledgeable and concerned, that given the democratic process of empowering people with information, initiating discussion at all Party levels and working toward group consensus through debate and discussion, we can come to grips with a subject as massive as technological change.

This report is an attempt to reflect the results of that process. Although we may not have all the answers, we have recognized the Party as having the talents, the ingenuity and the creativity necessary to incorporate the benefits and overcome

Microelectronics not only speeds up the production of work but also changes the nature of that work and the way that work is performed. This is often paralleled in a reorganization of the workplace. The memory capacity of microchip-based computing allows machines to carry out elaborate tasks on the basis of a programmed set of instructions. The human operator, instead of performing each task, now often monitors the machine as it performs the task she/he used to perform. The knowledge and information involved in highly skilled jobs can now be embedded in machines that perform tasks which once required years of training. Thus the workplace becomes organized to enhance the productive potential of microprocessor-led systems.

THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES — FRIEND OR FOE

It must be stated that a technological revolution is upon us. Every day sees the introduction of more and more highly advanced forms of new technology. The microchip makes this all possible. Many of the new technologies have the potential to benefit us. Advances in medicine can save lives. Instant world-wide communications systems can give us insight into the world's economic realities. Satellite systems can help us understand the nature of the universe in a profoundly different way. Scientific advances can lead the way to a greater degree of ecological balance. Human intelligence and creative potential could blossom in a workplace freed from hard, tedious, physical labour, dangerous materials and monotonous drudgery.

In a world where all this is possible, why do we have greater political confrontation than ever before, terrible unemployment, long food lines and swelling welfare roles? Why is the threat of nuclear oblivion hanging over our heads? New technology has the potential to free or enslave us. Ultimately the result will depend on who controls the new technology and for what purpose.

CORPORATE CONTROL OF TECHNOLOGY

In a capitalist economy, the *raison d'être* of any corporation is to maximize the rate of return to its owners. This means that all efforts are dedicated to increasing the enterprise's profits. Within this context, new technology is used to increase management's control of workers and to reduce labour costs. For corporate management, the employing of labour is a necessary evil, without which the production process cannot be carried on. As with all technological advances, the invention of the microchip was used by management to reduce the cost of labour. This process is accomplished in several ways.



EFFECTS ON WORKERS

Structural versus Cyclical Unemployment

For a long time unemployment was considered to be a cyclical phenomenon, a result of the boom and bust nature of capitalism. In boom times, demand for goods and services was great and levels

of unemployment were low. Once a market was saturated with goods and services, production would be curtailed and unemployment would rise. This cycle is an intrinsic part of the market economy. A

The following is a list of occupations, many of which are traditionally held by women, that are expected to disappear or change drastically due to the increasing use of micro-electronics.

Office Sector:

Postal Workers
Typists
Secretaries
Invoice clerks
Filing clerks
Shipping clerks
Stores clerks
Insurance clerks

Sales clerks
Stock clerks
Bank tellers
Data preparation staff
Cashiers
Packers
Telephone operators
Warehouse workers

Draftspeople
Computer operator
Programmers
Accountants
Supervisors
Administrators
Junior and middle managers

Production Sector:

TV repairers
Telephone repairers
Meter readers
Cataloguers
Assemblers

Machinists
Mechanics
Proofreaders
Library assistants
Operators

Production painters
Welders
Material handlers
Compositors
Inspectors

lack of co-ordinated economic planning and the individual enterprise's need for greater profit are the culprits. Unemployment rose and fell cyclically. For unemployed workers it was just a question of time before their labour, skills and talents would be in demand again.

However, today the nature of unem-

ployment has changed fundamentally. With the introduction of microchip technology, the bulk of unemployment today has become structural — build into the system. It is a direct result of technological change. The following chart, taken from the 1984 Federal NDP Policy Paper on technological change and provided by Statistics Canada, will illustrate:

EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE ON JOBS

Average annual employment per million dollars of real capital

	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75	1976-80
FORESTRY	175	130	96	57
MINING	24	18	14	8
MANUFACTURING	106	92	76	48
CONSTRUCTION	431	425	377	208
UTILITIES	7	6	5	—
TRANSPORTATION	61	59	57	12
FINANCE	109	83	67	40
TRADE	240	243	245	166
SERVICES/PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	63	60	55	42
ALL INDUSTRIES	82	73	66	37

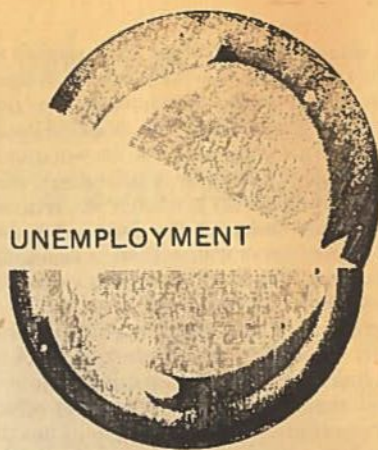
Women are disproportionately the victims of unemployment caused by technological change. It is estimated that 50% of Canadian women have jobs or are looking for jobs. The great majority of these are not second income earners. They are either single women or the heads of single parent families. The number of women in the workforce is growing but the vast majority (80%) is still found in only five of the approximately twenty-five major occupational areas, that is, clerical, health, teaching, sales and service. The occupational categories to be affected most by technological change will be those mentioned above. Because the majority of workers in these fields are women, they will feel the effects of new technology disproportionately. Estimates suggest that by 1990, 40% of all office work will be automated. As a result, nearly one million women will be unemployed by that time. According to a study done by the British Trade Union ASTMS (Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff), 62.1% of all occupations in the UK are threatened by microelectronics.

It is often argued that the unemployment that was widely anticipated in the 1950's and 1960's as a result of automation never occurred and that today's fears about technologically-created unemployment are consequently groundless. However this argument is a weak one. Massive unemployment wasn't seen in the fifties and sixties because those displaced by automation moved into other sectors of the economy, most notably the service sector. Today every area of the economy has seen the introduction of new technology. There is now nowhere for displaced workers to go. In spite of a recent recovery in corporate profits and economic growth in the last 2 years, Canada still has 400,000 fewer full-time

jobs and half a million more unemployed. In order to keep unemployment at 10% or less of the workforce, it is reported by the same NDP Policy Paper that at least two million new jobs will have to be created by 1992. To tackle the unemployment created by the increasing use of technology, Canada will need to create an additional two million jobs. This means that four million new jobs will have to be created by 1992 just to maintain unemployment levels of 10%!

So, while the benefits of increased productivity arising as a result of new technologies flow into corporate coffers in the form of increased profits, Canada's workforce faces permanent, structural unemployment. Unions lose members; their collective bargaining position is weakened. Meanwhile governments are actually offering credits, grants and financial assistance to corporations to encourage them to use new technologies. In other words, we are being put out of work by our own tax dollars. Much of the money given by government to aid Chrysler Corporation when it was in financial difficulty was used by that company to buy robotic assembly equipment which put auto workers out of work.

UNEMPLOYMENT



So the costs and benefits of technological change are shared unequally. Workers experience the curse of structural unemployment. Corporations enjoy increased productivity, reduced labour costs and higher profits. There are a range of other techniques that corporations use to reduce their labour costs.

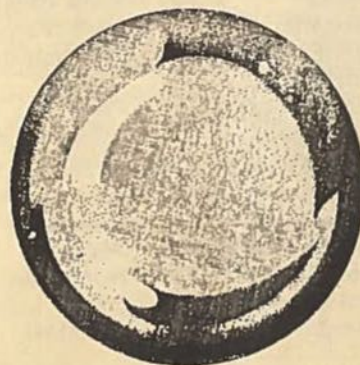
Increase in Part-Time Work and Shift Work

Many full-time jobs have been eliminated and replaced by part-time jobs. This increases corporate profits because part-time workers generally do not receive benefits. Benefits can total as much as 30% of the value of a pay cheque. Women suffer in this regard as well. The majority of women workers do not receive salaries on a par with their male counterparts. Employers see women part-time workers as a cheap pool of labour. Wage inequality is increasing. Because women part-time workers are usually paid lower wages than their male counterparts in the first place, the financial burdens created for female workers by the lack of health and other benefits, can be insurmountable. A further problem for female part-time workers is that their chances of being promoted or retrained are very slim.

Reorganization of the work process due to the introduction of new technology also allows for reorganization and expansion of the work day itself. Because an employer wants to get maximum use out of any new equipment in which she/he invests, it is likely that there will be an increase in shift work in many work places, including offices. Night shift work imposes many difficulties on women, the greatest of these being related to day care.

Deskilling

Deskilling is a further means by which corporations reduce labour costs. It is the process whereby a highly skilled job is broken down into simple tasks that can then be performed by semi-skilled or unskilled workers or by machines. Each unit of work is carefully monitored. Changes are made in order to speed up



production. Microelectronics enhances management's ability to reorganize the work process. By creating new work processes and by decreasing and compartmentalizing the tasks to be done, management's control over the structure of work is enhanced; the worker's control is undermined. Deskilling reduces workers' bargaining power, and hence they can only command lower wages. All workers suffer the consequences of deskilling but for women a further difficulty is added.

Deskilling of work creates a skills gap between jobs that do remain in the workplace. Because higher level office jobs require specialized training in the use of the new technologies, and because employers rarely offer re-training programs to female clerical staff, it is likely that women will find it even more difficult to move out of the job ghettos to which we have been restricted. Affirmative action, never a major force at the best of times, threatens to become a matter of lip-service only.



Part of the audience at the Vancouver conference on technological change

PRIORITIES



There are several important social implications of the whole de-skilling process. Management's enhanced ability to monitor the work process allows it to gain greater control over that process and greater control over workers. With greater control over the work process, the decisions that affect that process lie more and more in the hands of management, thereby reducing the possibilities for worker control. Thus, decisions are centralized in the hands of the corporate elite and workers are less able to affect the nature of their work. Any notion of democracy in the workplace becomes illusory.

Another implication for de-skilling has to do with the monitoring of the production process. New technologies give management information about how workers do their jobs and the speed at which they

do them. For example, computer-interfaced cash registers not only record the item bought and its price, but can also give information about the speed at which goods are processed and the number of errors made by a cashier. The new computers used by telephone companies record the number and duration of the calls each operator handles, the number of mistakes she/he makes and how long she/he is away from her/his station. Microprocessors in a factory can be used to tell how many parts a factory worker makes and the length of time taken per part. In the airline industry, the computer monitors the number of transactions per agent, the number of errors made and the dollar value of the reservations booked.

As might be expected, the stress felt by workers in these situations is tremendous. Workers become alienated from the production process. Any sense of creativity that their work may, at one time, have fostered is destroyed.

Cottage Industries

Because of the difficulties of shift work and the cost of maintaining buildings, employers are now considering the creation of a new kind of cottage industry, based on the operation of satellite computer terminals in the home. Cottage industries call to mind the horrors of sweat shops in the garment industry, where women are paid a set amount for each piece produced. There are no set hourly or weekly wages; because payment is based on amount produced there is tremendous pressure to work faster and longer. Because people who work in their homes are considered to be self-employed, they are not covered by labour code regulations. The isolation and lack

of social interaction caused by working alone produces stress. Although employers extol the benefits of working at home as solving commuter and daycare difficulties, one can imagine the quality of life for a single parent and her child as she sits with one hand on a computer terminal and one hand on the cradle. A professional may prefer to work in the home but it must be remembered that she/he has a choice; most women who would be employed in a cottage industry work situation would not.

EFFECTS ON SOCIETY

1. Loss of the Middle Class

Technological innovations being implemented today threaten the very existence of the middle class. In an industrial economy, there are a few jobs at the top which command a high wage and a larger number at the bottom which receive low wages. In the middle, a large segment of the population is employed in relatively skilled work for which it is reasonably well paid. The continued existence of this middle section is currently threatened. This is the area where corporations stand to enjoy the greatest gains from deploying labour-saving devices. For example, if a machinist is paid \$14 an hour, it is more profitable for a corporation to automate that part of the production process rather than another part of the process where workers are paid less. The introduction of technological innovation into this part of the workforce forces those who are displaced to move down the wage ladder and accept employment at much lower wage levels. The eventual result of this process is the creation of a small, highly paid and highly centralized elite at the top, and a growing population

of low wage earners at the bottom. According to the NDP Policy Paper on Technological Change "Thirty-eight years ago, only 31.7% of our workers were employed in the service sector. By 1981, the proportion had grown to more than 60% — and the rate is accelerating. Gulf Canada in fact projects that by the end of the decade, service sector jobs will occupy 73% of the workforce — and 80% in 50 years time".

As wages are our only means of re-distributing wealth today, the implications of the shrinking middle class are horrendous.

2. Social Disruption

It is possible to carry this scenario a little further. The following possibilities must be considered.

The destruction of the middle class and the resulting shift down the wage scale could have severe consequences for all working women and men. As men scramble for jobs, they will seek those jobs traditionally held by women. This has the potential of setting up an even greater sexual division of labour than has been seen in the past. The effects of pitting women and men against each other are devastating to any society. Pornography, wife abuse and discrimination have always been related to the position of women in society and the exacerbation of these atrocities is horrifying to consider.

As people move down the wage scale, unions will compete with unions and the unionized will compete with the non-unionized until eventually, the old capitalist adage of "divide and conquer" will be fully realized.

A lower wage means less access to education (the only hope of upward mobility), social and community services, health care, decent housing, etc.

Some of these effects are being felt now.

3. Foreign and/or Absentee Ownership

Foreign ownership, foreign control of Canadian companies and ownership of companies operating in B.C. whose head offices are located elsewhere are widely acknowledged. The Party has long recog-

nized the extreme difficulties and hardships imposed on regions by such ownership. The outflow of capital, for example, has always been a source of concern.

With the use of new technologies, the problems are compounded. As long as an industry operated in a resource/manufacturing area, the company employed the local workforce (although often importing management). Indeed, Liberal and Conservative policy has always promoted foreign investment because this meant jobs for the inhabitants of the area. The long term, negative effects of such ownership were balanced by the immediate access to jobs. Now, however, with the use of technology at those levels of the production process where the bulk of workers were formerly employed, foreign ownership takes on a more ominous light. No longer will the local workforce necessarily be employed. Workers will be increasingly alienated if they do have jobs and those who are unemployed will be even more alienated. So with the introduction and use of new technology, resources are depleted and little benefit accrues to the people who live in the region.

One of the most damaging results of absentee ownership of regional industry is the total disruption of community life when a company decides to automate that industry. If, because of a contract with the union, the company cannot lay off the workers, it offers the employees de-skilled, red-circled jobs in other areas of the province or country. If the employee refuses to leave, the company is absolved of further responsibility and the employee is without a job. Or, if a company decides to close shop altogether (usually because cheaper labour can be found elsewhere), whole towns are left unemployed. Regions, quite literally, become depressed areas.

There are additional sources of stress for working women which tend to become exacerbated by an organization of the workplace such as is created by the use of the new technologies.

With the threat of possible job loss, electronic monitoring, de-skilling, etc., such factors as sexual harassment, low wages, cutbacks, overload discrimination, boredom and lack of advancement opportunities become harder to deal with.

For many women, work is an economic necessity, and with today's fierce competition for jobs women may be reluctant (especially if they are not organized) to insist on fair and equitable treatment by employers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY



In Summary

As the new technologies speed up production and increase productivity, profits accrue to corporations and workers lose salary, decision-making ability and eventually jobs themselves.

ISSUES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

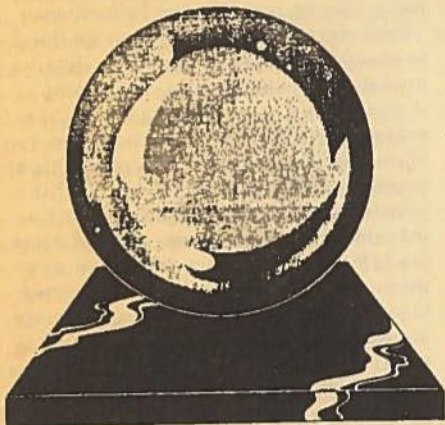
The new technologies have caused concerns in the areas of health and safety. These threats are particularly insidious and difficult to recognize. The hazards resulting from the use of VDT's (Video Display Terminals) are several:

1. Eye Strain — VDT's cause eye strain because the operator focuses the eyes at short range for long periods of time. Glare, caused by improper lighting and reflective glass screens, is another cause of strain. Contrast glare is caused by a background brighter than the machine surface with confuses the eye as to what surface it should be reading from. Flicker from the VDT screen can also hurt the eyes. Improper screen and character size can contribute to eye problems as well.

2. Low level radiation — This has been the focus of a great deal of attention as the effects of radiation on workers, and especially pregnant women, are debated.

3. Ergonomics — Ergonomics means person-machine relationship, that is how you sit or stand or move with the machine and what effect this has on your body. A machine may cost \$20,000 while the chair used by the operator may only cost \$20. Bodies should not have to adapt to machines.

4. Stress — This is the greatest hazard facing workers who work with the new technologies. De-skilling and monitoring produce stress; intimidation caused by a lack of understanding of new machines causes stress; boredom and a sense of isolation produces stress. All of these are present with the new technologies. Stress at work also has profound negative implications for home and social life.

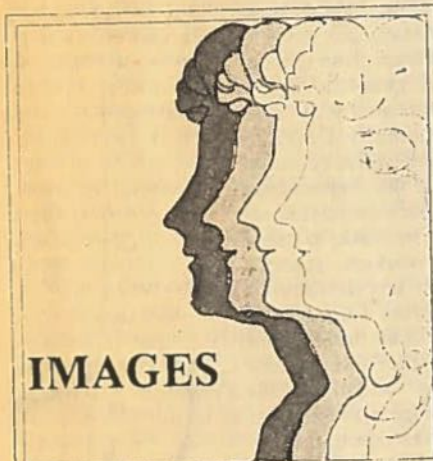


EDUCATION

There has been much discussion about the current state of education in B.C. today. Many people have become alarmed at the financial cutbacks, the resulting loss of programs and the quality of education in general. However, there is a deeper cause for alarm, as was pointed out in a brief entitled, "Post-Secondary Education and Technological Change in B.C.", which was submitted to the Task Force on Technological Change by Mr. George Stanley on March 23, 1985.

"The B.C. Ministry of Education is considering a comprehensive restructuring of program offerings at B.C.'s colleges and institutes. The relevant Ministry document is the 'Preliminary Report of the Planning Committee on Technological Impact'. The report represents a major departure from traditional educational policy. It sees education as being determined entirely by technological and economic considerations. Post-secondary education is to prepare people for employment and to provide specific job skills. But a decreasing number of students will be served, due to the decreasing number of jobs requiring skills. The system will 'filter out' students who cannot be appropriately trained. 'General education' (i.e. education not oriented to specific industrial needs) will be redefined, to include technology in all programs. Ministry claims to be able to increase technological education without skimping on the humanities are incompatible with constraints on funding. The report implies a need for centralized planning to divert resources away from social needs. 'The system will replace human instructors with educational technology.'"

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V1L 5R4

The view that education should be totally determined by economic and technological considerations, that the system must filter out students who cannot be appropriately trained and that education should be centrally planned so that the social needs of education become subordinate to industrial needs has profound and frightening implications for the future of participatory democracy.

The brief goes on to explain that... "In an alternate view, post-secondary education would meet the needs of **society**, not just the **economy**, and of **people**, not just **employment**. The report presents a specific social 'blueprint' as if it were an inevitable future. But technological development is not in the public interest if the people are not served by it. Students need to learn **about** technology, and the changes it is making in their lives. Although B.C. does need educated workers, it is a strong general education that is required, not specialized job skills. The requirement for 'technology in all programs' is shown to be unsubstantiated. The decline in the number of workers requiring specialized skills may be steeper than we think, and the 'middle-class worker' is most in danger. General education is essential to maintaining a humane and democratic society under conditions of 'permanent structural unemployment'."

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Canada needs new technology to become more productive! We must become more productive to be able to compete internationally. The hue and cry of increased competition has been raised time and again by governments, corporations and labour. This argument has often been used by corporations to justify the harsh introduction and use of new technologies and the resulting displacement of thousands of workers. But have we ever stopped to question the argument? Must we concern ourselves with increased productivity and international market competition? The answer usually given (whenever the question is even asked) is that success in international markets will advance the cause of democracy and eliminate poverty, that greater productivity will benefit all Canadians and give all people a greater share of the good life. But is this true?

As socialists, we must question these economic arguments. We must question the notion that increased productivity and securing a competitive edge internationally is the way our economy must go. Who benefits from increased productivity? Productivity in Canada has risen — are we, as workers, benefiting? With greater unemployment, an increasing gap between the rich and the poor and an insufferable and brutal reduction in social services,



Susan Stout at the Vancouver conference

who is benefiting? Given the current control of technology, these trends will become exacerbated, not lessened. We, as workers, will continue to suffer.

Unfortunately, many socialists have become as obsessed with the logic of maximizing economic growth as the capitalists have. We must remember that the goal of socialism is not rapid economic growth.

"Potential Output", a report prepared by the Economic Council of Canada, showed that the output of our economy in 1963 was more than double what it had been in 1946 (measured in 1949 dollars). The argument that poverty is caused by the failure to achieve increased output is hardly believable. If poverty was not eliminated between 1946 and 1963 when output doubled, there is no reason to believe that poverty will be eliminated now, with even greater productivity. Perhaps rapid economic growth could have eliminated poverty, but it didn't. What is needed is a re-distribution of income and a different set of priorities in what we produce.

The goals of socialism are universal economic security, equality of the human condition, the maximization of freedom and individual and communal creativity. Centuries of capitalism have provided the material base upon which these goals can be realized.

In promoting the goals of socialism, the NDP must develop an economy where the market strategy is replaced by overall, comprehensive, economic planning, with a decentralization of power and decision making, and where technology is used not to serve the needs of profit, but is **planned** to serve the needs of people.

Much work still needs to be done around the issue of technological change.

The importance of this work cannot be overestimated. Technology is affecting all of us, directly or indirectly. This strategy is not intended as an answer to all of the problems posed by the technological age. It is intended as a starting point, a place to begin the work involved in moving toward our goal of social democracy. This strategy greatly reflects the impact of technological change on smaller communities in the Province. It is a strategy that commits itself to continued refinement and development as we move toward the realization of social democratic ideals.

Many of the recommendations and directions proposed by "Toward A Strategy for Democratic Technological Change" will require legislative changes. The Task Force has heard from many individuals and groups and it is from this input that we recommend the following, beginning strategy.

1. CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

The most obvious way to begin our fight for democratic technological change is to consider the ways and means whereby both private and public sector employers can be held responsible to the workers they employ and the communities in which they locate. How this is to be done will depend on the nature of the industry and the nature of the community. It is, however, the starting point for us, as a Party, right now.

a) Responsibility to Workers

The democratic and political freedoms we enjoy in our private and social lives must be extended into the workplace. We have many freedoms in society but few in our workplaces. Democratic freedoms in the workplace can be achieved by empowering workers through giving them access to information, and then giving them the right to participate in the making of those decisions that will affect the nature of their work and their workplace. Sharing in the decisions means sharing in the benefits as well. In legislating democratic freedoms in the workplace, an NDP government will clearly empower workers' initiative and control in this area; legislation must not rely on the good will of corporations for implementation.

Workers must have input into how and when new technology is introduced into the workplace and how it is used in the workplace as well. With user-driven design and worker input into the introduction and use of new technology in the workplace, workers are put in a pro-active position rather than a re-active position. Technology

is currently introduced into the workplace with little advance notice given to workers and unions and with little information as to how the technology is to be used. Because new software can totally change the function and use of the technology, what employees are told originally about the function of the technology can change fundamentally once the technology has been installed and the software is changed. Currently, software is not recognized as new technology. Technology is used to centralize power and decision making and electronic surveillance is used to exert greater control over workers. This must stop. The labour codes must be amended in the area of technological change.

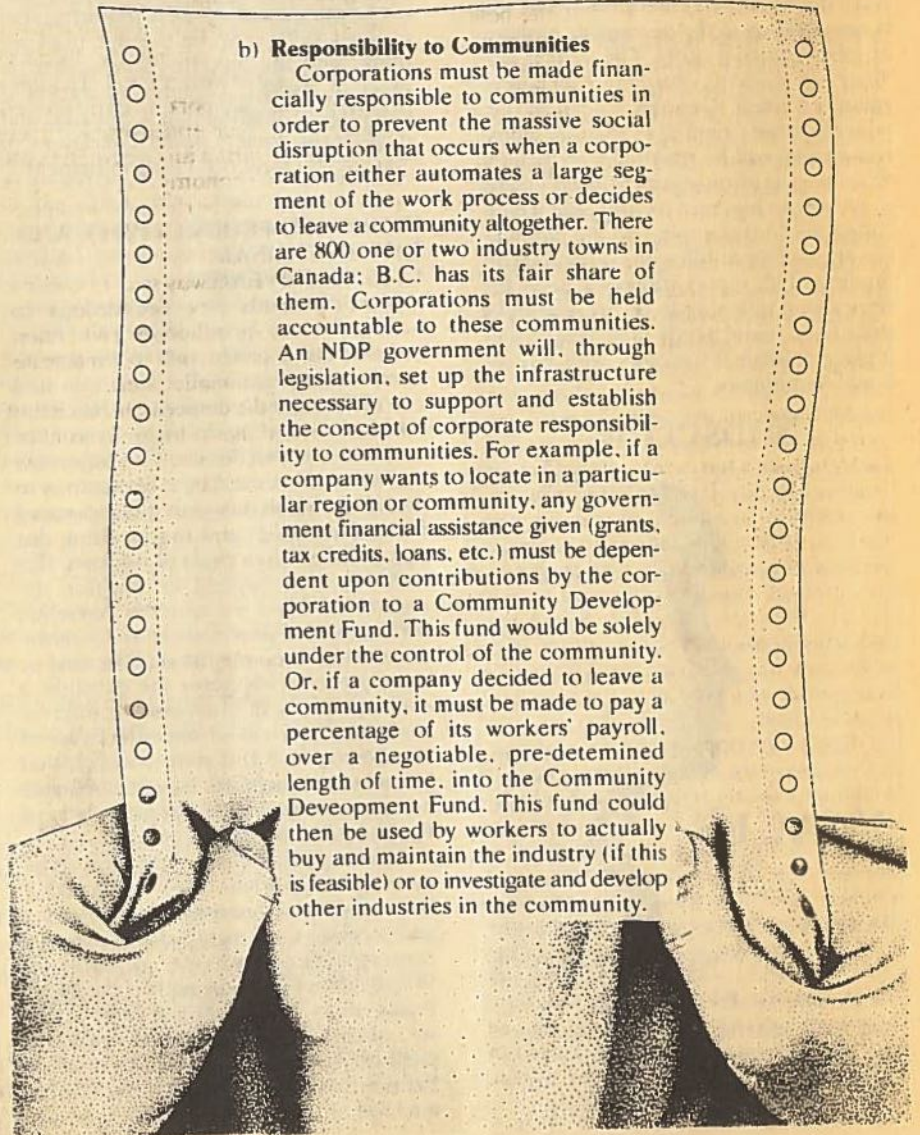
If new technology is introduced into the workplace or a reorganization of the workplace occurs, a corpora-

tion must be held accountable to its employees. This accountability will be in the form of costs, borne by the corporation, that will provide for paid re-training, the option of early retirement, longer vacations, a shorter work week (at full salary), paid educational leave, pro-rated benefits for part-time work, portable pensions, and pensions for part-time and seasonal work. An NDP government will establish the legislative groundwork for the implementation of such accountability.

Because women will be disproportionately affected by the introduction and use of the new technologies, an NDP government will re-affirm its commitment to equal pay for work of equal value and affirmative action programs in its consideration of costs borne by corporations.

b) Responsibility to Communities

Corporations must be made financially responsible to communities in order to prevent the massive social disruption that occurs when a corporation either automates a large segment of the work process or decides to leave a community altogether. There are 800 one or two industry towns in Canada; B.C. has its fair share of them. Corporations must be held accountable to these communities. An NDP government will, through legislation, set up the infrastructure necessary to support and establish the concept of corporate responsibility to communities. For example, if a company wants to locate in a particular region or community, any government financial assistance given (grants, tax credits, loans, etc.) must be dependent upon contributions by the corporation to a Community Development Fund. This fund would be solely under the control of the community. Or, if a company decided to leave a community, it must be made to pay a percentage of its workers' payroll, over a negotiable, pre-determined length of time, into the Community Development Fund. This fund could then be used by workers to actually buy and maintain the industry (if this is feasible) or to investigate and develop other industries in the community.



2. NATURE OF WORK

The current state of unemployment in Canada is such that the cry of "jobs, jobs, jobs" resounds everywhere. Anyone proposing to set up an industry which holds the promise of employment is welcomed. Witness for example, the proposed Dynatek plant that, one day after it was proposed, saw 850 applications for employment at the local Canada Employment and Immigration Centre. Regardless of the impact or viability of such a project, anyone questioning the wisdom of such industrial development is called a heretic and torn apart by the media.

But the idea of jobs at all costs must be approached with caution. We, as socialists, must begin to examine the nature of work and the nature of the workplace. Dynatek may have provided 500 jobs but what kind of jobs? The majority would have been microchip production jobs that would have paid minimum wages, subjected workers to the use of dangerous chemicals, involved the repetition of tedious, assembly-line tasks and been an environmental hazard. Is that the best we can do in providing jobs for people? How far does our need to provide jobs go and what are the other considerations involved as well? In setting up a microchip assembly plant in B.C., we would be competing with third world countries whose workers are paid about \$1 a day, who are not unionized, who work without labour codes and who are not protected by health and safety codes. Do we want to increase their plight or subject Canadians to this kind of slave labour (as the proposed special enterprise zones threaten to do)?

To refute the idea of jobs at any cost, an NDP government will take a positive stand on the presentation of alternatives in dealing with the current state of industrial technology. It will take the offensive in presenting reasoned, pragmatic alternatives, rather than taking the defensive and reacting negatively to current employment trends. It will develop and present options to people. It will study regional industrial needs and integrate those needs with creative, satisfying work that uses technology to serve the human needs of those regions.

With an unemployment rate of over 10% today, any attempt by workers to maintain existing rights or seek a legitimate expansion of rights through the collective bargaining process is often thwarted, and workers are told that their demands are too great and that they should be grateful that they even have jobs. The threat of unemployment hangs over all our heads. The idea that we should be grateful to be working is divisive, and an acceptance of that notion can only hurt us in the long run. Socialism asserts women's and men's rights to useful, meaningful employment. However, the advance of technology will result in fewer

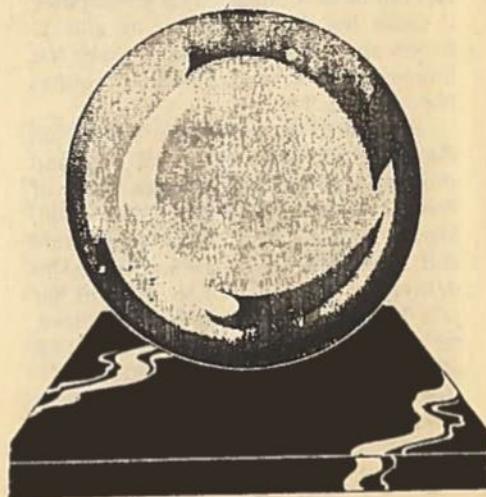
skilled and creative jobs. Those unemployed for a long time will suffer even more as the competition for jobs increases and the number of jobs decreases. How can productivity and wealth be shared with fewer jobs to go around? An NDP government will re-affirm its commitment to a guaranteed annual income for all people and will enact legislation to set this in place. This is more important now than ever before.

3. COMMUNITY OWNED INDUSTRY

The NDP recognizes the problems caused by industries whose head offices are based outside of the community in which the industry is located. These problems include a lack of accountability, arbitrary shop closure and the resulting community disruption, cash flow out of the regions and resource depletion.

An NDP government will therefore commit its resources to provide the infrastructure necessary to encourage the development of local/regional community owned industry. This infrastructure would include such things as financial support (in the form of Community Development Funds), Community Development Information Centres, etc. This infrastructure will support community co-operatives in their endeavours to meet human needs within an environmentally safe, sustained economy. Such co-operative ownership will be designed to replace, not supplement, corporate control of the economy, and such ownership will be structured in such a way so as to enhance the role of new and existing trade unions involved in those industries and sectors. Such co-operatives will be integrated into regional economic plans.

The greater the degree of local control, the less likely the industry is to close. Funds generated from such co-operatives would not leave the community but would be used to enhance local initiative, new industry, stimulate new growth and support the quality of community life.



4. EDUCATION

To foster the kind of society that we, as socialists, would like to bring about and to begin the process of moving toward a strategy for democratic technological change, the role of education must be recognized. There are several aspects of education to consider.

a) Public Education

The public needs to be made aware of the implications of technological change. Information is power and a true democracy must have citizens, empowered by information, to make intelligent decisions and choices. The majority of people today see technological change as a new bank machine, a new VDT at work, a personal computer or the electronic cash register at the supermarket. Computers have a mystique about them and so are to be avoided, or they are harmless toys and so are played with. Many people are without an analysis or understanding of the real implications of technology. Any disquieting notions or feelings that they do have about the rapid growth of

technology are often without an economic or political framework. Having the feeling but having nowhere to go with it leads to alienation and acquiescence to experts for the solutions to problems. Democracy is always presented as the guarantor of certain rights and freedoms; rarely is it described as responsibility. However, it is the responsibility of people to participate in the decisions that will affect them and their children. An NDP government will be equal partners with working people in providing information and resources to raise all people's awareness about the implications of living in a technological age.

b) Institutional Education

Education, through public and post-secondary institutions in BC, is in a beleaguered state. In a time when this province needs an educated electorate, retraining programs, upgrading courses and affirmative action programs, education funding is under attack. An NDP government will reaffirm its commitment to universal education as the true base for the growth of participatory democracy. In a report entitled, "The Educational Implications of High Technology", by Levin and Rumberger, prepared for the Institute for Research on Educational Finance and Governance at Stanford University, it was clearly demonstrated that high technology will not upgrade the skill requirements of future jobs. The Social Credit government is currently emphasizing and supporting the growth of maths, science and technical programs at the expense of other programs. This is clearly the wrong way to go.



From the victim's perspective

by Sharon Shniad

PRIORITIES

An NDP government, through the Ministry of Education and in consultation with teachers and parents, will promote and support those programs that develop the analytical, communicative, expressive and computational skills of students as well as programs designed to foster extensive knowledge of political, economic, social and cultural institutions. These skills should be an integral part of the education system, not so as to meet the needs of high technology, but because such skills will be necessary in dealing with the changing nature of society that students will face in their adult lives.

5. PRIVACY

As technological innovation increases, the issue of privacy grows in importance. Electronic surveillance in the workplace is rapidly being extended into our private lives as well. The use of computers to gather and store information about all of us is growing. The Social Insurance Number has become a universal identifier and such data afforded by banking transactions, credit cards and health records leaves a trail of information that can be kept and stored by data banks. This process of collecting and storing information is totally unregulated. Not only do people not have access to the information stored about them, but in many instances, they do not even know that such records are kept. Advances in micro-electronics continue to enhance this gathering and storage process. Electronic spying of this nature must be regulated. The use of personal data must be licensed and laws must be set in place so that people are aware of, and have access to, any information about them that is held by data banks. An NDP government will enact legislation designed to investigate and regulate such instances of intrusion. This could be accomplished through either a Privacy Bureau or through the Office of the Ombudsman.

The legislative implementation of many of these recommendations will begin our fight for true democratic technological change. But it must be pointed out that this will be an ongoing fight as technological innovation increases, and one that must continue if our goal of socialism is to be realized.

As the Task Force on Technological Change toured the province, hearing briefs from organizations and individuals, a number of common themes emerged. Regardless of the type of work being discussed, the effects of the introduction of new technology on the workers were often the same.

Deskilling, dehumanization, performance monitoring, new health and safety concerns, loss of jobs, substitution of part-time work and overtime for full-time jobs, the benefits of increased productivity going to the company and big business interests at the expense of the public: this was the report from the field heard over and over.

What do these general trends mean in the daily lives of individual women workers? At the Task Force's Vancouver conference held March 16 at the Robson Square Media Centre, the human impact of technological change was described in a workshop entitled *The Victim's Perspective*.

Deskilling

"A passenger agent used to have to know something," said Susan Stout, airline reservations agent and member of the Joint Air Canada - CALEA Health and Safety Committee. "It used to be a challenge to obtain the best financial combination for a passenger. Now that this can be accomplished by a computer, it takes less knowledge to be able to follow the rules. The work is much less interesting now and, of course, requires fewer agents."

Her words were echoed by Marion Pollack, mail sorter at Canada Post and shop steward for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). Like Susan, Marion says she used to take some pride and find challenge in the knowledge of delivery routes required to perform her job. Now that the work is mechanized, no specific knowledge is needed. This allows for a more "mobile, flexible" workforce, making workers into the interchangeable parts desired by management.

"Older workers can't cope with the

technology," reports Marion. "They feel that their skills are no longer valued. They tend to flunk out of computer training and retraining and they don't want to work in the mechanized areas."

Another result of mechanization is the isolation of workers. To relieve the monotony of the job, workers now retreat inside headphones. "Talk among workers on the shop floor used to create ties which strengthened union solidarity," says Marion. Now worker isolation weakens the union.

A third invited workshop speaker was to have been telephone operator and TWU Local 10 president Susan Croll. Although Susan was unable to attend, her story would doubtless have been similar to those of Susan Stout and Marion Pollack. For the telephone operator's view of technological change, we refer to a recent interview in the Vancouver *Sun*, given by Local 10's secretary, Stella Crampton.

Deskilling means dehumanization

In B.C. Tel, reports Stella, deskilling means dehumanization. Operators who used to feel they were performing a public service to their communities are now strictly limited in their contact with callers. Casual conversation is forbidden. With calls now processed centrally, operators can no longer provide neighbourly emergency assistance to local people in trouble.

Monitoring of the production process

Each of the workers reports a qualitative leap in recent years in the ability of the company to monitor productivity. The supervisor no longer hovers over the worker's shoulder but is built into the computer.

At Air Canada a computer monitors the time Susan Stout takes to make an airline ticket sale, the number of transactions she makes, the dollar value of the flights she sells, and the number of errors she makes. If a worker's daily average is lower than that of her colleagues, which occurs simply by the luck of the draw (passengers requesting cheaper flights, for example), the pressure is put upon her to increase her sales. The result is constant speed-up and stress.

Computer monitoring in the post office means individual work measurement and constant speed-up for Marion Pollack as well. As if that were not enough pressure, absentees are harassed through enforced counselling and disciplined if absent more than 6 times in one year.

Telephone operators at B.C. Tel.

are also carefully monitored for productivity by computers, and operators are required to post a flag when they go to the bathroom. The predictable result is stress. "We've got operators who have been here for 4 or 5 years, and when you go to the bathroom, they're there in tears," Stella told the *Sun*.

Health and Safety

Stress from constant speed-up, competition with co-workers, and constant monitoring is a major health and safety concern related to technological change. But there are others. As she spoke, Susan apologized for having to stand to address the workshop, explaining that after years of working at a computer terminal which had been designed and installed with no consideration of the principles of ergonomics, sitting causes her severe back pain. She is now obliged to work in a standing position. While the company invested thousands of dollars in computers to meet its profit needs, it ignored the physical needs of its workers.

The Video Display Terminals (VDT's) used by ticket agents also continue to present a health and safety concern. In addition to the question of low-level radiation, VDT's are now being linked with an increased incidence of angina among women workers due to stress.

Centralization

Another universal of computerization is the new corporate ability to centralize operations. All ticket reservations made in Saskatoon and Regina are soon to be funnelled through Winnipeg. It is anticipated that reservations from all the western provinces could ultimately be processed in Winnipeg, thus closing down B.C. ticket offices.

If workers are unwilling to move once their reservations office is closed, the company can lay them off. By locating central offices in less desirable areas, the company can reduce the work force.

Part-time workers

New technologies, by reducing the need for training and for highly skilled workers, have allowed companies to increase their use of part-time workers. This produces a number of benefits for the company but few for workers. Greater use of part-timers reduces the total number of full-time jobs in the work force so that fewer people can make a living. Part-time work may increase the flexibility of the company but it also increases the unpredictability in a worker's life.

Marion reports that in Canada Post part-timers who want to become full-timers are not being taken on as such.

There have been no new hirings in Vancouver since 1982. Rather, part-timers are used to do overtime. Since their extra hours per day still do not amount to a full work week, they do not have to be paid overtime. No increase in wages has been granted workers to compensate for the increased flexibility gained by the Post Office.

nesses get twice-daily mail drops, letter carrier service to new suburbs and Saturday services to rural areas are being eliminated. Long line-ups confront the average customer at postal stations. Delivery every second day is under consideration.

In telecommunications, new technologies have led to increased competition for the long distance telephone market.



Participating in the Tech Change conference in Vancouver

"If overtime were abolished," declares Marion, "there would be 900 new jobs in the post office." CUPW now loses members at the rate of 1,000 per year.

According to Susan Stout, Air Canada's goal is to get rid of the full-time work force altogether. Part-timers receive only \$5.75 an hour and must pass through 4 wage levels to reach the company minimum for full-timers. With only a 12-hour work week, these workers would not even qualify for UIC.

Decline in service to the public

And, finally, each speaker noted that technological changes in her workplace were instituted to increase profitability and serve the business community at large, not to serve the interests of the public.

Marion noted that the rate structure and services of the post office are designed to benefit large enterprises, not the average customer. Bundled business mail can go first class for only 30 cents while a regular letter costs 32 cents... and rising. While some downtown busi-

The B.C. Telephone Company is lobbying government for a new rate structure allowing a decrease in long distance costs, incurred primarily by business, and an offsetting increase in the costs to residential subscribers for local service.

At the Vancouver airport, Air Canada plans to introduce self-service ticket machines in the fall of 1985 with full implementation by the opening of EXPO in 1986. These machines, activated by a card with a magnetic stripe, will give you a boarding pass and a gate number—another example of service to the public being sacrificed, along with hundreds of jobs.

For workers like Susan, Marion and Stella, technological change has not made their jobs easier, presented new horizons on the job, nor opened job opportunities in new fields. It has meant stress, injury, decreased pride in work, and the constant threat of job loss.

That is why all three of these women are activists in their respective unions. That is why, as *Priorities* goes to press, Susan Stout is walking a picket line from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night. And that is why the struggle must be joined by all of us. ♀

Taming the work force: behind the Quality of Work Life mask

by Nancy Walsh

The report of the Women's Rights Committee Task Force on Technological Change reveals that working people have to pay an extremely high price for the restructuring of the capitalist system we are currently witnessing. Various tactics are being employed to convince workers to pay this price. Familiar to all are the blunt instruments — unemployment, destruction of rights won, union-busting, etc. More subtle tactics, directed towards those fortunate enough to be employed, are illuminated in this, the first of a two-part study researched by Nancy Walsh. It will be concluded in the next issue of Priorities.

Although this issue is not one of concern to women only, as usual women and social minorities will be the first to be driven to the bottom of the social pyramid on which the 'new realities' rest.

Quality of Working Life programs (QWL) have received considerable attention in recent years. Several corporations, government agencies, and innumerable smaller operations have embarked on an astonishing variety of innovations in industrial relations, all offering some degree of worker participation in the managerial decision-making process, and "a new way of working together."

Many QWL programs are implemented in expensive new, highly automated, continuous operation plants designed for large scale production. Other programs, along with new technology, are introduced into existing plants.

Principles and underlying attitudes

QWL is based on a socio-technical perspective which attempts to match workers' social, psychological and physiological needs with the mechanical and technical processes of the workplace. QWL claims a style of management which allows workers to participate in structuring their work. Program scope can range from early involvement in plant design, through work teams that take full responsibility for shift operations, down to simple added responsibilities such as basic machine maintenance, or choice of a suitable type of office chair or colour of paint. Quality circles, semi-autonomous work groups, job enrichment and rotation are all claimed to be appropriate ways of structuring QWL programs based, of course, on a facade of consensus-style decision-making.

Systems designers realized that if expensive, complex plant operations were to be fully productive, management must have a fully co-operative, willing work force. Thus, underlying these management initiatives is an imperative that co-operative relations between management and workers must replace traditional adversarial relations. Offers of more responsibility, training, job progression and participation in decision-making are used

in most programs to entice the worker to identify with the company. The truly sophisticated program encourages the employee to identify with the job; the company is a friendly, supportive place to achieve satisfaction working hard and doing one's best. Productivity will improve along with job satisfaction; wastage and downtime will decrease along with absenteeism, and more open, honest, trusting work relationships will evolve. And profits will increase.

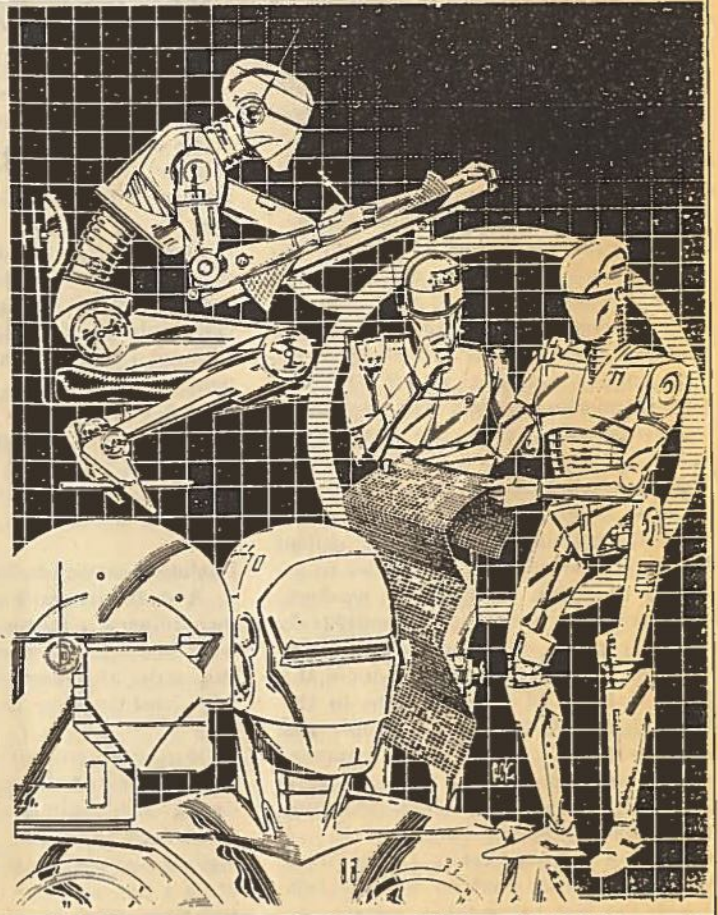
And the birds will sing, the sun will

always shine, and we will all work happily ever after in Industrial Camelot. Except, of course, the two million or so for whom there is no employment in Canada.

High failure rate in QWL programs

Some of the problems with QWL programs will become clear as we look at individual cases. We should note, however, that QWL programs in north America have a high failure rate and a high rate of abandonment. Such programs

Many QWL programs are implemented in expensive new, highly automated, continuous operation plants designed for large scale production.



have often left behind strained work relationships and shattered workers. The potential for abuse, manipulation, excessive monitoring and interference with union structures proves too tempting to managerial staff. Often, new plants with new programs are located in rural areas where an inexperienced and unorganized work force is used. U.S. experience (and Canada's is likely to match) shows an increase in the use of female labour in these plants. Since few women working in the private sector are organized and since women are more likely to be hired for deskilled jobs, we are seriously threatened by any programs making our unionization more difficult or slowing our progress towards workplace equality.

We need real guarantees

It is of no use trying to explain away a failed program with "there was no full time consultant" or manipulation with "management didn't educate themselves well enough." Nor is it useful to try to excuse attempts to use QWL to prevent unionization as "not real QWL." Or "real QWL" has to be based on "honest trust."

We live in a real world with little real protection for what little we have. For the real world we need real guarantees. The effect of QWL programs is to erode those few we have. The high failure rate, the potential for abuse, and the tendency to undermine our unions are just what we have to be concerned about. QWL programs do little to improve the quality of working life because they do nothing to change the unequal power relationships between worker and boss.

To explain the dangers inherent in QWL programs and the strategy behind them, we need to look at the historical context in which they have been introduced.

The post-war settlement

It is now more than forty years since the federal, and most provincial governments, gave legal recognition to the rights of private sector workers to organize, bargain collectively, and to strike. In addition, some welfare state reforms and some effort to reduce unemployment showed that business was willing to trade Keynesian economics for political stability. Government and business imposed this arrangement on a militant and politicized working class to ensure control and to safeguard the future of capitalism.

The same legislation recognizing these fundamental rights also constrained them. For example, Canadian labour legislation, in all jurisdictions, forbids strikes during the life of a collective

agreement, often names and proscribes "unfair" labour practices by unions and sets out precise legal requirements for strike action. Public sector labour legislation has set limits on the content of collective bargaining. The inalienable rights of property are set above the rights of working people, to ensure that labour will play but a subordinate role in Canada's capitalist democracy.

Today's recession, which began in the early 1970's, sees corporations faced with stagnant, shrinking markets, increased foreign competition, and rising resource prices. Governments have responded by offering additional corporate subsidies, by underwriting investments, and by shifting the costs of the welfare state onto working people. But while governments bribe corporations with our money, we are also charged with the responsibility of maintaining capitalism as a viable economic system; to forgo wages, to give up rights and, in the words of a former Liberal prime

impose statutory incomes policies and pass legislation facilitating the use of non-union labour on construction sites? How can workers exercise their Charter rights of association if legislation making it more difficult to organize remains on the books?

And while hard-won union rights are made to appear as privileges, massive unemployment reduces the right to a job to a privilege as well. Every trade union right, every trade union capability is threatened by the ultimate in shop floor coercion: unemployment.

Limitations on the bargaining agenda, inability to bargain new issues, reduced ability to limit arbitrary use of management power, the threat of job loss — all combine to weaken the only organizations that have ever protected us.

Now, it will be more difficult to get protection from sexual harassment while workers fight to protect safety provisions. It will be harder to get affirmative action while we fight to preserve tech



minister, to trust and believe.

Where trust has failed, where workers have refused to give up wages and rights, state coercion has been used to make it possible for capital to renege on the post-war settlement.

What is the use of the right to strike in the face of back-to-work legislation and the jailing of union leaders? How effective is strike action when government imposes restrictions on picketing and designates ever more public sector workers as "essential"? What use is collective bargaining when governments

change clauses, and almost impossible to get equal base rates while so few wage increases are being won. It will be harder to organize in the pink collar ghetto where workers are severely vulnerable to job loss. And how can we protect full-time jobs when part-time work hides an additional unemployment rate derived from the sum of fractions of jobs that no longer exist?

The above is an all too brief look at the historical and economic context in which QWL programs are introduced, programs that claim to assist us in



We can begin to explain this apparent contradiction by recalling the structural antagonism built into the capitalist system. Corporations and workers have no common objectives. Any claim that they do is not merely suspect, it is false. But QWL programs rest upon this claim.

growth and personal development and make a real contribution to company productivity.

We can begin to explain this apparent contradiction by recalling the structural antagonism built into the capitalist system. Corporations and workers have no common objectives. Any claim that they do is not merely suspect, it is false. But QWL programs rest upon this false claim. (That false claim was also part of the fourteen-point industrial relations introduced in October 1976 by then federal Minister of Labour, John Munro, at the same time as wage and price controls were brought down).

The request for trust on the shop floor simply parallels the request for trust in the political arena.

Space does not permit presentation of a representative sampling of QWL programs and, as a compromise, we will present examples of the most successful, the failed, the abandoned and the worst. Each will illustrate a common threat, the threat to workers' organizations and to the work place rights gained over many years of strikes and negotiations.

Two examples will be dealt with in this article; the remainder will follow in the next issue of *Priorities*.

The Japanese auto industry

The Japanese auto industry seems to be the most frequently cited example of management and labour co-operating for greater productivity. It is the latest industrial relations "foreign import," used to drive workers to pay for management mistakes and to extort concessions. It follows a line of West German and Swedish models, advertised before a public convinced that north American workers are lazy, incompetent and greedy and that their industrial relations system has become obsolete.

The high productivity of the Japanese auto industry comes at a high price—the sort of price that only workers are asked

to pay. Its successes are based on a dual economy consisting of a core of permanent workers and a large, lower paid, temporary and often female work force, all dominated by a loose confederation of company unions.

In 1953, during a four-month lock-out at Nissan, the militant auto union was torn apart by a breakaway union led by some employees in the accounting department. When violence against the locked-out workers failed Nissan, backed by the Japan Industrial Bank, offered full back pay to each worker joining the new company union.

75% excluded from benefits

Only about 25% of Japan's workers, all male, enjoy the benefits of lifetime employment, a system where the "company recruits, selects, trains, indoctrinates and ultimately controls an appropriate number of loyal employees" who are willing to equate their personal well-being with the company's success.

All other jobs are filled by expendable, peripheral workers, often women. One of the reasons Honda and Yamaha automated their factories was to increase the use of part-time female employees. These women have no unions, can be fired without notice and are thus hesitant to complain about inferior working conditions. (*Business Week*, Mar. 14, 1985).

In the early sixties, company unions played a major role in the introduction of quality control circles. All workers are required to participate in these small shop floor groups which meet frequently to examine ways of improving product quality and manufacturing efficiency. They saved Nissan \$60 million in 1980.

Although claimed to give workers a sense of participation in management, basic work relationships within the company remain undisturbed. They can be compared to those of a military hierarchy: highly regimented, authoritarian,

and feudalistic, where each worker is expected to know her/his place. This form of work organization, abetted by company union collaboration, has created unusually onerous conditions for Japanese auto workers. Two social mechanisms, the "right attitude" and "group cohesiveness" are the primary levers of shop floor control, backed by supervisory and even union intervention if necessary.

Loyalty to company essential

Remuneration is based on relatively low wages augmented by several allowances. Added to that is a merit system based on supervisors' evaluations. Merit has little to do with it; attitude is all-important. An attitude that is not sufficiently pro-company, one that questions meetings in spare time or mandatory overtime can have devastating effects on pay. Once labelled an "enemy of the company," a worker will be ostracized.

The emphasis on group cohesiveness, workers' reluctance to let workmates down, and the requirement that groups compete with one another are all used to drive workers harder. Competing groups end up doing setup and maintenance outside working hours, so now everyone works beyond normal hours, without pay. To avoid production stops, workers often try to adjust or repair equipment while it is operating. Several have died as a result of this practice. Injuries go unreported because accident reports make the group look bad. With no relief workers, workers maintain production levels by forgoing time off, skipping breaks, and cutting short vacations. And whoever rocks the boat threatens all.

Ocelot Industries methanol plant

Ocelot Industries set up a QWL program in Kitimat in 1981. The company philosophy statement contained the usual references to co-operation and communication, personal development, and openness. It offered the open progression system, with pay for knowledge rather than job; opportunities to learn the entire plant operation by job rotation; weekly meetings with management; company socials, etc. Many management-employee committees were set up and employees believed they had a lot of input.

We learned about Ocelot's program from a woman who was forced to quit after a year and a half. We counted nine grievances and an unfair labour practice leading up to her forced resignation.

She had good work experience, with both unionized and non-union employers. Because she hoped to progress in a secretarial career, she quit another job to come to Ocelot.

— Continued on page 16



International
Women's Day
1985



THE OCELOT QWL PROGRAM

Continued from page 14

Like most employees, many from Alberta, she was not concerned that the company was non-union. With all the promises of enhanced work opportunities and "a new way of working together" it sounded like a "fairy-tale" company.

Before long, the company put its program to real use. A known union activist was among the first three to give notice. They couldn't "stand the brainwashing." They were fired immediately or, in company jargon, "self-terminated."

Our contact had worked hard and received good work evaluations. That all changed when the first three left. She and her husband had been friends of the union activist. The company also discovered that a close relative was a union official. Pressure on her mounted until her health suffered. When she refused to sign a bad evaluation, she was asked to "self-terminate."

The program deteriorated along with Ocelot's financial situation. They used work comparisons, favouritism, inconsistent discipline and evaluation-based pay rates to encourage competition and divisiveness. The weekly plant and department meetings became little more than rituals where management would 'give out little bones and then take them away.' Only four women were able to get work in operations, only one in maintenance, one in engineering. They had trouble with negative attitudes towards women. Two left.

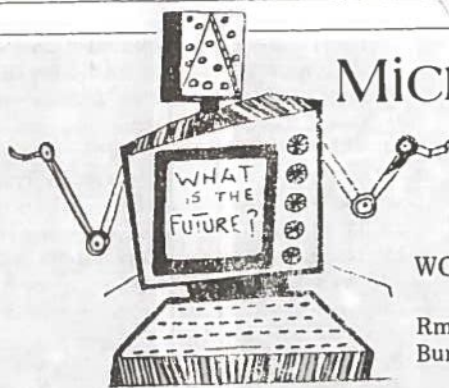
Eleven secretaries (all clerical staff were called secretaries) worked in an open plan office watched constantly by management. They were not offered progression and a promised training plan never materialized. The secretarial workload increased dramatically as the women found they were expected to cover for other employees, and absenteeism was increasing. Employee suggestions for altering the office and work station layouts were rejected.

Employees were questioned if they missed company socials, and other reports claimed that demerit points were given. If your name-tag was not picked up, they knew about your absence.

In spite of the recession, turnover and absenteeism at Ocelot remain quite high. The absentee rate at company socials is even higher. The employees had not been told of the seriousness of Ocelot's financial situation until the B.C. government bail-out.

So much for openness: it only went one way. Many had quit secure jobs to come to Ocelot. ♀

To be concluded in our next issue.



Microtechnology Project

WOMEN'S SKILL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

Rm. 9-443 Irmin Street
Burnaby, B.C. V5J 1X8 (604) 430-0450

Who are we — a background to women's skills

The Women's Skill Development Society is a community-based group interested in the issues of women's work, education and economic survival. We are committed to developing research strategies, publishing educational resource materials and conducting local community-based workshops that will:

1. promote a better understanding of the present realities of women's work (both paid and unpaid), and
2. support a broader range of economic and educational options for women.

We emphasize the use of educational materials and practices which draw on and incorporate the life experiences and everyday knowledge of women who live and work in communities around B.C.

In 1982-83 the founding body of Women's Skills was responsible for publishing *Tools for Change*, a 400-page curriculum about women and work. This curriculum has recently been reprinted and is now available from the Women's Skills office or B.C. Teachers Federation Lesson Aids Department.

Why study microtechnology?

Many women work in occupations rapidly being changed or eliminated by microtechnology. Already disadvantaged in today's labour market, women face increasing poverty and hardship if they cannot participate in or benefit from the new application of microtechnology in Canadian society.

Although the experts disagree about the positive and negative implications of microtechnology for women's employment and training, they are unanimous in their belief that this technology will fundamentally alter the nature and content of our working lives. We think that this is important for women to understand these changes from our own perspective so that we can begin to take control of our future. The project is a beginning in this direction.

Women's Skills need your help

The Women's Skills Development Society has recently received a grant from Labour Canada to research and write learning materials about the impact of technology on women's work in British Columbia. We need your help on this project. We would like to talk to you if you have an interest in the topic, have worked on a job that has been eliminated or substantially changed by technology, or know someone who has.

Out of this research we want to produce learning materials that will be useful to teachers and counsellors in high schools and colleges, women's groups, unions, etc. In order to do this we need to know what you feel about computer technology, what you think should be done about it and how it directly or indirectly is affecting your work and home life.

... So please phone or write us. We are looking forward to hearing from you. The Women's Skills contact person is Marcy Cohen and she can be contacted at our office.

"We won't be clowns in your quality circus"

The bitter lockout of 1977-78 and the occupation and lockout of 1981 made the B.C. Telephone Company's poor labour relations a matter of public knowledge. Faced with a public disgusted with demands for excessive rate increases and the company's refusal to bring its labour relations philosophy into the twentieth century, B.C. Tel has set about putting on a facade of good corporate citizenship. This is the same company that imposed twenty years (spanning the depression and World War II) of company unionism on its workers. It appears that B.C. Tel's long-term strategy is to restore the old order.

Don Champion, vice-president for

So you have this apparent discrepancy between immediate and long-term solutions. Quality circles try to keep workers from sympathizing, understanding, identifying with the union and reorient them toward the company. That's where I see the danger: that workers will go along with the process, believing that by participating in quality circles, they will benefit themselves and the people they work with. Companies have always

industrial relations, was made responsible for implementing a new labour relations policy. He hints at the company's anti-union philosophy and at its real strategy:

"We are basically looking for attitude and behaviour we believe will result in improved productivity. But our objective, initially, was to address the question of getting people to belong to the company again."

To get a worker's view of this company effort, Priorities writer, Nancy Walsh interviewed Susan Croll, president of the Telecommunications Workers Union Local 10 and a telephone operator at B.C. Tel for five years.

the workers alike, and the only way to solve it is by mutual co-operation. They try to get employees on B.C. Tel's side by saying, "Look, if B.C. Tel is not competitive, you won't have a job because someone in another company will take your job away. The old days of 'we're against you and you're against us' are over, and we had better sit down and try to work things out together."

I don't think they are completely ruthless in their approach. They'll say, "Yes, we know there's a problem with this equipment; we know there's an ergonomics problem here." I don't think that if a person ever raised a complaint, a skilled quality circle manager would say, "There is no problem," I think they would say, "You could be right. Do you want to talk about it? Let's see what we can do."

But, meanwhile, that's the jurisdiction of the Health and Safety Committee—an example of how they bypass the union structures. That's one of the things that quality circles like to claim: "We're better than the union because look what we were able to accomplish." But it's been the Health and Safety Committees that have laid all the ground-work, pushing

P. We understand that B.C. Tel has implemented quality circles in some areas. Would you tell us what these are and describe the practice at B.C. Tel?

S. Workers realize they don't have any voice in a huge multi-national corporation. Management realizes that it is the workers who know best what is going on and how to improve things. So, one purpose of the quality circles is to have people believe that if they work together with management in a quality circle, they can actually have a say in how the company is run. I think that this is an illusion. That is not what happens in a quality circle.

A second purpose of quality circles is to get the workers to say, "If we had this piece of equipment, it would make the job so much easier. Then in six months you don't have a job. You've just tech-changed yourself out of a job. Many workers in other industries have inadvertently lost their jobs by suggesting ways to run things more efficiently.

The third purpose is to smash the grievance procedure and the whole shop steward system. Corporations have always wanted to union-bust. In the 80's they are using a more subtle, psychological form of union-busting. A quality circle makes it sound as if in three days a problem can be solved. But when a person comes to a union meeting, she/he is told, "We've got to go back and negotiate with them," or something like that.



had the Labour Relations Boards and legislation on their side, but that affects the worker on the job only indirectly. Quality circles are a way to get at the individual in the work-place.

P. How does the company go about making workers think like management and see through management's eyes?

S. They take the current situation in the telecommunications industry and make it seem as if the company is an innocent bystander in the face of competition. They claim there's a problem, a big problem, facing the telephone company and

and pushing for the last few years. It's like snatching away a union victory.

P. Who participates in quality circles?

S. I don't want to be derogatory. People who are incredibly naive, people who want an hour off each week, people who believe they can have a say in how things are run, or people who are looking to get into management. It's a very small percentage of the work-force. The place where they have most promoted quality circles is the clerical area, because that's where the sales are concentrated in the telephone company and, interestingly,

it's where the locals have been weakest. Because of competition in the telecommunications industry and deregulation, they have to sell equipment. So they set up quality circles to get ideas on how to sell more.

Union's views on quality circles

P. Was the union consulted at any time about the introduction of quality circles?

S. Yes. This is what happened. As you'll remember, in 1981 the workers occupied the telephone company and ran it for five days without management. When we came out of the occupation and lockout, BTE (the division of the company that sells telecommunications equipment to businesses) was just getting on its feet. Because of the bad public image of the telephone company, they were trying to do anything to save public face and to change the style of labour relations. They changed some of their top personnel and promoted Don Champion. I think he was the main person behind quality circles.

At that point the issue was so pressing that the union held a special convention in September 1981 to deal with quality circles. The union proposed that the only way it would participate in the program was if the union could decide who would take part, e.g. shop stewards, etc. The company did not accept that. So our union policy is not to participate in quality circles. We fight against them. We don't just sit there and pretend they're not happening. We even have a slogan, "We don't want to be a clown in your quality circus."

How have employees benefitted?

P. Have the workers benefitted? Has the company acted on any suggestions that would improve conditions for workers?

S. Not that I know of. I think the only benefit for workers is a free dinner or a sports bag or something like that because of an incentive program.

P. Have grievance procedures been sidestepped?

S. I guess that depends on the local. The most effective way to defeat quality circles is to have a strong shop steward system in place and to get information on the dangers of quality circles.

There can be a problem if a person goes to management and asks why they weren't paid time for, say, a doctor's appointment. If there's no shop steward around to take up the issue and quality circles are in place, then management can say, "Well, one of our objectives is to reduce absenteeism. You should be going to the doctor on your own time."

But if people are aware of their rights under the collective agreement, they are not going to go into a quality circle and give things away.

P. Has anyone lost a job because of a quality circle suggestion?

S. I don't think so. As you know, there is amazingly rapid technological change happening in the telephone company. People are losing their current jobs and being redeployed to other areas. The only reason they're not laid off is because we've got a really good tech change clause in our contract.

P. Have workers been monitoring absenteeism and performance and is this being raised in quality circles?

S. Well, overall the company is raising this beyond quality circles. But I'm sure that's one of the things they talk about in quality circles, in terms of how to make people's jobs more satisfying.

Campaign against absenteeism

What they're emphasizing right now is a policy to reduce absenteeism, and they're coming down with all sorts of crazy ideas and discipline against people for being absent. They are using tactics that have the same goals as quality circles—like rewarding people for perfect attendance by taking them out to dinner. Or putting their names on a bulletin board with gold stars beside them. They have actually done that in our area. We grieved that and won. So, in places where they haven't been able to implement quality circles within a group of people, they're going after the individual.

P. What about squealing on other workers?

S. I think that it's inevitable. The thing you have to remember is that manage-

ment has gone to school to learn how to facilitate quality circles, and they are fishing for specific information. I think that quality circles are fairly manipulative, and if they want to hear something, they will manipulate the conversation to get the kind of answer they are looking for.

P. Many commentators think that it's all right if quality circle arrangements and relevant protections are negotiated into the agreement. What do you think?

S. I don't want anything about quality circles in the collective agreement. In my opinion, the place for relations between workers and management is through the union and through the grievance procedure. That's what shop stewards do, and that's what we pay our business agents for. Other than that, I don't think there's a place for quality circles, because I know what they can do.

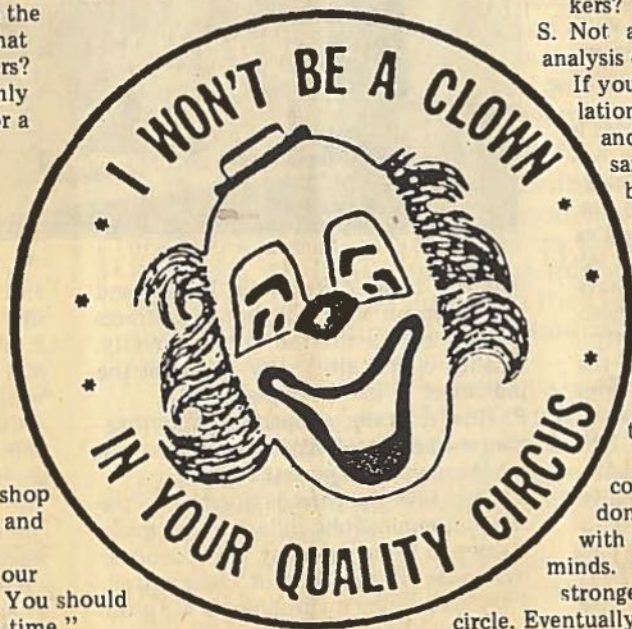
At the Nissan Company in Japan there was a real union that was broken in an all-out confrontation with the company in 1953. Now there is a company union and that union agreed to quality circles.

Workers are in such competition with each other and with other departments they don't even take their full vacations. Here, in North America, the UAW in the U.S. made concessions and agreed to quality circles. People went into quality circles believing, "If this is the way to save jobs, we'll do it." They have now come out saying, "We went in there in good faith, and we still got hanged." That's what you have to do. Look at other unions' experience.

P. Do you think that quality circles could ever work for the benefit of workers?

S. Not at all. First of all, you need an analysis of what corporations are all about.

If you believe that there can be good relations between management and labour and that both are working toward the same goal then, sure, you're going to be for quality circles. I don't believe that. I've never experienced that the company is working in my best interest. The only organization that's ever worked in my best interest is a union, and that's who I'd prefer to stick with. I would rather build a union than build a company, and that's all there is to it. The point of the company is to produce a profit that comes from our exploitation and I don't believe that by sitting in a circle with them we are going to change their minds. Quality circles are beatable. The stronger the union, the weaker the quality circle. Eventually, our ideas can win.



Video terminal operation linked to angina symptoms

From the North Carolina Communications Workers of America

The North Carolina Occupational Safety and Health Project (NCOSH) and seven locals of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) from throughout North Carolina conducted a survey of office workers employed by Southern Bell and other N.C. telephone companies. A self-reporting questionnaire was used to determine the extent and types of health problems experienced by telephone company office workers. The results of this survey concur with those found in other studies, with one notable new finding about the

relationship between video display terminal (VDT) use and angina (chest pain). In summary, these results include:

- VDT users (workers who use a VDT for more than half of their work day) experienced significantly higher rates of health problems than non-VDT users (workers who either do not use a VDT, or use one less than half of their work day). Increased rates of the following include:
 - eyestrain
 - musculoskeletal (back and neck strain and arm and hand pain);
 - stress-related health problems (headaches, nausea, tension, insomnia and fatigue); and
 - chronic health problems [hypertension (high blood pressure), and angina (chest pain).
- Poor work-station design factors including lack of adjustable controls for VDT screen angle, brightness and glare, and chairs providing inadequate back support were increased associated with rates of health problems for both VDT and non-VDT office workers.
- These health problems were further aggravated by jobs that involved low job control (lack of decision-making, excessive supervision or monitoring, and dealing with the public) and/or high job demands (meeting strict deadlines, working at a fast pace, and paying close attention to details) for VDT and non-VDT users. VDT users' jobs were more

often characterized by low control and high demands than non-VDT users. This may be significant in results showing that VDT users experienced the highest rate of eyestrain, tension and angina.

- There was a significant relationship between angina (a first sign of heart disease) and VDT use. This study is the first to document a relationship between VDT use and a long-term chronic health problem. This finding underscores the critical need for more research into the long-term health effects of VDT use. ♀



TWU TRANSMITTER



TWU TRANSMITTER

The source of QWL programs

by Joyce Meissenheimer

The "new realities" of labour-management relations have spawned a network of advisers telling bosses how to change their image and gain better control of their work force.

Achieve Enterprises, based in Mississauga, Ontario, is an affiliate of a U.S. company, Zenger-Miller. It sells a program called Towards Excellence, based on a book called In Search of Excellence.

This company has been active in Canada for two years and ranks B.C. Tel and MacMillan Bloedel among its top clients.

Techniques include the use of a "value statement" which defines the company's principles, policies and approach to its workers.

Management by "walking around" and talking to workers "as individuals"

is another aspect of such programs

According to an article in the Vancouver Sun, May 6, a Richmond plant, Ebco Industries (organized by the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers) has adopted this new program.

What do Ebco workers think? The Sun's headline says they are "wary over the new approach."

Henry Morgentaler in Vancouver

by Janet Vesterback

About 200 people crowded into the room to hear and cheer for Dr. Henry Morgentaler on Friday, April 12 at a wine and cheese reception at the Trout Lake Community Centre. This event was co-sponsored by the B.C. NDP Women's Rights Committee and Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion (CCCA).

The enthusiastic crowd expressed its heartfelt thanks to Dr. Morgentaler for his uncompromising stand on the question of choice by giving him more than simply applause: donations totalled well over \$1600, money greatly needed if mounting legal costs are to be met.

NDP spokeswomen

NDP speakers reaffirmed the party's support for freedom of choice on abortion. Margaret Mitchell cited the 1983 convention resolution to remove sections 251 and 252 from the criminal code and to pardon practitioners who have been prosecuted under these archaic laws. She noted that the party has policy to support free-standing clinics for abortion and sterilization procedures.

MLA Eileen Dailly added that progressive NDP policy on abortion is the same federally and provincially. She pointed out that there has always been a vociferous minority trying to prevent women's control over their reproductive

lives.

There were many criticisms of the Manitoba NDP government which is acting in contradiction to party policy by failing to accredit Dr. Morgentaler's Winnipeg clinic, thereby leaving him and his associates open to prosecution.

Perhaps the most direct criticism was delivered by former MP Grace MacInnis, who asserted that politicians are too afraid to take a firm stand on the issue.

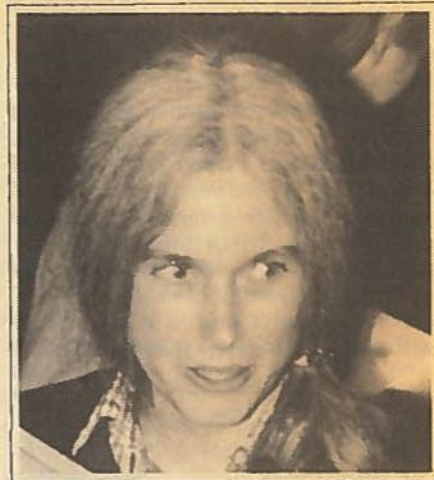
Pointing to the need for a visible and vocal pro-choice movement, she declared that politicians will only move if they are more afraid of the majority than they are of the minority.

CCCA rally

The next evening the CCCA held a large public meeting at John Oliver High School. Again, the hall was packed despite attempts by anti-choice demonstrators to block access to the hall.

Both Dr. Morgentaler and Carolyn Egan of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics were greeted with thunderous applause and donations exceeded \$4500. The standing ovation for Henry Morgentaler lasted several minutes as people expressed their deep respect for his personal sacrifice on the front lines of the fight for free access to abortions.

Carolyn Egan gave a very strong



Carolyn Egan of the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics

speech emphasizing the historical nature of the struggle for abortion rights, comparing it in importance with the fight for the right to assembly, to unionize, and to vote. Reproductive freedom is as fundamental to the liberation of women.

She spoke of the many positive features of the fight so far. In Toronto, 150 women have volunteered to escort women needing abortions from safe houses in the vicinity to Dr. Morgentaler's clinic. They do this on a regular basis in order to counteract the intimidation of the anti-choice faction. This is a good example of women helping women in true solidarity.

Statistics of limited access

Carolyn provided statistics to prove that access to abortion in Canada is a privilege, not a right. Women who cannot afford to travel to obtain an abortion are generally working-class women, poor women, native women, immigrant women, rural women, and young women. While support for choice on abortion has risen (83.2% in a recent poll in B.C.) obtaining an abortion is more difficult than ever.

No abortions are performed on Prince Edward Island. In Newfoundland, only one hospital provides this health service. Fifty percent of Alberta women go to the United States for abortions and, across Canada, seventy-five percent of abortions are done in about 50 hospitals.

Carolyn stressed our long-term goal: to win a breakthrough with the clinics that will render the law unenforceable,



Henry Morgentaler, accompanied by Margaret Mitchell MP and Eileen Dailly MLA being welcomed to the reception by NDP Women's Organizer Frances Birdsell

and result in its removal from the criminal code. To achieve this goal we need need two things:

1. A doctor, or doctors, willing to open clinics in spite of the criminal code, and

1. A broad-based alliance of unions, community and political groups led by the women's movement.

Another doctor's support

Dr. Nelson Savein outlined the difficulty women have in obtaining abortions in B.C. Every week's delay increases the risk to women by twenty percent. Backups are common in our overcrowded facilities and delays are inevitable as women wait for therapeutic abortion committees to meet and approve applications for abortions. After India, Canada has the highest rate of second trimester abortions in the world.

Aldersperson Libby Davies said that it is a black mark on Canadian society that, as we approach the end of the United Nations decade toward equality for women, we still do not have the right to control our reproductive lives.

She introduced Dr. Morgentaler and, when the cheering finally died away, he directed our attention to the *Catholics for Choice* in the audience, pointing out that the church community is *not* united in opposition to choice on abortion. He insisted that many religious people who would not choose abortion for themselves also would not force their moral convictions on others.

History of Morgentaler's struggle

In reviewing the history of his own involvement in the struggle, Dr. Mor-

gentaler described the earlier abortion law which could have sent a person to jail for life for procuring or providing an abortion. Weekly, there were notices in the newspapers of the deaths of women who had died of botched abortions. He felt he had an obligation, as a doctor, to help these women. He firmly believed that a jury would never convict a doctor for providing necessary, safe medical services to women.

To date, juries have acquitted Dr. Morgentaler four times.

"Morgentaler amendment"

After his first two acquittals by jury, he found himself still in jail, serving an 18-month sentence imposed by a court of appeal.

"I remember a cartoon in the *Globe and Mail* which showed me in jail and a guard was pushing the food underneath the bars and saying to me, 'Congratulations, Doctor — you've just been acquitted a second time!'"

All this resulted in the "Morgentaler Amendment" to the law which forbids a Court of Appeal to overturn a jury verdict.

Under the present Parti Quebecois government in Quebec, community health centres in Quebec provide counselling, preventive medicine and health care for new mothers and infants. Many provide abortions for women who ask for them. Women from all over Canada go to Quebec for abortions. These clinics are financed and operated by the government of Quebec but so far, says Dr. Morgentaler, it has not been prosecuted for doing so. "Only I am being prosecuted all the time."

Funds are urgently needed to defend Dr. Morgentaler and his associates in their battle to win freedom of choice for women in Canada.

Defence costs are mounting. Do your part now.

Make out cheques and mail to:

"Morgentaler Clinics
Legal Defence Fund"
c/o CCCA
Box 24617, Station C
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 4E1

Unfortunately, this close to ideal situation for women in Quebec could be turned around after the next provincial election if the Liberals under Bourassa are elected and he applies the federal law, as he has threatened to do. This is another reason why repeal of the law is imperative.

New charges in Ontario

In Toronto, despite the acquittals, new charges have been laid. Meanwhile, in Winnipeg, there are four fronts to fight, according to Dr. Morgentaler.

1. *The NDP government in Manitoba.* It has failed its membership by refusing to adhere to party policy. The attorney-general is pressing charges and the weak excuse he uses is that he is obliged to do so under the law. We believe the government has an alternative. It can simply accredit the Morgentaler clinic.

2. *The Winnipeg police.* Not only are they laying charges, but they raid the clinic every time it opens, seizing expensive equipment which must be replaced.

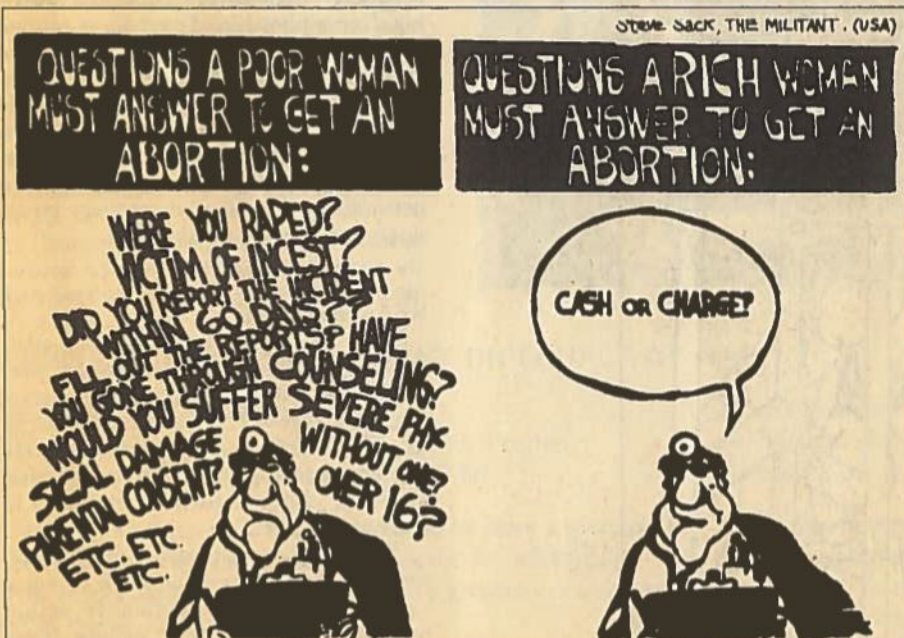
3. *The Manitoba College of Physicians.* This body's mandate is to protect health care in the province. By suspending Dr. Morgentaler's licence to practise medicine, it denies women this protection.

4. *The anti-abortionists.* This fundamentalist sect harasses and intimidates women trying to enter the clinic. There have been threats against Dr. Morgentaler's life.

Close to a breakthrough

But Henry Morgentaler is undaunted. He is convinced that a breakthrough is close and that now, more than ever before, is the time to be actively involved.

"Wherever I go, I sense this enormous support, this tremendous indignation and anger at the continuing injustice to Canadian women... with the support of all the people in Canada who believe that women have the right to reproductive freedom... we will win this struggle." ♀



Right-wing women: the anti-feminist backlash

by Angela Page

In a recent speech made in Vancouver to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, NAC's president, Chaviva Hosek, asked her audience to send telegrams to Brian Mulroney and Walter McLean (Minister responsible for the Status of Women) asking that they continue to support the equality of women and to fund only groups concerned with this goal.

In the past, the express mandate of federal women's programs under the Secretary of State has been to further the equality of women. If it seems incredible that Hosek's request should be necessary in 1985, then it is time to examine the phenomenon of REAL Women. The group so named seeks not only to gain funding from the federal Secretary of State but also to abolish funding for women's groups committed to promoting the equality of women.

to promoting the equality of women.

Who is organizing anti-feminism?

Such anti-feminists are a relatively recent phenomenon in Canada, at least in organized form. An obvious parallel in the U.S. is Phyllis Schlafly's anti-ERA Eagle Forum, but REAL Women's closest links are with the anti-abortion movement.

Gwendolyn Landolt, a Toronto lawyer, acts as legal counsel for the Toronto Right to Life Association. In January, 1983, Landolt and Grace Petrusek, also active in the anti-choice movement, appointed themselves along with ten others as organizers for Canadians who want women to be "Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life" (REAL). Now this group claims to have 20,000 members across Canada — chapters in Ontario, New

Brunswick, Alberta and British Columbia — of whom 12 percent are men.

B.C. allegedly accounts for 3,000 members. However, REAL Women have not yet published accounts which would show how many people have actually paid the \$10 membership fee. There is no formal executive, and the "movement" is essentially run by the original twelve women.

According to Charlotte Gray (*REAL WOMEN — the traditionalists take on the feminists*, Chatelaine, March 1985), "as of January 1985 there was no democratic policy-making process or structure that guaranteed the organization was genuinely representative."

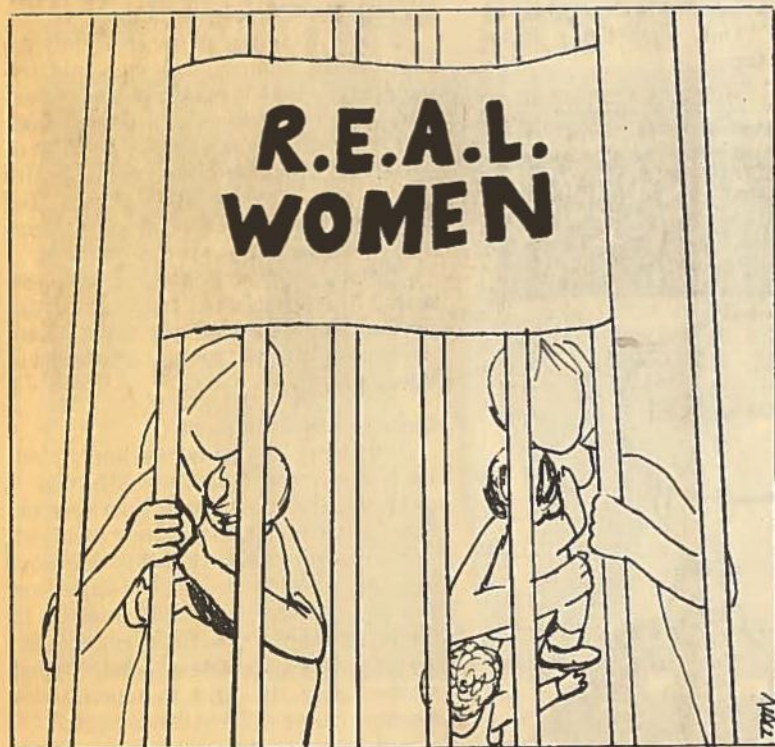
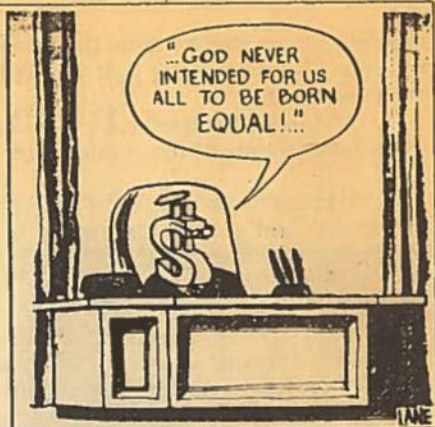
NAC is democratic

Conversely NAC is a conventionally democratic organization, having 320 member groups, each with a registered membership entitled to participate in making policy and to elect the national executive. NAC has worked hard to promote the equality of women through research, public information and lobbying. Its membership of over three million — including the Anglican Church of Canada and the Canadian Teachers Federation — are members in more than name only. Their affiliation reflects their support of such policies as equality in survival benefits in pension plans, access to pensions by a wife after marriage breakdown, and choice on abortion.

REAL means anti

One of REAL Women's main platforms relates to the latter policy; they are anti-abortion and anti-NAC. According to a recent *Province* article (March 31, 1985) they are also against universal day care because they believe "the ideal place for children to be nurtured is in their own home."

They are against easier no-fault divorce and equal pay for work of equal value. They oppose affirmative action programs because "they believe those



programs would mean reverse discrimination," and they oppose equality provisions in the Charter of Rights.

What REAL Women aim to promote, says the *Province* article, is "the family as the most important unit in society." They want "tax breaks, separate and distinct from the family allowance, to recognize the value and contribution of women who raise children at home; an extension of the child-rearing drop-out provision of the Canada Pension Plan, which now allows a woman to drop out of the labour force for seven years without loss of pension benefits; and tax deductions or credits for people who care for elderly parents, disabled or other family members at home."

Around the world — backwards

REAL Women has parallels, not only with Phyllis Schlafly and the Moral Majority but also in England with the Society of the Unborn Child and the Responsible Society, and in Australia with a group called Women Who Want to be Women. All are anti-choice and "pro-family" — aggressive supporters of the view that a woman's first duty is to her marriage and children. All are inclined to refer to feminists as "libbers" and to claim that the women's movement has downgraded motherhood and has pressured young mothers to go out to work.

The abortion issue is crucial in exploring differences between feminists and anti-feminists. Other issues include concepts of equality (do we want to be equal but different, or equal and the same?); responsibility for oppression; relationships with men; motherhood and children. Some of these are explored by Robyn Rowland's collection of essays by feminists and anti-feminists from Australia, England, the U.S. and Canada: *Women Who Do and Women Who Don't Join the Women's Movement* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul). Maori women, Australian aborigines and one black woman speak here; the age range is 17 to 75.

Rowland's introduction gives a brief history of the women's movement, its membership and structure and the main

issues with which it is concerned. She then analyzes the anti-feminist movement as a reaction to feminism, which is looking for change. She relates anti-feminism to the recession and the prevailing conservative mentality which also attacks movements such as black or gay rights.

Women who don't

Rowland also notes that conservative pressure groups rarely present themselves as anti-woman but rather as "pro" some value or institution that some women in the movement would be reluctant to attack, such as church or family.

There is also the claim made by REAL Women that anti-feminists represent the "silent majority" such as home-makers who are assumed not to support the women's movement. In spite of their attacks, the majority of the anti-feminists in this book call themselves feminists, and some of their views overlap with those of feminists. It is helpful to read each article without looking at the writer's biography, so that one does not prejudge which side

she is on.

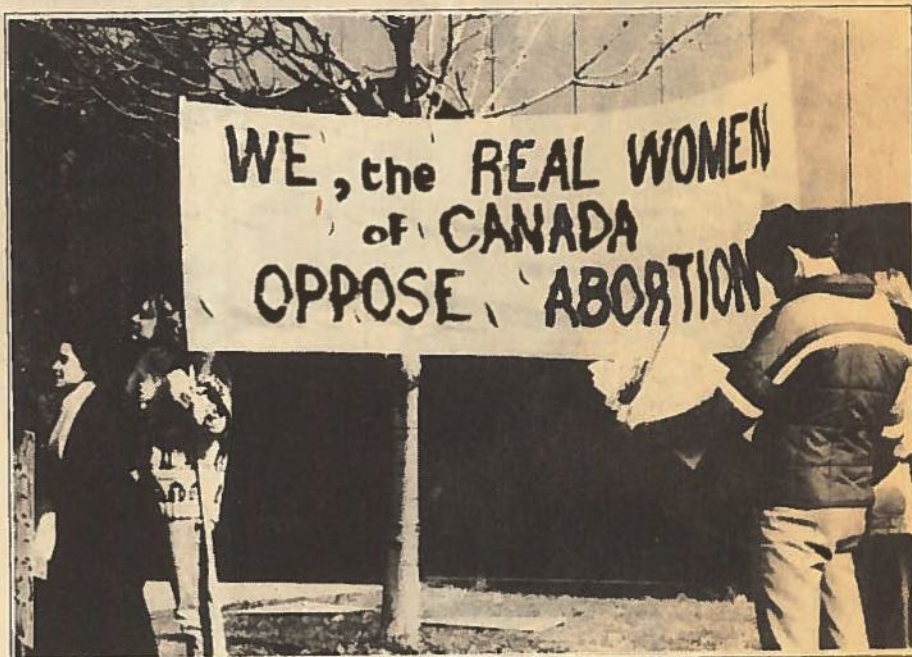
Debate and defence

We need dialogue about feminism; women's aims are too often misrepresented and misunderstood. Adrienne Rich's comments are germane:

"But it is pointless to write off the anti-feminist woman as brainwashed or self-hating or the like. I believe that feminism must imply an imaginative identification with all women . . . and that the feminist must, because she can, extend this act of the imagination as far as possible."

Enough said about the ideal situation. At the moment, funding for REAL Women is apparently being considered seriously in Ottawa, and whatever is given to them will be taken away from the groups advocating equality. REAL Women have lobbied very diligently, according to one source, and the government has received "not one letter from other groups."

NAC is asking for messages to be sent to the government. Sample telegrams are printed below. ♀



DEENA RASKY

SAMPLES OF TELEGRAMS SENT ON BEHALF OF NAC

Hon. Walter McLean
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Parliament Buildings, Ottawa K1A 0A6

We congratulate you for continuing to take a strong stand supporting the equality of women, and urge you to continue to fund only those groups concerned with the equality of women.

Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa K1A 0A6

We support continued federal funding for organizations concerned with equality of women. Keep the promises you made at the last election to support equality of women.

The Charter of Rights

by Frances Gordon and Alicia Lawrence
(updated by Hannah Hadikin)

At the March 24 Women's Rights Committee meeting, Vancouver lawyer and rights activist Frances Gordon provided committee members with a brief workshop in understanding the Charter and its implications for women. The following article summarizes that information.

On April 16 the B.C. government introduced to the legislature an omnibus bill intended to bring B.C. law into compliance with Section 15 of the Charter. Frances reports that in the near future she will be putting together an article about significant changes for women arising from the application of the Charter, analyzing the adequacy and implications of the B.C. amendments. We look forward to including her analysis in an upcoming issue of *Priorities*.

(Note: italicized portions of the text are taken from the law)

Canadian women are facing a new legal challenge in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The challenge is to take hold of this new tool and use it to create a new body of law that expresses the principle of the equality of men and women. It is essential to understand that the protections now found in Section 15 of the Charter are there only because of the many years of political wrangling by women who were not satisfied with the direction constitutional discussions took between 1979 and 1982.

Until eleventh-hour lobbying efforts in 1982, it appeared that women would have to be satisfied with equality provisions taken directly from the Canadian Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights provided only for equality *before* the law and equal protection *of* the law, and these provisions had been shown to be woefully inadequate in dealing with the issue of discrimination on the basis of sex.

Narrow interpretation

In the 1970's, the Supreme Court of Canada interpreted the rights protected by the Bill so narrowly that women responded by lobbying for better guarantees against sex discrimination. These efforts intensified in the months prior to April 17, 1982, and the result is to be found in Section 15 of the Charter:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, nationality or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Language of the Charter

- *Equality before the law* deals with equality only in the administration and application of the law by law enforcement officials. In other words, this phrase guarantees only procedural fairness. It does not refer to the substance or the text of the law itself. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada found that Jeannette Lavell's claim that she was discriminated against by S.12(1)(b) of the Indian Act was without merit under the Bill of Rights. The section was obviously discriminatory as it did not treat Indian men and women equally; however, because there was no procedural discrimination, the Bill of Rights did not apply.

- *Equal protection of the law.* On



Jo Nesbitt, WOMEN'S REPORT, May-June 1977. (England)

WOMEN'S MODERATION MOVEMENT?

interpreting the meaning and application of this phrase, the court would first have to determine whether the law in question was one which provided "protection." If it found that it did so, the court would then assess whether this protection was conferred equally on women and men. Examples of laws conferring protection are human rights laws which set standards for hours of work and minimum wages.

Domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, are exempted from the protection of these laws in many provinces. Consequently, these laws may be open to a challenge under S.15 on the basis that they do not provide equal protection to a group of workers who are predominantly women. The complainant in this case will have to prove that although the laws do not appear discriminatory in their text since all domestic workers, male or female, are exempted, they are discriminatory in their effect.

The Charter has added the following protections:

- *Equality under the law.* Prior to the Charter, legislation that was discriminatory in its provisions was not invalid because equality under the law was not guaranteed. The obvious example of such legislation is the Indian Act S.12(1)(b), which means the loss of Indian status for women who marry non-Indian males, but not for men who marry non-Indian women. This section is clearly challengeable under the Charter.

- *Equal benefit of the law.* This phrase is potentially the broadest as it is the one through which women must persuade the courts to define discrimination by its consequences.

The Bliss case illustrates why the "equal benefit" clause is essential. Stella Bliss applied for regular UIC benefits and was refused because she was pregnant. When unemployment is interrupted due to pregnancy, a woman must apply for maternity benefits. To do this she must establish two more weeks of insurable earnings than a non-pregnant person. Because Ms Bliss met all other requirements, but fell two weeks short of qualifying for maternity benefits, she was denied any benefits.

The matter was heard in the Supreme Court of Canada, where Mr. Justice Ritchie found that there was no discrimination where the object of the law was to provide special benefits to individuals. The distinction between a benefit and a penalty was drawn by the court which held that because Stella Bliss stood to lose a benefit, equality before the law did not apply. This case has left us with some memorable quotes:

If section 16 treats unemployed pregnant females differently from other

employed persons, be they male or female, it is... because they are pregnant and not because they are female. (Mr. Justice Pratt, Federal Court of Appeal).

... Any inequality between the sexes in this area is not created by legislation but by nature. (Mr. Justice Ritchie, Supreme Court of Canada).

Pension plans

One example of how the equal benefit clause might be used is a challenge to certain pension plans. Some public employee pension plans of the money purchase or annuity type, pay out a lower monthly benefit to women who have made the same monthly contributions as men. These payout rates are determined by sex-based mortality tables. The justification is that over the person's lifetime the total paid out will be the same for the average man and woman. Women public servants are not receiving the equal benefit of the law.

Affirmative action S. 15(2)

Section 15 expressly permits affirmative action programs. This arose from the issue of reverse discrimination raised in the U.S. in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*. In this case the

courts found that a university program that reserved places for applicants from minority groups whose qualifications were often inferior to those of the non-minority applicants, discriminated on the basis of race. The program was found to violate equal rights legislation. In order to avoid the problems the Bakke case raised, women lobbied to have the concept of affirmative action entrenched as a fundamental constitutional principle.

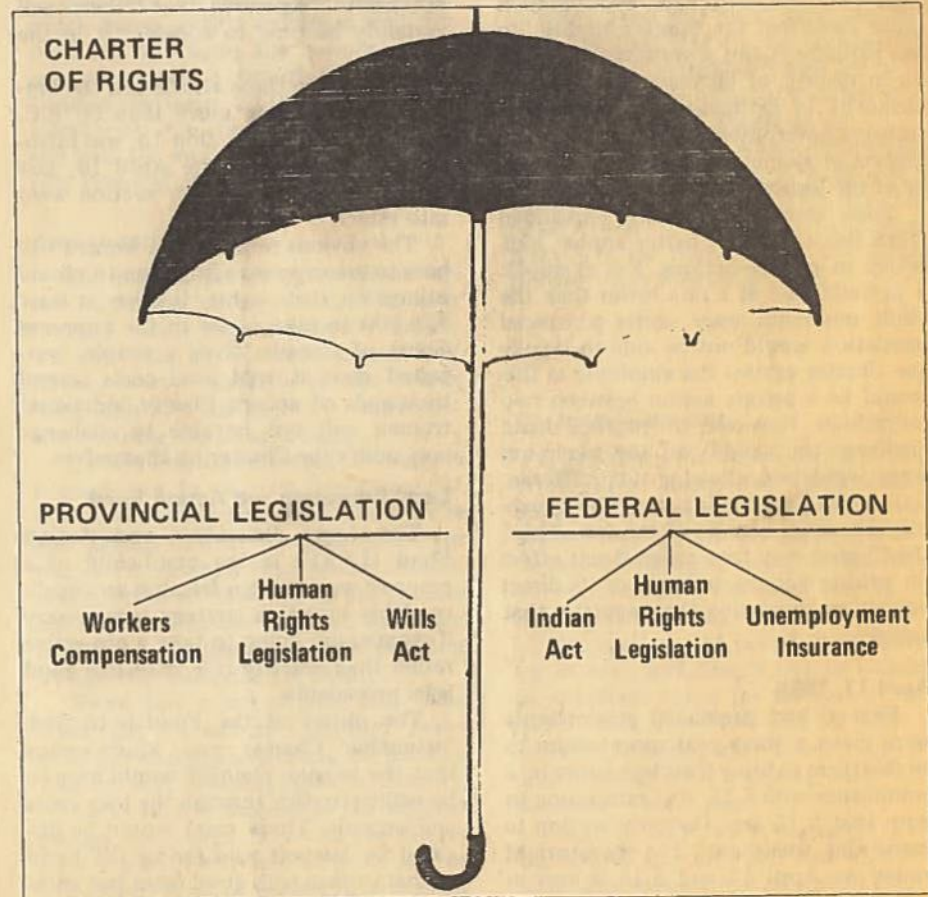
Red flag to the judiciary: S.28

Toward the end of the discussions, a specific sex equality provision was drafted. This later became S.28 which states:

Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

Why was S.28 enacted when, on the surface, it appears to restate the equality rights in S.15? One reason is that it will serve as a red flag to the judiciary, reminding them that discrimination on the basis of sex is subject to the strictest scrutiny. This is obviously needed in light of the history of the Court's treatment of equality rights. (Lavell, Bliss).

Furthermore, S.28 acts as a purpose clause, expressing the intention of the Charter that sex equality rights must be treated seriously.





Bill of Rights vs Charter of Rights

- Equal protection of the law
- Equality before the law
- Equality under the law
- Equal protection of the law
- Equality before the law
- Equal benefit of the law

Section 33 permits governments to override Section 15(1) protections. However, it does *not* permit the overriding of S.28 so it appears that S.28 ensures that all governments must comply with sex equality provisions.

Section 27 provides that the Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canada. Some groups may try to justify sex discrimination as necessary to the preservation of their cultural heritage. However, where this requires the denial of rights to women, Section 28 trumps S.27 and makes it clear that equal rights for women is a fundamental value of Canadian society.

Application of the Charter

The question arises as to whether the Charter applies to governmental action only or whether it applies to private actions between individuals as well. The Charter is the supreme law of Canada to which all other provincial and federal legislation is subordinate. Section 32 is quite clear that the Charter applies "to the Parliament and government of Canada in respect of all matters within the authority of Parliament and the legislature and government of each province in respect of all matters within the authority of the legislation of each province."

Some commentators have concluded from this that the Charter applies indirectly to private actions. For example: a juvenile paid at a rate lower than the adult minimum wage under provincial legislation would not be able to invoke the Charter against the employer as this would be a private action between two individuals. However, the juvenile could challenge the validity of the minimum wage legislation allowing such differential on the grounds that it denies a juvenile the equal benefit of the law. Thus, the Charter may have a significant effect on private actions because of its direct impact on legislation that regulates that action.

April 17, 1985

Federal and provincial governments were given a three-year moratorium to enable them to bring their legislation into compliance with S.15. It is interesting to note that S.15 was the only section to merit this treatment. The moratorium ended on April 17 and S.15 is now in

full force.

During 1984, most provinces started the immense task of reviewing statutes by a "statute audit." Because many women felt that government audits would tend to deal with the more obvious provisions in a cosmetic fashion, women's groups across the country researched and published their own statute audits.

The B.C. Charter of Rights Coalition hired two researchers and published their own audit in September 1984. The Coalition tried to meet with members of the provincial government Interministerial Government Committee, responsible for presenting the official audit to the government. They were not granted a meeting.

On March 27, during question period, MLA Rosemary Brown asked the attorney-general Brian Smith when the government would bring down an omnibus bill of S.15 amendments and whether the public would have an opportunity to review the bill before it passed and to play a role in the decision-making process. Mr. Smith responded that "there will certainly be time to consider it in the House . . ."

Contrary to these assurances, the omnibus bill, making more than 50 B.C. laws comply with Section 15, was introduced in the legislature April 16, just hours before the equality section went into effect.

The obvious result is that women will have to use expensive litigation to obtain rulings on their rights. It takes at least \$30,000 to take a case to the Supreme Court of Canada. Even a simple, contested case at trial level costs several thousands of dollars. Clearly, individual women will not be able to challenge laws under the Charter by themselves.

Legal Education and Action Fund

The Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) is the brain-child of a group of women who felt that an equality rights litigation strategy is necessary if women are going to take a pro-active rather than reactive role in setting good legal precedents

The object of the Fund is to find "winnable" Charter cases, which means that the woman plaintiff would have to be willing to stick through the long cases and appeals. These cases would be litigated by lawyers paid for by the Fund so that women with good cases but with-

out financial means would have an opportunity to have their day in court.

In Vancouver, a group of women lawyers and laypersons working on systematic litigation have drawn up priority cases and are now seeking funding as well as plaintiffs.

We are now in a position to make equality for women a reality. The Charter will only be a useful tool if we know how to use it and are able to do so. The first step is to study the Charter itself and become involved in encouraging governments to do their jobs.

It is a tremendous task. The time, energy and expertise which went into gaining equality protections into the Charter of Rights was an initial effort. It is up to each woman concerned about real equality in our society to take an active part in making equality real.

The Charter will be with us for decades to come . . . we may never experience the full benefit of equality of opportunity and treatment in our lifetime . . . yet the knowledge that our daughters and grand-daughters may live in a world free of the effects of misogyny and male supremacy is worth the effort.

To contact the Vancouver Charter of Rights Coalition, write 302-1279 Nicola Street, Vancouver V6G 2E8, or call 669-8049 (evenings).

Bibliography

Women's Equality and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a preliminary review of B.C. legislation. 649 Mountjoy Ave., Victoria V8S 4K0.

Women and Legal Action: Canadian Council on Social Development, 55 Parkdale Ave., Ottawa K1Y 1E5 (\$4.95 plus postage).

Equality Issues and the Federal Law: Dept. of Justice, Ottawa K1A 0H8 or from your local MP.

Charter of Rights: from your MP. ♀



BRITISH MINERS' WIVES ARE BACKBONE OF STRIKE

"It's not the kitchen sink any more"

Maureen Gill is chair of the Mansfield Women's Strike Support Group in Nottinghamshire, England. She visited Detroit with two striking coal miners in January and February to raise money for the strikers' families. All agreed that the women have been the backbone of the miners' year-long strike against the government's plan to close mines. This article is reprinted from the March 1985 issue of Labor Notes which asked Gill what the women's support groups have accomplished.

'Coalfield women have a long tradition of being the ones who looked after the home and the children and saw that everything was good for the man. The majority are in the home all the time. I would say that 90% of them had never done anything like this before at all.

What changed them, in my home county, was the sudden influx of 10,000 policemen overnight. You saw men beaten on the picket lines, and you suddenly found out that your husband or your brother or your uncle was in prison and being held on no charges, to stop them picketing. And that was the very first thing that made the women realize what the pressures were going to be to get the men back to work.

Small groups of us got together in homes and just chatted about what we wanted to do. The first thing that we said we must do was to go straight down onto the picket lines and stand with the men.

From that, and from larger meetings when the Yorkshire women came into the Nottinghamshire coalfields, the support groups were formed.

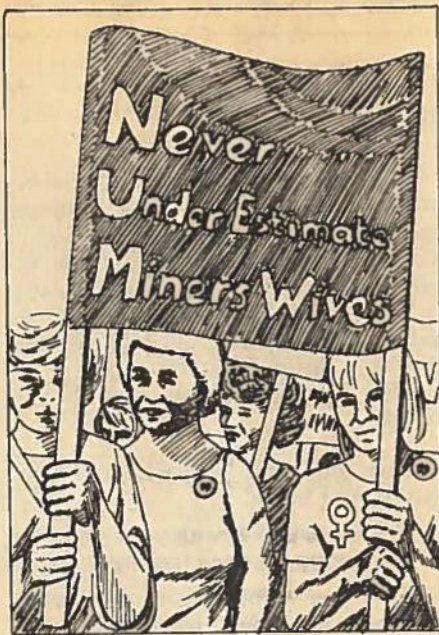
We took a policy to go and find premises to run the soup kitchens from, and to meet regularly. And we decided we'd have to go out fund-raising. It started right at the grass roots.

The men get no strike benefits from the union. But the government came out and said, "We are going to assume that every man on strike is receiving 15 pounds per week, so whatever [welfare] benefits the woman is entitled to, we'll deduct 15 pounds per week from that."

A woman and two children of school age will be receiving 14 to 18 pounds per week [\$12.84 - \$16.51]. But if the government find out they're receiving a food parcel from one of the parcel centres, they deduct five pounds.

Soup and flying pickets

There are 26 soup kitchens in Nottinghamshire. In each mining community in Nottinghamshire, the women formed a support group, and then we decided that we all ought to hold one big meeting and form a Nottinghamshire Central Women's Group, because we had decided that we ought to do flying pickets as well. The central group coordinates the flying pickets and the speaking invitations.



And then we have a national group which meets once a month as well. On the 11th of August the national group organized a march through the centre of London—between 30,000 and 40,000 women—to the houses of Parliament and past the end of 10 Downing Street [the Prime Minister's residence].

Remain active

The women are going to remain active after the strike is over. We have become much more politically aware. To give you an example, one of the Labour Party branches in the North Notts area now has 30 to 50 women per week joining the Labour Party.

Quite a few have thought it would be a good idea to start up something for the unemployed youngsters. And they're also asking now at the universities for classes for women into labour history and political sciences and so on, because we feel that at the moment we really haven't all the background information we need to understand it deeply.

We've had a lot of help and visits from the Greenham Common peace women [who are protesting the installation of U.S. Cruise missiles in Britain].

Some of the women in the support groups have been down to the Greenham encampment and stayed two or three days. A lot of them will be moving

on to that as soon as our struggle is over.

The Greenham women came to us because they'd had a great deal of police intimidation and imprisonment. They said to us, "We've been living with this for so many years we can help you to understand exactly what the state might try to do to break you."

We'd known of women's movements before, but keeping home, I suppose you're a bit apathetic about it until something comes along and actually hits you. I've heard a lot of women say this—until you've actually confronted with it yourself, you think it's okay, the Greenham women are doing a fantastic job, you'd never have dreamt of going to Greenham yourself.

Lives have changed within the home. It's not the kitchen sink anymore. Before a woman would say, "Well, I've got to go, Fred will be in off his shift and he'll want his dinner on the table." The attitude changed there.

When Fred gets home now, he more often than not gets his own dinner, and he's absolutely delighted that his wife's out at a meeting or away in some other part of the country speaking.

In most of the homes the children have suddenly become a joint effort, which it never was before in the coalfields. Never. It was strictly "a woman's place is in the home." Now that's gone forever. They'll never go back.

The most important

The strike is the most important thing in our lives. Because we know without doubt, and we've seen it happen to steel towns, that if this pit closure plan is carried out, they're going to lay waste our communities. The town I live in will become a dead town.

The majority of people in Mansfield are miners, and they'll just be standing in a welfare queue for the rest of their lives. There's nowhere else for them to move to. It'll not only finish us up, it'll also finish up small business, traders and everyone. That'll go.

That is why we're fighting. We're fighting to stay alive. We don't want to be thrown on a human scrap heap." ♀



Letters to 'Priorities'

Women and "men's work"

In the article *Tumbler Ridge: A new-style resource town* by Adrienne Peacock (page 8, March 1985), she uses a quote "Women are more conservative and caring than men. In time, I really think women will out-class men in the working place and that is what they are afraid of."

Women already did this at the time of the Second World War. They proved, in the all-women factories, that they could do the job. After their retirement years later, many of the bosses, supervisors and foremen who were men admitted that the women workers were more dependable and better workers than the men who did the same jobs before the war.

However, with the return of the men, and no more use for weapons or goods of or for the war effort the women were needed no more.

Sometimes I read the entertainment and gossip papers like the *Star*, the *National Enquirer* and *The Globe*. Here is an article from the March 19, 1985 *Globe* which I am sure should be of interest to Adrienne and your readers.

Women are giving men a run for the money

Women are starting their own businesses at a rate four times greater than men, say experts.

Statistics collected by the Small Business Administration in Washington, D.C. show that there was a 29 percent increase in women-owned businesses compared to a 6.6 percent increase in operations run solely by men, between 1977 and 1980, the last years for which reliable figures are available.

Women have some characteristics like attention to detail, that make them more successful in small business than many men, says Tom Troy, chief economist at the SBA.

Emmerson Luffman
4-313 Alexander Street
Vancouver, B.C.

Breastfeeding

I would like to hear from women who have recently given birth in hospital. INFACT (Infant Feeding Action Coalition) is concerned about the increase in formula feeding, particularly in the Third World. I am trying to gather information about what is happening in British Columbia.

Here are the questions I would like to ask:

- How soon after birth was your baby put to your breast?
- Was the baby left with you? Or taken to the nursery between feedings?
- Were you encouraged to nurse your baby even if you felt you couldn't?
- Was the baby ever bottle-fed without your consent?
- Were you given literature about infant formula?
- Were you given a "discharge pack" containing a sample of formula upon discharge?
- Any other information you think would be useful would be appreciated.

Thank you for publishing this letter.

In sisterhood,
Amy Dalgleish
4768 Blenheim Street
Vancouver V5L 3A6
Telephone 263-4684

Bouquets for 'Priorities'

Thank you for publishing such a good magazine. It is reasonable in argument, not strident and is a credit to all of you.

Bernice L. Packford
152 Cambridge Ave.
Victoria
V8V 4B3

Pensioner's appreciation

That time of year again to pay membership. Enclosed \$10.00-\$5.00 for membership and \$5.00 donation just to help out. Wish it could be more but being a pensioner doesn't allow you to throw much money around, eh!

All the best for the coming year. Enjoy *Priorities*. Hope things will improve for you in B.C. soon and we can hold on to our Manitoba NDP government next election. The world seems to be on a conservative kick now.

Sincerely,
Joyce Harrison,
Winnipeg, Man.

Another compliment

Am enclosing my renewal for 1985. Your reports are so well written and interesting. Keep up the good work, on behalf of Women's Rights.

In solidarity,
Kathleen Allan
204-1475 Fir Street
Vancouver

VANCOUVER STATUS OF WOMEN CONFERENCE

THROUGH FEAR INTO POWER
Feminists examine the Right

JUNE 8 & 9, 1985

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