

PRO-CHOICE NEWS



SUMMER
1987

*A National Forum
of news and opinion
on abortion rights*

Abortions resume at Royal Inland Hospital

VICTORY FOR CHOICE IN KAMLOOPS, B.C.

It was an important victory for Canadian women when pro-choice forces regained a majority in a June election for the Royal Inland Hospital Board of Directors. No abortions had been performed at the Kamloops, B.C. hospital since April, when four of six doctors appointed to the therapeutic abortion committee by the old board refused to serve under its newly-established restrictive guidelines.

The old board had established stringent restrictions on who was eligible to obtain an abortion, interpreting the wording of Section 251 in the Criminal Code allowing abortion if there is a threat to a woman's health to mean only a clearly life-threatening danger. The new regulations stated that the procedure could be approved only if there were a "direct, significant and real risk to the physical health of the mother," and

that the risk must be "probable and not merely possible."

Sandy Mallory, the previous hospital board chairman, told the *Vancouver Sun* in April that "the majority of the board feels the abortion rate here is too high and they want to cut the rate." Doctors on the committee were upset that the board had automatically been refusing 25 percent of the committee-approved abortion requests.

The issue received national attention when a 14-year-old girl was refused an abortion in late April and eventually travelled to Vancouver to obtain one.

Pro-choice forces began organizing to regain control of the board in the upcoming June election. "I think the majority of the people in the community are pro-choice," said Ronolee Stevens, spokesperson for Kamloops Citizens for Choice on

Abortion, and she turned out to be right. The vote was decisive. Six anti-choice nominees were defeated by about 500 votes; about 3,500 people voted. Pro-choice candidates won six vacancies on the 14-member board. A position for a provincial appointee was vacant, leaving the new board 9 to 4 in favour of choice.

Gus Halliday, who resigned as chairman but maintained her directorship last February when the board first voted to tighten the guidelines for the therapeutic abortion committee, was re-elected to her previous position.

In an interview with *Pro-Choice News*, in August, Halliday said that business was back to usual at the hospital. "The community is breathing a sigh of relief," she said, but cautioned pro-choice forces to remain alert to possible reorgani-

(Continued on page 11)



Andrew Stawicki, Toronto Star

Gloria Steinem and Dr. Henry Morgentaler at Toronto benefit for The Issue Is Choice (see article, page 14).

IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the President 3

News

Kamloops victory for choice 1
New polls 3
R.E.A.L. funding protest fails 5

Features

Study of "Pro-Life" Activists 4
Silent Scream II
by Ellen Goodman 6
Supreme Court round-up 7
What's happening on the Hill?
(Mitges motion defeated)
by Robin Rowe 8
Medical update 9
Around the world 10
Across Canada 12

From our readers

You told us 2
You asked us 2

YOU TOLD US

CARAL received the following letters of support during the summer.

Please accept the enclosed check for \$50.00 to further the cause. One of us is 73 years of age, the other 69, so our support is based on a long consideration. This, in our opinion, is about as fundamental a question of individual rights as can be imagined. The issue is so simple. Is a woman equal to a man in the choices she can make in this society?

Baldur and Helen Kristjanson,
Surrey, B.C.

I am taking this opportunity to thank you for putting my name on your mailing list and to compliment you and your organization on the production of a very informative newspaper. In your winter 1987 edition, I was most interested in your articles on the erosion of the principles of medicare in Alberta. As a member of the opposition, I am concerned with the government's role in the administration of these programs and am further enlightened through your publication.

Grant Mitchell,
Member of the Alberta
Legislative Assembly
(Edmonton Meadowlark)

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In response to the abortion-access crisis at Royal Inland Hospital in

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Canadian Abortion Rights Action
League (CARAL)
344 Bloor Street West, Suite 306
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 1W9
(416) 961-1507

Editor: Libby Scheier

The purpose of CARAL is to ensure that no woman in Canada is denied access to safe legal abortion. Our aim is the repeal of all sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion, and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptive and abortion services, including appropriate counselling, across Canada.

Kamloops, B.C. (see article, this issue), CARAL sent letters of protest, addressed to federal Minister of Health and Welfare Jake Epp, to all CARAL supporters, asking them to sign and mail them or write an addition or letter of their own. Here are three letters our supporters wrote to Epp, sending copies to us:

It is hard for me to believe that in this so-called "enlightened" age, the archaic Section 251 of the Criminal Code was ever put in effect, and harder still to believe that it has still not been repealed. The therapeutic abortion committees are forced to play "God" with the lives and well-being of countless women and girls who, through no fault of their own, are too poor to afford the luxury of another child, or too immature to handle motherhood, or too mentally or physically ill to go through childbirth.

I am seventy-four years old and have no vested interest in this problem, but the memory of the girls (children) whose lives were ruined by the necessity to quit school, give up careers, in order to become impoverished mothers still haunts me. And as for back-alley butchery by abortion quacks, truly it was like the dark ages. And yet women, knowing the risks, were willing to take their chances rather than add another child to an already overburdened father to attempt to provide for.

It is ridiculous to claim, as these rabid pro-lifers do, that abortion is used as a form of birth control. No

woman would go through this procedure if she could help it.

The sooner this problem is taken out of the hands of therapeutic abortion committees and put where it belongs, in the hands of the women involved and their doctors, the better. Please give this prime priority.

Violet De Courcy,
Vancouver, B.C.

As chairman of a therapeutic abortion committee I agree that these committees are an affront to the doctor-patient relationship.

You are no doubt aware that in the recent Marion Powell study, approximately 95 percent of the therapeutic abortion committee members interviewed thought the committees should be abolished.

A Doctor,
Northern Ontario

We see the denial of choice as a form of institutionalized rape, the taking control of another person's sex organs against their will. It is beyond the dignity of a civilized state to reduce the options available to pregnant women, as these zealots who force their way into the wombs of women want to do. Repeal Section 251 and protect the dignity of your office, your government, and our country -- for pity's sake!

Peter Holt for the Holt family,
Kingston, Ontario

YOU ASKED US

Because The Issue Is Choice sponsored the Midsummer Celebration with Gloria Steinem, a number of people have asked us about this group.

The Issue Is Choice is a group of Toronto women who joined together to reach those people who support choice, but who may not have been previously encouraged to voice that support. Their primary method has been to run newspaper ads specifically intended to generate public

support for the pro-choice issue and Dr. Morgentaler in particular.

The goal of the Issue is Choice is to raise funds for the defense of those charged in Winnipeg and Toronto for their attempts to establish free-standing abortion clinics. The money raised goes toward the pro-choice defense fund. The Issue is Choice is an autonomous organization whose operation in no way conflicts with the work done by CARAL or the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics.

Some thoughts after the AGM

It was a very successful Annual General Meeting in May: attendance at Barbara Ehrenreich's talk exceeded 500, a range of important issues was discussed, and strategy and tactics planned for the coming year.

CARAL has grown rapidly in the past year, indicating the increased commitment of people to the pro-choice cause. We have reached over 400,000 people through our direct mail campaigns and *Pro-Choice News*, which is now sent to every Member of Parliament. CARAL responded to many crises all over the country. During the Ontario doctors strike, we were in contact with the Premier, the Minister of Health, and the Ontario Medical Association leadership. During the extra-billing crisis in Alberta, CARAL wrote to every member of the provincial legislature, as well as the Prime Minister, and the Ministers of Justice and Health. As crises developed during the year in P.E.I. and Newfoundland, we wrote to inform all Members of Parliament in Ottawa, and contacted the appropriate legislators in the province. I myself did a lot of travelling to speak on local issues and work with local CARAL groups, and I spent time lobbying in Ottawa, along with Ottawa CARAL members. CARAL has become more known and influential over the year in Ottawa.

At the AGM we noted that these heightened activities and raised profile had paid off in membership growth and support.

Our featured speaker at the AGM, Barbara Ehrenreich, quite correctly and powerfully raised concerns about the new right's growth and the meaning of its championing of the anti-choice cause. It's useful to take note of some of the things she said.

Ehrenreich is, of course, eminently qualified to speak on the issue of choice and women's rights. A contributor to *Ms Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Esquire*, *Mother Jones*, and other publications, she is a fellow at the New York Institute of Humanities and the Washington-based Institute for Policy Studies. Her books include *Remaking Love: The Feminization of Sex*, *The Hearts of Men*, and *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of Experts' Advice to Women*.

Ehrenreich pointed out that, increasingly, the subject of women is disappearing from the abortion discussion, as carried on by the new right. Women are seen as vehicles or containers, not as human beings. For example, the anti-choice film, *Silent Scream*, shows fetal life inside the womb and makes reference to the woman's uterus as "the sanctuary," never referring to the woman as a person with her own rights and needs. These fetal-centred arguments have even caused some pro-choice women to insist that guilt is a natural element of choosing to have an abortion. Ehrenreich correctly pointed out that this is a defensive response.

Ehrenreich, who holds a PhD in biology, called into question the entire "scientific" approach to deciding



Message
from the
President

Norma
Scarborough

when a fetus becomes a person. "Science can study fetal life," she said, "but it cannot rule on when it becomes a person, because this is a social decision. It's a scientifically meaningless question." Ehrenreich made reference to the long-held position of the Catholic Church that, prior to the halfway point in a pregnancy, "abortion was not an issue, it was not a sin. It was just not of interest." The relatively recent change in the Church's position has more to do with its notions of how to preserve the traditional family, than it does with a concern for the "sanctity" of fetal life. The major concern, of the Church establishment and the new right, is a desire to continue male control of female reproduction and social/sexual behaviour.

Gloria Steinem noted it at The Issue Is Choice benefit (see article, this issue), Barbara Ehrenreich said it at CARAL's AGM, and many Canadian commentators have drawn attention to the fact: the cutting edge of women's struggle for equality is now the fight for women's reproductive control. At the centre of that issue is the struggle for choice on abortion.

New polls on contraception, abortion

91% favour TV ads for prevention of AIDS, teen pregnancy

Canadians indicated overwhelming approval for television advertisements directed at preventing teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, in a poll conducted by the Gallup organization in April 1987 for the Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada. The poll results were made public

shortly after the opposite opinions were expressed to the media by the President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Pierre Juneau, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Jake Epp, who said these subjects were too controversial for the Canadian public.

Ninety-one percent of respondents approved of television messages on the prevention of AIDS. In addition, 87 percent said they favoured the use of TV for messages directed toward the prevention of teenage

pregnancies and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). A full 81 percent approved of messages about contraception appearing on television.

Norma Buchan, President of Planned Parenthood of Canada, said: "It appears that the federal government is out of step with the majority of the Canadian public which recognizes the serious threat of unintended pregnancy and STDs to the public health. The Gallup Poll also

(Continued on page 4)

STUDY REVEALS FRINGE ATTITUDES OF "PRO-LIFE" ACTIVISTS

Lorna Erwin, a sociologist at York University, sent out surveys last spring to over 1,000 people on the mailing lists of such groups as R.E.A.L. Women and Campaign Life, in an attempt to uncover a range of their opinions on social, religious and political issues. Receiving over 800 responses, Erwin discovered that the respondents hold views which put them on the fringe of Canadian society, when compared to other major surveys on these views. While anti-choice activists have always claimed to represent the mainstream, the survey showed this is not the case.

Religion is the centre of their life, and their regular church attendance (63 percent attend more than once a week), puts them in a minority of even those Canadians who identify themselves as adherents of a religion. Connected with their religious activity is an avid desire to maintain the traditional (patriarchal) family, and respondents expressed a deep fear that homosexuals, feminists, and the media are destroying the family.

About three-quarters of the respondents were Roman Catholics and 17 percent identified themselves as Christian fundamentalists. In answering questions about what led to

their activism in the "pro-life/pro-family cause," 99.8 percent cited abortion as an important consideration. Other concerns inspiring commitment to the "pro-life" movement, cited by more than 80 percent, were pornography, feminism, "secular humanism," and the gay rights movement. All of these concerns were also listed as threats to traditional family life.

Erwin was struck by the uniformity of the responses, noting that she was unaware of the members of any other social movement being in so much agreement on so many issues. Uniformity of attitude and what Erwin calls a "moral absolutism" characterized the study as a whole. "For them there is no grey area," she said. "Very few picked categories like 'it depends' or 'under some circumstances'."

This absolutist attitude appeared to be connected to a belief held by most of the respondents (70 percent)

Zalm is waging a personal battle against abortion rights (see *Pro-Choice News*, Fall, 1986).

When 504 people were polled on the Lower Mainland by United Communications Research for their response to the statement that the decision to have an abortion should be up to the woman and her doctor, 87 percent of the respondents said they agreed with the statement. Only 12 percent disagreed. Even among those who identified themselves as supporters of Vander Zalm's Social Credit Party, 82 percent agreed with the statement. (Ninety-one percent of NDP supporters agreed.) We would strongly advise the B.C. government to sit up and take notice of

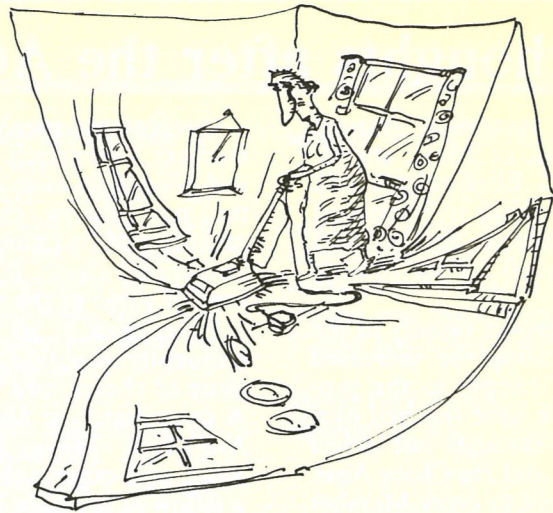
that they or others in the anti-choice movement had not used tactics harmful to the cause, although a few expressed reservations about picketing people's homes and the firebombing of American clinics.

Over half the respondents said they would vote for the "strongest pro-life candidate no matter what party." While about one-fourth identified with the Conservative party (22 percent said they were Liberals and 7 percent NDP), they expressed dissatisfaction with the federal Tory government, saying that it had done nothing or little to help the "pro-life/pro-family cause." Forty percent of respondents favoured forming a new federal party that would be more in line with their views, 37 percent were opposed to this, and the rest said they were undecided. Overall they were "alienated and very dissatisfied with the government," said Erwin.

the strong pro-choice leaning of its constituency.

Catholics and Abortion—Recent Poll

A poll conducted for the *Toronto Star* by Goldfarb Consultants Ltd. surveyed 325 Catholics from across Ontario during August of this year. Among those Catholics polled, almost 60 percent disagreed strongly or somewhat with their Church's position that abortion under any circumstances is wrong. When asked about the statement that the use of any form of birth control is morally wrong, 85 percent of the Catholics polled strongly or somewhat disagreed.



Paula Youens, Lone Thoughts From A Broad

R.E.A.L. Women protest fails HOUSE REAFFIRMS FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY GROUPS

The House of Commons released a committee report in July which reaffirms the need for a publicly funded women's program. Called "Fairness in Funding," the report says that future applicants for funding will have to support "in their principles, objectives and activities," the Charter of Rights, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (which Canada signed), and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (also formally supported by Canada).

This commitment to equality should stymie any future efforts by R.E.A.L. Women to get Women's Program funding. R.E.A.L. Women began the fuss that led to the formation of the committee and its ensuing report, by complaining about

which groups were being funded and demanding at least equal funding for itself. The stakes were high at

A dart for R.E.A.L. Women of Canada:

For requesting \$50,000 of taxpayers' money to do research on why women work. What's to research? Women work for the same reasons men do: To support themselves and their families, to make use of their talent and education, to be productive members of society, and, yes, even for money, fame and fulfillment. There's no need to spend 50 cents, let alone \$50,000, to find that out.

—"Darts and Laurels," *Toronto Star*, March 7, 1987.

\$12.4 million, which is how much money the Secretary of State Women's Program has available this year to fund women's projects.

After a strenuous lobbying effort by R.E.A.L. Women on Parliament Hill last year (see "What's Happening on the Hill? R.E.A.L. Women Seeks Funding," *Pro-Choice News*, Fall 1986), one Tory MP announced that 75 percent of Conservative MPs (excluding Cabinet ministers) thought the government should fund R.E.A.L. Women.

After hearing from 144 groups from all across Canada and receiving 265 written briefs, the committee reaffirmed the principles of the Women's Program, and its important work can now continue, uninterrupted. This victory has been an important one for all Canadian women.

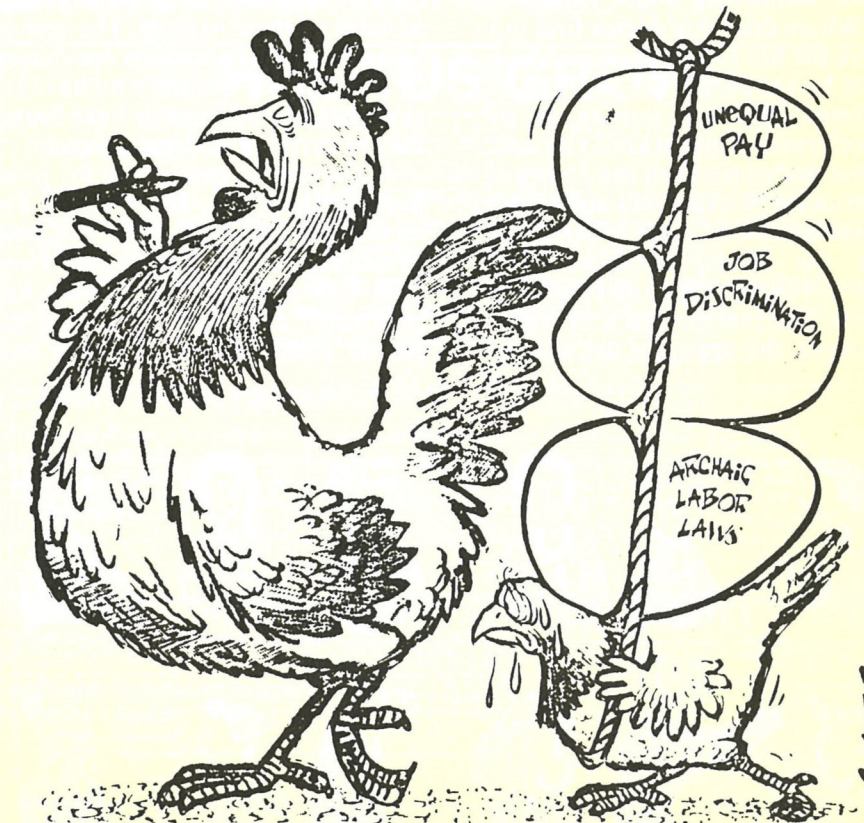
Remembering Illegal Abortions—Can You Help?

The Childbirth by Choice Trust has started a project to compile and publish Canadian women's stories about their illegal abortions. It is important that these stories be collected, particularly from older women and health care professionals, before they are lost to us. They are a significant part of our history and a reminder of the times we are fighting not to repeat.

Are you willing to share your story or that of someone close to you? Or have you had experience with illegal abortion in your professional capacity—as a nurse, doctor, social worker?

If you are interested and would like more information, please write to Louise Daw, Childbirth by Choice Trust, 344 Bloor Street West, Suite 306, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1W9 or call 416-961-1507.

The stories will be published anonymously and confidentiality will be absolutely respected.



"I don't know what you chicks are complaining about. We're just trying to protect your feminine mystique."

New Polls...

(Continued from page 3)

indicates that almost half of Canadians believe there is too little access to services on contraception and family planning. Instead of increasing education and medical services, governments are, with few exceptions, either doing very little or cutting back on these programs."

B.C. Poll Results Encouraging

A poll aired on B.C. TV in May showed a high degree of public support for choice on abortion in the province of British Columbia, where anti-choice Premier William Vander

IN LIVING COLOUR: *Silent Scream II*

by Ellen Goodman

Every horror movie has its sequel and this is no exception. Producer and doctor Bernard Nathanson is at it again. He has put together *Silent Scream II*, or what he has entitled *Eclipse of Reason*. He has used two lenses, one inside and one outside the womb, to focus on a politically more vulnerable spot, the second-trimester abortion.

The film, far more graphic than its predecessor, was premiered in the Senate Office Building on Wednesday and released just in time for yesterday's snow-plagued annual Right to Life March.

Dispensing with credits, it opens with a fiber-optic shot of an 18-week fetus and a warning: "During the next eight minutes, you will be witness to an ultimate act of violence. This child will be destroyed before your eyes." We are indeed shown a D and E (dilation and evacuation), complete with a series of bloody instant replays.

A good filmmaker, I am told, can make you suspend judgement. But I cannot watch Nathanson's work without wondering about its direction. Where does this doctor find the players for his films? Presumably, a patient had to permit her abortion to be filmed. Did this woman do so with informed consent about its use? Did her doctor perform the abortion for her or for Nathanson's audience?

These questions come to mind because the filmed abortion itself seems to violate proper medical procedures. The insertion of a fiber-optic camera, the apparent use of gen-

eral anesthesia, the surgical techniques described as unskilled by other physicians, all put the woman at greater risk, though they show a clear picture of the fetus.

This is symbolic of the Nathanson cinematic and political style. His lens looks straight through the woman, as if she were an invisible vessel. The pregnant patient is faceless, reduced to a bit role as villain, or to be more specific, murderess.

Nathanson plays to an audience that is uneasy about abortions that take place after the first trimester. Most of us are. At some point we are legally allowed to abort a fetus that can also be saved. The law, as Justice O'Connor wrote, is on a collision course with technology. Today, 92 percent of abortions are done in the first trimester. Only 1 percent are done beyond 20 weeks. In practice, we are already restricting the outside limits of abortion.

But the dilemma ignored in this polemic is that those who choose abortion in the 16th week or the 18th week are most often teenagers who haven't been able to face their pregnancies or their parents. The rest of second-trimester abortions are chosen by and large by women who have serious health problems or have found they're carrying abnormal fetuses.

At the risk of competing for most horrific story line, Dr. William Peterson, the head of obstetrics and gynecology at the Washington Hospital Center and someone who has performed a number of second-trimester abortions, says, "We've had

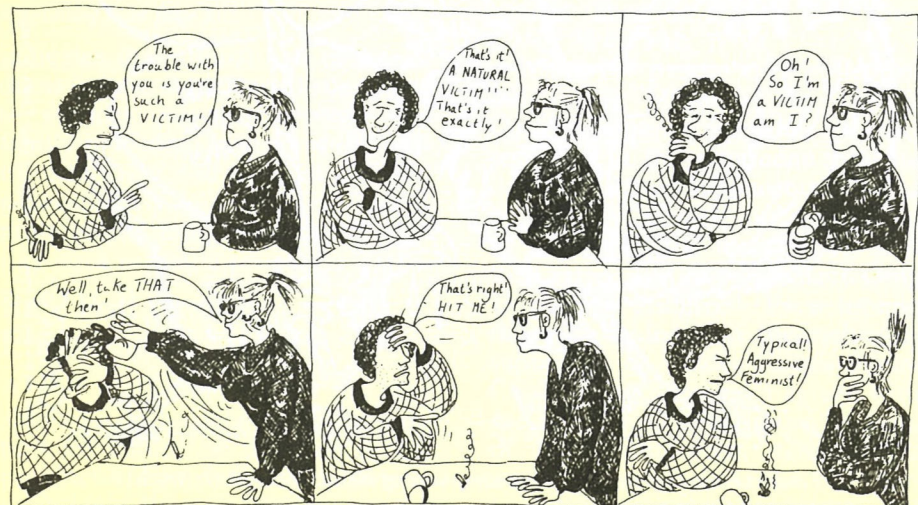
women come in where the fetus has no head, or the kidneys aren't developed, or with serious neural-tube defects where the child may be a vegetable or have very marginal capabilities." The ethical questions are far more complex if you air the real stories.

Nathanson lumps all second and third-term abortions into what he repeatedly calls "late abortions," implying that these are all viable fetuses. He implies also that third-trimester fetuses are being aborted by D and E and aborted as late as eight months. As Dr. Peterson points out, even to save the life of the mother, an eight-month fetus is not aborted, it's delivered.

At the end of the film, in his best medical voice, Dr. Nathanson intones, "Abortion, all abortion, is violence... There is no rightful place for violence in a world of reason." Indeed there is a place for reason, for reasonable debate about mid-term abortions. But it does not have room for the man who originally called this tract *Revelation and Nightmare*.

Dr. Nathanson does not reason, he manipulates. He doesn't make documentaries, he makes propaganda. The scary part of his horror films is that the central character keeps disappearing from the cast: the woman.

(This article appeared in the *Miami Herald*, January 23, 1987 and is reprinted here by permission of the author. It has been edited slightly for space reasons.)



Sour Cream

SUPREME COURT ROUND-UP

Section 15 and Dr. Morgentaler

A series called "The Cutting Edge of the Law" in the April *Globe and Mail* noted that the Supreme Court of Canada has been inundated with cases based on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of the Canadian Constitution. In particular, Section 15, or the equality-rights section, has opened a legal floodgate.

While many cases seeking to extend equality to women and ethnic minorities have been brought to the court, there have also been a good many attempts to turn back past achievements. Gwen Brodsky, from the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, said that many long-standing programs of benefit to women have been threatened, such as single-mother benefits and a law shielding rape victims from being cross-examined on their sexual history.

In the meantime, the court's first stab at interpreting Section 15 is expected to come in Dr. Henry Morgentaler's case, in which lawyer Morris Manning argued that Canadian women have unequal access to abortion services. As yet, there is no indication when a decision will be handed down.

Hnatyshyn proposes high court reform

In May, Justice Minister Ray Hnatyshyn introduced proposals in the House of Commons to eliminate Canadians' automatic right to appeal lower court rulings to the Supreme Court. Lawyers would also lose their automatic right to 15-minute oral hearings on behalf of their clients when they are seeking leave to appeal lower court decisions.

Hnatyshyn said the amendments are necessary because of the increasing workload given the court as a result of appeals arising from the five-year-old Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

There are two instances in which people are automatically given the right to appeal to the high court. Under the amendments, they would have to seek leave to appeal.

One of these instances involves a

person who is acquitted by a jury, only to have a provincial appeal court reverse the acquittal, as in the case of Dr. Morgentaler, who was acquitted by a Toronto jury of conspiracy to procure a miscarriage, but was ordered to undergo a new trial by the Ontario Court of Appeal. Morgentaler opted instead to exercise his automatic right to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Under the changes, the Supreme Court would have the option in most other cases to decide whether to grant leave to appeal based solely on written arguments. In addition, the court could still allow oral hearings if they were deemed necessary.

Court refuses to hear Campbell...

In June the Supreme Court denied Rev. Kenneth Campbell permission to appeal an Ontario Supreme Court ruling that the province's Attorney-General, Ian Scott, was within his rights when he ordered a stay in Campbell's proceedings against Drs. Henry Morgentaler, Nikki Colodny, and Robert Scott. Campbell's law-

yers had argued that the stay was illegal or that it violated the rights of either Campbell or "unborn children" he represented. In his decision, Justice M.A. Craig interpreted previous court decisions as meaning that fetuses have no rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

...but will hear Borowski

In July the Supreme Court agreed to hear Joe Borowski's case against abortion. The court gave the self-appointed anti-choice crusader leave to challenge a Saskatchewan Court of Appeal ruling last April that the constitutional guarantee of right to life does not apply to fetuses. Borowski contends that Criminal Code provisions allowing therapeutic abortions where the health of the mother is in jeopardy are unconstitutional. He says that "unborn children" are protected by the constitutional guarantee that every individual has the right to life. No date for hearing the Borowski appeal has been set.

HELP US GROW!

Dear Reader,

Amongst your friends, relatives and acquaintances there are probably many people who share our ideas but who have never become CARAL supporters. They might just need their attention drawn to our organization.

Would you help us grow by sending us the names of people you think might be interested? We will send some of our literature along with a membership application to each prospective supporter.

Name of possible supporter:

Address

Name of possible supporter:

Address

DEFEAT OF MITGES' MOTION VICTORY

by Robin Rowe

On June 2nd, the House of Commons defeated the anti-choice motion introduced by Owen Sound veterinarian and Tory backbencher Gus Mitges (PC, Grey-Simcoe). The defeated motion called for amending the Constitution to extend to the fetus the guarantee to life, liberty and security of the person under section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. According to press reports, Mitges had earlier supported the death penalty for women who have abortions (see *Pro-Choice News*, Spring 1987). Mitges' motion was defeated by a healthy margin of 89-62, with just over half of all Members taking part in the vote.

Each Member was allowed to vote on Mitges' motion according to his or her conscience, without regard to party position. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Liberal Leader John Turner were not in the Commons for the vote. New Democratic Party Leader Ed Broadbent voted against the motion, as did all the other NDP MPs present. The Liberal and Progressive Conservative caucuses split on the motion, but all Cabinet Ministers present (there were 11) voted against it. Of the 16 women who voted, the only one to vote for the motion was Thérèse Killens (Liberal-Saint-Michel).

A list of how MPs voted on this motion is set out on these pages. If your MP's name appears, let your Member know how you feel about his or her vote.

Clergy Supports Choice

The debate on the motion was often emotional. One highlight was the speech by pro-choice supporter Pauline Jewett (NDP, New Westminster-Coquitlam), who introduced the subject of women to the debate, and quoted these words of the Rev. Tom Harpur of the *Toronto Star*: "To compel a woman to bear a child against her will or to force her to abide by what others define as adequate or inadequate reasons for an abortion, is a form of naked, authoritarian violence."

Outside the House, the Reverend Dr. Robin Smith of the Family

Ministries Division of the United Church of Canada, in speaking to the motion said: "This motion precludes consideration of the rights and situation of all other members of a family. It robs women entirely of responsibility for their own bodies and their moral action. For many this could mean serious hardship. It takes no account of the life and needs of siblings, which can be deeply affected. Finally, this motion gives absolute value to one element in a complex moral situation: the right to existence of the fetus. It thereby reduces all other factors to insignificance. While life is sacred, it is not, as many of our national policies illustrate, of absolute value."

After the motion's defeat Justice Minister Ray Hnatyshyn called the vote "close" (although the margin was 3-2), and claimed it reflected the lack of a firm consensus within Canada. Of course there is no lack of such a consensus -- polls and surveys indicate that only a tiny minority of Canadians agree with Mitges' anti-choice position. Once again an

excuse is made for the government's cowardice in failing to amend Canada's unworkable and unfair abortion law.

Reimer's Bill

In the House of Commons, a new attack was launched against a woman's right to choose. Tory MP John Reimer of Kitchener proposed changes to the abortion law which would make it nearly impossible for any woman in Canada to secure an abortion. He proposed to remove the word "health" from section 251 of the Criminal Code, which now permits abortions when the continuation of the pregnancy would likely endanger the woman's "life or health".

Under this proposed law, abortions would only be permitted if a woman's very life was physically threatened by the unwanted pregnancy. If the pregnancy endangered the woman's "physical, social or mental health", the state would not permit her to have an abortion.

During the June 15 debate on this bill, Svend Robinson, NDP MP for

Members Who Voted FOR Mitges' Motion

Attewell	Greenaway	Ravis
Belsher	Gustafson	Redway
Binns	Hardey	Reimer
Blenkarn	Henderson	St. Germain
Cardiff	Holtmann	St-Julien
Coates	Hopkins	Schellenberg
Comeau	Jepson	(Nanaimo-Alberni)
Cooper	Kilgour	Scott
Crosby	Killens	(Victoria -
(Halifax West)	Kindy	Haliburton)
Crouse	MacLellan	Scowen
Dantzer	Malone	Stackhouse
Darling	McKenzie	Stevens
Domm	Mitges	Taylor
Forrestall	Nicholson	Towers
Fraleigh	(Niagara Falls)	Turner
Fretz	Nunziata	(Ottawa-Carleton)
Friesen	O'Neil	Vankoughnet
Frith	Oostrom	Warner
Gagnon	Pietz	Wenman
Gervais	Plourde	White
Gormley	Porter	Wilson
Gottselig	Price	(Swift Current-
		Maple Creek)

FOR PRO-CHOICE FORCES

Burnaby, defended the rights of women to proper health services, saying: "What does the Bill, which the Conservative Member of Parliament is proposing here, say? It says that no longer can a woman whose health is threatened seek an abortion. No longer, Madam Speaker, can a woman who might suffer serious physical harm, who might, in fact, be disabled, seek an abortion... What right does that Member have to tell that woman, 'No, you must bear that child even if it means that your health will be permanently damaged as a result?'"

Although this bill quickly died on the order paper, it reminds us how tenacious and inhumane the foes of legal abortion can be.

MEDICAL UPDATE

Dalkon Shield

About 30 women, their husbands and children demonstrated in July



Andrew Stawicki, Toronto Star

About 50 people demonstrate outside the A.H. Robins Co. in Mississauga, Ontario to protest the firm's delay in compensating women who suffered ill side effects using the Dalkon Shield intrauterine device.

Members Who Voted AGAINST Mitges' Motion

Allmand	Epp	Maily
Andre	(Thunder Bay-	Manly
Angus	Nipigon)	McDermid
Axworthy	Ferland	McDougall
Benjamin	Foster	(St. Paul's)
Bertrand	Fulton	McInnes
Blackburn	Gagliano	McKinnon
(Brant)	Gauthier	McLean
Blackburn	Gérin	Merrithew
(Jonquière)	Graham	Murphy
Blaikie	Gray	Nystrom
Blais	(Windsor West)	Orlikow
Bosley	Grisé	Pépin
Boudria	Gurbin	Plamondon
Bourgault	Hamelin	Prud'homme
Brightwell	Heap	Reid
Broadbent	Hicks	Riis
Browes	Hnatyshyn	Robichaud
Caccia	Hudon	Robinson
Cassidy	Jacques	Sparrow
Clark	Jardin	Speyer
(Yellowhead)	Jewett	Tardiff
Clark	Joncas	(Charlesbourg)
(Brandon-Souris)	Keeper	Tobin
Collins	Kempling	Tremblay
Cossitt	Landry	(Québec-Est)
Crofton	Langdon	Tupper
Daubney	Lapierre	Vézina
de Jong	Lawrence	Waddell
Desjardins	Layton	Wineguard
Dick	Leblanc	Wise
Dorin	Lewis	Young
Duguay	MacDonald	
Ellis	(Kingston and	
	the Island)	

outside the A.H. Robins Canada headquarters in Mississauga, Ontario. They were protesting a court-ordered reorganization of the drug firm which has again delayed compensation payment for the estimated 320,000 women worldwide who used the Dalkon Shield and are claiming damages for its ill side effects. About 6,000 of these women are Canadians who used the intrauterine device in the 1970s when it was pitched as a safe alternative to the birth control pill.

Despite damage settlements that have so far totalled more than \$500 million, company officials still will not admit that the Dalkon Shield

may have caused the pelvic inflammations, spontaneous abortions, fetal deformities, and sterility among women who used them.

Litigation against A.H. Robins prompted the firm to seek protection under U.S. bankruptcy law, which, in effect, allows the firm to forestall creditors in a bid to reorganize. The rally was timed to coincide with a court proceeding in Richmond at which Robins was to unveil its reorganization plan. The hearing was postponed until the fall. The initial court order for reorganization of the firm was launched 22 months ago, and women are angry at the repeated delays.

NICARAGUA

Women Struggle for Rights, Abortion Still Illegal

Following a pledge to fight "manifestations of machismo" made to mark International Women's Day last March by nine men who make up the national directorate of the governing Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), the Sandinista women's organization (AMNLAE) announced a new campaign to secure better legal rights and social conditions for women.

For the first time, the FSLN leadership singled out violence against women as a social problem that needed to be addressed, and promised additional aid to sole-support mothers.

Lea Guido, AMNLAE president, welcomed the proclamation, saying: "There are people who say women's demands are a distraction, a diversion, something imported from other countries. Now we can say the Sandinista Front has raised them specifically." AMNLAE will push for stiffer sanctions for wife-beaters, better daycare facilities for working mothers, education campaigns to persuade men to share domestic chores, and better sex-education programs in the schools.

Women were important as FSLN supporters and soldiers in the 1979 revolution, but winning general social equality has proved difficult. Demands raised by women are often criticized as "feminist," a tag rejected by AMNLAE, as an approach that would ghettoize women.

Abortion Debate

According to an article by Paul Knox in the April 14 *Globe and Mail*, the sensitivity around issues affecting women was illustrated by the fallout from a public debate that arose late in 1985 on whether to decriminalize abortion. The debate was sparked by a doctor's study showing high rates of death and sterility from illegal abortions. It flowered for a month or so in the FSLN newspaper *Barricada* but quickly died out. In the summer of 1985, Maria Lourdes Bolanos, a leading advocate of reforming the abortion laws, resigned under pressure from her post as head of AMNLAE's legal office. She said recently that she was

convinced her strong stand on abortion reform was the reason. "Some people thought we were taking a position that was too advanced," she said. "I had a high profile and all of a sudden they were talking about how the office was badly run and there was anarchy within the organization."

Church Influence

Bolanos said the anti-abortion teachings of the Catholic Church had influenced even women's rights activists in Nicaragua, where an overwhelming majority of people are Catholic. She said those who had been pressing for legalization came to realize that many Nicaraguan women -- even those who had gone more than once to backstreet abortionists -- believe abortion is a sin, and feel guilty about their own sexual conduct.

Choice on Abortion Not in Constitution

Bolanos remains a firm Sandinista and believes the abortion debate was the beginning of a long process of consciousness-raising. The issue was discussed openly in public meetings on Nicaragua's new constitution, although the final document approved last January does not guarantee freedom of choice. Guido said Bolanos was forced to resign not because of the abortion issue but because of differences over the administration of the legal office. She said AMNLAE had decided that Nicaragua needed widespread sex education before legalizing abortion. Otherwise, she told the *Globe and Mail* reporter, repeating the old myth, women would simply use abortion as a form of birth control.

U.S.A.

Reagan Nominates Anti-Choice Judge for Supreme Court

In July, U.S. president Ronald Reagan nominated staunchly conservative appeals court judge Robert Bork for the Supreme Court seat left vacant with the retirement of Justice Lewis Powell. Judge Bork once said that the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion was "a classic instance" of the court's imposing its morality on local jurisdictions. He also complained that Supreme Court decisions have extended con-

stitutional protections and federal authority beyond their proper bounds. In a 1982 speech, he sharply criticized high court decisions on abortion, sexual freedom, and many types of free expression. "The court responds to the press and law school faculties," Judge Bork said. "The personnel of the media are heavily left-liberal. Their values are quite egalitarian and permissive."

It is expected that Bork would attempt to be instrumental in altering some of the court's landmark decisions, especially women's right to abortion and the principle of affirmative action.

While the White House called for an early confirmation before the court's new term in October, the Democratic-controlled Senate served notice that it wanted to thoroughly examine Bork's qualifications. Senator Patrick Leahy of the judiciary committee said, "The Senate is going to carry out its constitutional role with probably more scrutiny than anything in this decade."

White House officials admitted privately that they expected a tough fight in Congress, first in getting Bork's nomination through the judiciary committee and then a filibuster from opponents on the Senate floor. A coalition of pro-choice, women's and other groups is organizing to defeat Bork's nomination.

Claimants Win Damages for Fetal Death

In a 6-3 opinion defining unborn children as family members, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled last June that the "parents" of a fetus killed in a car accident may recover damages under their family insurance policy. The decision reflects the push towards reactionary thinking on abortion issues in the U.S., under the influence of the Reagan government.

The case involved a policy issued by IMT Insurance Co. to Michael and Joan Craig. The state Supreme Court, reversing a lower court ruling, said the Craigs are entitled to \$25,000 U.S. under the IMT policy for their "unborn son" delivered dead in December 1984, when Joan Craig was 6 1/2 months pregnant.

IMT agreed the fetus was viable and the death was a direct result of an automobile accident caused by an uninsured motorist five days

earlier. But the firm argued the fetus was not covered as a family member. Chief Justice W. Ward Reynoldson said, in a majority opinion, that a minor child, "including an unborn child, is a 'family member' and a 'covered person' within the scope of the policy."

In a sharp dissent, Justice Louis Schultz said: "The plain meaning of the terms 'person' and 'family member' in the policy do not include the unborn. A person is a human being who has attained a recognized individual identity by being born alive."

Press reports did not say whether the insurance company would appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Fetus Neglect Case Dismissed

A ruling significant for the rights of American women was reported in the June 1987 issue of *Maternal Health News*, which said that, last February, a municipal judge in San Diego, California threw out the case against a woman charged with criminal neglect of the fetus she was carrying.

Judge MacAmos upheld a defense claim that Pamela Rae Stewart, 28, could not be prosecuted under a state law traditionally used to ensure child financial support. Stewart was charged with failing to provide medical attention to her fetus by taking street drugs and disobeying her doctor's orders.

(See also "Baby R' Case Raises Fetal Rights' Issue" under "Across Canada - British Columbia.")

Reagan Cuts Funds for Abortion Counselling

U.S. President Ronald Reagan, promising to push "just as hard as I know how for pro-life measures," moved in July to end use of U.S. government family-planning assistance money for abortion counselling and referral. Reagan also said he ordered Surgeon-General Everett Koop to prepare "a comprehensive medical report on the health effects, mental and physical, of abortion on women."

Among the other anti-abortion measures Reagan announced was a gathering of anti-choice activists was an order to the Department of Health and Human Services to draft

a proposal to eliminate language in the Public Health Act that requires recipients of federal funds to suggest abortion as an alternative to pregnant girls and women.

The National Organization for Women, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association attacked the changes as "a desperation move" being put forward by a "lame duck, discredited administration", saying they would file a lawsuit to block the proposed changes.

Feminist Brief Calls Surrogate-Motherhood Form of Slavery

Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, Marilyn French, Grace Paley, Lois Gould, and 18 other feminists have entered the "Baby M" case, saying that surrogate-motherhood contracts exploit women, constitute baby selling, may lead to acceptance of human "breeding," and that surrogacy itself is a form of slavery.

In a brief, the group urged the New Jersey Supreme Court to reverse a lower-court ruling that upheld the \$10,000 contract under which Mary Beth Whitehead agreed to be artificially inseminated and bear a child for William and Elizabeth Stern.

"The enforcement of this contract and those similar to it will lead to the full-scale commercialization of women's reproductive organs," the brief says. "It will reduce women to what the trial court termed 'factors' or 'means' to the reproductive needs of customer couples. This, in turn, could increasingly promulgate class differentiation and exploitation of disadvantaged women and families, with the creation of essentially a caste of 'breeders' among the poor women of this country and world."

ZIMBABWE

Jail Terms for "Baby Dumping" Decreased

In this southern African country where abortion is illegal, birth control information and supplies scarce, and adoption is blocked by tribal prohibitions -- infanticide has become an increasingly serious prob-

lem, according to a report in the July 26 *Toronto Star*.

It's called "baby dumping" in Zimbabwe, and judges and lawyers have begun debating the proper punishment for the crime. Prison sentences that once ranged up to nine years, with hard labour, are coming down under pressure from citizens' groups. Until recently, judges had shown little leniency for baby dumpers, assuming the women were probably prostitutes who had made a calculated business decision to do away with their unwanted babies. But a recent survey of women in prison for killing infants indicated they were primarily young, poor, uneducated women who had at least one older child. Many had come to the city in search of work, leaving large extended families behind. "The great majority of baby dumpers are in a desperate situation economically, have no education or skills and see no way to support themselves without a husband," said Elizabeth Rider of the Harare Women's Action group.

The article recounts several cases in which women were joined or assisted by boyfriends or male family members in baby dumping, but in all the cases mentioned, the men received lighter sentences than the women or no sentences at all.

Citizens' groups and social workers have called for measures to prevent baby dumping, such as birth control campaigns, and homes for unwed mothers. Although abortion is illegal, gynecologists estimate that about 40,000 occur yearly. One in five cases of miscarriage brought to Harare Central Hospital is the result of an attempted self-abortion, doctors say.

KAMLOOPS VICTORY...

(Continued from page 1)

zation efforts by anti-choice activists. It is "very important for pro-choice elements to remain visible and active in the community." Halliday noted that, as a result of the struggle, the Kamloops hospital now had resource material that could be of help to others engaged in similar struggles elsewhere.

(For more on the Kamloops hospital struggle, see the "You Told Us" column, this issue.)

ALBERTA

Pro-Choice Lobby Includes Churches, Unions, Opposes Provincial Bid to De-Insure Med. Services

Hospitals Minister Marvin Moore announced last May that, beginning in August, services such as birth control counselling, vasectomies, tubal ligations, and premarital counselling would be dropped from Alberta's medical insurance plan. Plans were also announced to drop eye examinations and visits to chiropractors, physiotherapists, and podiatrists from paid provincial coverage.

Earlier reports said Moore would seek to have abortion services removed from the plan, but he apparently had to shelve this idea as a contravention of the Canada Health Act.

Coupled with the serious abortion-access problem in Alberta (see *Pro-Choice News*, Winter 1987) these plans spell severe trouble for the Alberta population, especially women. Glenna Cross, past president of the Calgary Birth Control Association, said, "There is no question but that this is anti-woman."

Lobby Fights Access Crisis

In response to the critical decline of abortion access, a coalition formed last May to lobby for province-wide access to safe abortions, improved family planning services and the removal of abortion from

the Criminal Code. More than 20 organizations belong to the coalition, including the United Church and the Alberta Federation of Labour.

The number of legal abortions at Edmonton hospitals declined 38 percent in March from the same month last year. Extra-billing was ended in the province in September 1986 and many doctors -- most of them in Edmonton -- will not do the procedure for the approved fee of \$84.50. More than half the total number of abortions in Alberta are now performed in Calgary hospitals.

If you live in the Collingwood/Thornbury/Meaford area and are interested in helping to start up a local CARAL chapter, contact Carol Lutz-McDonald at: Box 248, Thornbury, Ontario, N0H 2P0 (519) 599-6039.

The number of Alberta women obtaining abortions in Montana jumped from 18 last January to 59 in December 1986, according to state records. Increasing numbers of Alberta women have been heading to Toronto for abortions. The Harbord Street clinic performed 18 abortions on Alberta women last year -- more than any other province excluding Ontario -- and had performed the procedure on 13 Alberta clients as of April, this year.

In response to the formation of the coalition, Moore said he considered the abortion access situation a regional problem and had no plans to change current fee schedules or conditions for the procedure, and no plans to urge Edmonton doctors to return to the practice of performing abortions.

And in May he announced plans to drop a list of birth-control-related and other medical services from the provincial medical plan.

Dr. Gerald Bonham, Calgary's medical officer of health, described the move as "a big mistake" and said that it would not save money, as Moore claimed, but would be very costly. "Alberta now has the highest rate of gonorrhoea in the country and one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy. It seems that anything to do with choice in sex and reproduction is treated as if it is optional. The province does not appreciate the consequences, such as an increased

demand for abortions, of putting up barriers to these services."

Glenna Cross pointed out that the move will shift the burden of providing essential services to community agencies like the Calgary Birth Control Association. But these agencies are being threatened with funding cuts by the province, too.

Critics note that these plans will particularly hurt disadvantaged groups such as teenagers, single parents, and the working poor, and lead the way to the creation of a two-tiered medical system that would erode the integrity of medicare.

Moore Too Much for Alberta Medical Association

Even the Alberta Medical Association, which provided Moore with a list of medical services it felt could be dropped from the insurance plan, was surprised at plans to de-insure contraceptive and premarital counselling, and eye examinations. "This certainly de-emphasizes preventive medicine and that is an unfortunate thing," said Dr. Richard Kennedy, AMA president. (Although the AMA had initially included tubal ligations and vasectomies on its list, it later changed its policy and formally recommended to Moore that the sterilization procedures not be dropped.)

Down the Garden Path to Private Medical Insurance

Richard Plain, a health economist at the University of Alberta, said the plans to de-insure services go hand in glove with legislation before the provincial Legislature providing for the introduction of private health insurance. When medical procedures and services are covered by private insurance, doctors can pass on their charges; they do not have to bargain collectively with a provincial government. "De-insuring services and introducing private insurance is very attractive to organized medicine. What is happening here is setting an important precedent," Plain said.

Despite Plebiscite, Abortion Committee Still Not Working

In the first plebiscite of its kind in Canada, residents of the northeastern Alberta city of Fort McMurray

voted in October 1986 to establish a therapeutic abortion clinic at the city's hospital (see *Pro-Choice News*, Winter 1987). Forty-three percent of the electorate voted (the highest turnout ever for a local election), and 57 percent of the 9,100 voters supported a motion to establish the committee. After months of stalling, the hospital board (whose majority had previously voted against installing an abortion committee) approved policies and procedures for the committee in April 1987, but as of June, no doctors had come forward indicating a willingness to serve on the committee or perform abortions.

Debi Kalinin of the Fort McMurray CARAL chapter, which worked hard to bring about the establishment of this committee, expressed disappointment and frustration at these events: "The community clearly identified by a majority vote what their wishes were, but we can't seem to make it happen."

"It's up to individual practitioners to apply," said hospital president Grant Lemon. "To my knowledge, no one has stepped forward." Lemon said several members of the hospital's medical staff have the privilege to perform abortions if they wish to. Others would have to apply, he said.

Kalinin said Dr. Johannes Asfeldt had expressed interest in doing the procedure, but he left at the end of May to practise in Dawson Creek, B.C.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

"Baby R" Case Raises "Fetal Rights" Issues

Last May, the British Columbia Social Services Ministry seized what was later referred to in the press as "Baby R" while it was still in the womb. Thomas Gove, the lawyer representing the Ministry, claimed the Ministry was "seizing a child being born" in order to give it medical attention. The woman whose womb happened to be involved was ordered to undergo a Caesarean section, and the baby was taken from her at birth. Represented by lawyer James Thomson, she is seeking the return of her child on the grounds that the provincial government has no right to seize a fetus.

Woman as Container

It's interesting to note that according to the July 18 *Globe & Mail*, the woman's identity must be concealed "to protect the baby." It's also interesting, or maybe "chilling" would be a better word, to note that all the mainstream press reports noted the fact that a fetus, baby, or "child being born" was seized by the state, but nowhere was it pointed out that, by the by, a woman was also seized and forced to undergo an operation against her will. It brought to mind Barbara Ehrenreich's point (*Pro-Choice News*, Spring 1987) that, in most of the anti-choice literature she had seen, "Women are so invisible that an uninformed reader might conclude that fetuses reside in artificially warm tissue culture flasks or similar containers."

Ministry lawyer Gove denied he was seeking a legal precedent that would give the government the right to apprehend, or police the health of, the unborn. But groups including the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) fear a hidden agenda, in the province led by self-appointed anti-choice crusader William Vander Zalm. LEAF speculated that the province could do away with legal abortion altogether if it is permitted to make fetuses wards of the state.

The core of defence lawyer Thomson's argument was the fact that Canadian courts have not recognized a fetus as a person with legal rights and protection. Judge Brian Davis of the B.C. Family Court, indicating he found the issues before him difficult and of great public importance, reserved his ruling until September 3.

Following the court appearances, the B.C. Human Rights Coalition and 14 other groups wrote a strongly worded letter to B.C. Ombudsman Stephen Owen, asking for a review of the "misuse of authority" by the Social Services Ministry in the so-called "Baby R" case. The letter called for a thorough review of ministerial employee actions in the hours preceding the enforced Caesarian-section birth, noting: "We have information which leads us to believe that the Superintendent of Family and Child Service has misused the Family and Child Service Act by intervening in a medical matter which

involved a person who is not a child as defined by the Family Service Act."

[As we went to press, we learned that the court had ruled in favour of the province on the "Baby R" case. More on this in the next issue!—Ed.]

In a similar case recently in Belleville, Ontario, a judge apprehended a woman before the birth of her baby. CARAL wrote the following letter to the *Globe and Mail*:

"The recent ruling by a lower court judge in Belleville, making a fetus a ward of the Children's Aid Society, may be irrelevant as a legal precedent but has disturbing implications, nonetheless.

"From the published reports it seems that the mother-to-be was negligent with respect to responsibilities for the fetus. Although the judge may have had legitimate concerns for the health of the woman and the fetus, he ignored Canadian law by attempting to expand the definition of "child" under the Child and Family Services Act to include a fetus. Such an expanded definition is without authority in law; moreover, there were other means available by which this woman might have been helped.

"The proper way for society to deal with concerns for developing fetal life is to ensure that women who choose freely to have children will receive proper pre-natal education and will be guaranteed food, housing and medical attention.

"This would be a far superior solution than resorting to coercion over women and using legislation in ways that it was never intended to be used.

"The Belleville judge's decision, on the other hand, plays into the hands of those who want to justify control over women's bodies by denying them sex education, birth control and abortions when they choose them."

Abortion Refused in Potential Birth-Defect Case

A woman who became pregnant after taking accutane was refused a therapeutic abortion by the therapeutic abortion committee at Vernon Jubilee Hospital in July. Accutane, a medication to treat severe cases of

We Are Sorry!

A number of you notified us that you received a reminder letter from Norma Scarborough in June asking you to renew your CARAL membership for 1987, when you had already done so. Needless to say, this should not have happened. To those affected, please accept our sincere apologies for this very annoying error.

We rely on a computer firm to process our donation updates, and a direct mail company to organize our mailings. When an error like this happens we feel as dissatisfied as you do. Please rest assured that we are working to ensure that there will be fewer such errors in the future.

acne, causes birth defects in the fetus. The majority of the 36 doctors in the hospital's family practice department have publicly expressed their lack of confidence in the hospital board. And Dr. Hugh Clarke, Chairman of the Medical Staff Committee, stated that the failure of the Board to grant a therapeutic abortion in this case was a failure to provide good medical care. The Vernon Jubilee Hospital Board is an elected one and new elections will be held soon.

MANITOBA

Erosion of Medicare

In June the provincial government eliminated medicare coverage of ultrasound services and the practice of providing free IUDs to women. Dr. Jack Armstrong, the new president of the Manitoba Medical Association, called these measures "examples of medicare's erosion in the province." Armstrong said the province was chipping away at "medicare's tenets of comprehensiveness and universality."

These measures parallel medicare cutbacks in Alberta (see article in "Across Canada," this issue) and, as in Alberta, focus on services provided to women. This should be cause for alarm to women's groups, medicare supporters, and people in the preventive-health field across the country, who need to oppose this reactionary trend before it goes any further.

Armstrong said the government's decision to stop paying for IUDs will create a two-tiered system for funding family planning. Health reasons prevent some women from using the pill, which is included in medical coverage, he said. Armstrong also said the province is planning regulations to ban medicare coverage of experimental and medical research.

ONTARIO

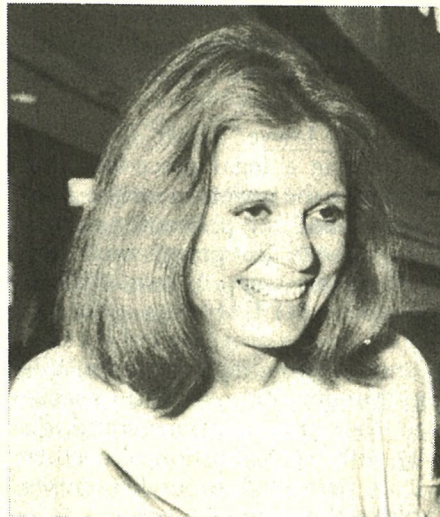
Morgentaler Benefit Features Gloria Steinem

A successful fundraising event for The Issue Is Choice was held at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall in July. The evening netted about \$20,000 for the pro-choice defense fund, and

featured Gloria Steinem, Nancy White, Rosemary Brown, the Clichettes, and other noted speakers and performers.

Steinem called Morgentaler a "hero of our shared continent" for his work in abortion clinics. "We have added reproductive freedom to our basic rights. It is as important as freedom of speech," she said. "No government has the right to make that decision for any citizen, male or female."

The "backlash" to the women's movement is focused on the issue of reproductive freedom, the most basic issue in the women's movement all over the world, Steinem said.



Gloria Steinem

Andrew Stawicki, Toronto Star

Morgentaler Answers Slanders

In a letter printed in the Toronto Star on July 8, Dr. Henry Morgentaler eloquently responded to the slanders of those anti-choice activists supporting Constable David Packer, the policeman who refused to guard the Harbord Street Clinic because of his anti-abortion views. The letter is reprinted below.

You tell us about a petition of anti-abortionists who applaud the actions of the Toronto constable who refused to protect people and property at the Morgentaler Clinic... You quote the organizer of this petition as saying, "The Morgentaler Clinic is an illegal abortuary where babies are killed daily." I take strong exception to the statement and to your publicizing it.

I am considering legal action against all persons who knowingly

spread such propaganda. In the meantime, I wish to express my revulsion at this type of malicious untruth parading under the guise of pro-life sentiments. To put it simply, we are not killing babies at our clinic. I consider killing, injuring or brutalizing a baby or a child as the most heinous of crimes. Women come to our clinic because they want to arrest the growth of an embryo or a fetus so that it will not become a baby. They do it out of a sense of love for children, so that they might give life to a baby at a time when they can provide for it love, affection and nurturing.

I consider a choice about a pregnancy when proper nurturing is not possible a moral and responsible decision, and that is why I have been helping women to obtain safe medical abortions, as have many doctors across the country. We are opposed by people who are ignorant of biology and do not seem to be able to make a distinction between a fertilized egg, a zygote, a blastocyst, an embryo or a fetus, and a baby. These people believe that from the moment of conception when there is only one cell present, this cell and the various entities it gives rise to are equivalent to or are indeed already a baby.

It is as if somebody claimed that one brick is already a house. The notion is absurd, yet the more absurd a statement is the more difficult it is to refute. Starting from these erroneous notions, they accuse all women who opt for abortion as murderers and all doctors who help them as murderers.

From their high perch of moral superiority, they look down on women having to make these existential choices with contempt and try to block their access to good medical care which protects women's life, health and dignity. Frustrated that they cannot achieve this goal in view of contrary overwhelming public opinion, they resort to despicable tactics of harassing and insulting women seeking abortions and those willing to offer medical help.

These people obviously have a right to express themselves in our democratic society, and they do; public debate about abortion has been going on for at least 23 years in this country. It is perfectly all right for someone to believe that abortion

is morally wrong. It is not permissible, however, to smear opponents, to lie blatantly and to incite hatred by talk about "killing babies."

Doctor Urges School Birth Control Clinics

Birth control clinics should open in schools and students should be able to obtain free contraceptives, Dr. John Spence told a June meeting of the Ottawa Board of Education Community Liaison Advisory Committee. "It's very clear. The students want somewhere to get birth control without anyone finding out," said Spence, chief of gynecology at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

Spence pointed to Statistics Canada data that one in five abortions involves teenagers, that 27 percent of sexually active teenagers never use contraceptives, and that 40 percent use them only sporadically. Most teenagers do not use contraceptives because their sexual encounters are not planned, they are afraid of being discovered, and because the "cost is not insignificant."

School board officials expressed skepticism about Spence's views, voicing concern that families would object and that taxpayers would not want to "pay for free condom machines in all the schools."

Anti-Choice Unionist Loses in Dues Issue

A Catholic public servant who complained that his union, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, favoured abortion, lost his bid to avoid paying dues to it. The favourable attitude of the Catholic church towards unions, embodied in a 1981 papal encyclical, takes precedence over an individual's opposition to abortion, the Public Service Staff Relations Board ruled last spring.

Revenue Canada employee Bernard Riordan's lawyer argued that because his client was compelled to pay dues to the alliance, his freedom of religion under the Charter of Rights had been violated. But the board's deputy chairman, Walter Nisbett, ruled that the Charter did not apply. "There is no government

compulsion of payment of membership dues and the bargaining agent's use of those monies," he said.

Anti-Choicers Form Political Party

A group of anti-choice activists supported by Campaign Life became Ontario's eighth official political party last June after the Commission on Election Finances verified the names on a petition submitted by the group.

The new party has dismissed suggestions that it is strictly an anti-abortion movement, but its protests are lame in face of the facts.

The party is headed by Burlington businessman Don Pennell, a national director of Campaign Life. The central planks of the party's platform are opposition to public funding for abortion and opposition to secular sex education. Senior party organizers are all longstanding Campaign Life workers who once made tentative plans (later abandoned) to form a federal political party to press for reactionary changes in Canada's abortion law. The new Ontario party also used the anti-choice group's mailing list in its efforts to secure names for the petition.

QUEBEC

Man Loses Bid to Halt Lover's Abortion

A Verdun man lost a court bid last spring to prevent his lover from having an abortion. Georges Guay met the woman through an advertisement and they began a relationship. Guay claimed that when she became pregnant, she was initially happy and discussed marriage. She later told him she planned to have an abortion.

Guay asked a Superior Court judge to issue an injunction to stop the abortion, claiming the woman had made a binding agreement with him to raise a family. Judge Alphonse Barbeau rejected the idea of a contract and the injunction bid, adding that the woman could not be considered a surrogate mother, bound

by a legal promise to bear children, simply because she answered an ad which said a man was seeking a woman to bear his children.

Morgentaler Charged Again

In July, Dr. Henry Morgentaler was once again ordered to go before a court on charges of performing an illegal abortion in his Montreal clinic. He was to be arraigned in mid-August on a charge brought by self-appointed, anti-choice crusader Reginald Chartrand, who continues to harass Dr. Morgentaler. Acquitted three times by Quebec juries on similar charges in the 70s, Morgentaler is petitioning the Quebec Superior Court to block all further actions against him by anti-choice activists.

SASKATCHEWAN

R.E.A.L. Women vs Victorious Women

It was only a matter of time. R.E.A.L. Women has experienced its first split (more to come?). Last May, the national organization expelled its Saskatoon chapter for, according to some press reports, speaking against escort services and sex education. Other press reports indicated the row was an old-fashioned struggle for power in a war of personalities. The expelled chapter promptly renamed itself Victorious Women of Canada, presenting us with the amusing question of whether it is better to be "real" or to "win".

Former R.E.A.L. president and outspoken anti-choice activist and lawyer Gwen Landolt wound up with Victorious Women, while new R.E.A.L. president Lynn Scime (whose reactionary inaugural speech made headlines (see *Pro-Choice News*, Spring 1987) stayed at her post.

While the insults flew and the squabbles raged publicly, the pro-choice movement could only hope that Ottawa was watching the group it had been considering funding.

The purpose of CARAL is to ensure that no woman in Canada is denied access to safe legal abortion. Our aim is the repeal of all sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion, and the establishment of comprehensive contraceptive and abortion services, including appropriate counselling, across Canada.

I support the statement of purpose of CARAL and wish to become a member.

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Suite 306
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Member & Endorsing Groups

Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Moncton, N.B.
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Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, Edmonton, Alta.
British Columbia Teachers Federation, Vancouver
Calgary Birth Control Association, Calgary, Alta.
Calgary Status of Women Action Committee, Calgary, Alta.
Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Assoc., Vancouver, B.C.
Canadian Air Line Flight Attendants' Assoc., Mississauga, Ont.
Canadian Unitarian Council, Toronto, Ont.
Centre de santé des femmes, Sherbrooke, P.Q.
La clinique des femmes de l'Outaouais, Hull, P.Q.
Chilliwack Citizens for Choice, Sardis, B.C.
Citizens for Reproductive Rights, Moose Jaw, Sask.
C.L.S.C. Centre-Sud, Montréal, P.Q.
Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Winnipeg, Man.
Collectif féministe de Rouyn, Noranda pour la santé des femmes, Rouyn,
P.Q.
Comité condition féminine, Montréal, P.Q.
Community Health Services, Saskatoon, Sask.
Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion, Vancouver, B.C.
Cranbrook Women's Health Network, Cranbrook, B.C.
Doctors for Choice, Toronto, Ont.
Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances, Montréal, P.Q.
Fédération Québécoise des Infirmières et Infirmiers, Montréal, P.Q.
Herizons, The Manitoba Women's Newspaper, Winnipeg, Man.
Humanist Association of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
Jessie's Centre for Teenagers Inc., Toronto, Ont.
Kingston Action Committee on the Status of Women, Kingston, Ont.
Kingston Sexual Assault Centre, Kingston, Ont.
Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Don Mills, Ont.
Lakeshore Unitarian Church, Beaconsfield, P.Q.
Les Editions du Remue-Ménage, Montréal, P.Q.
London Status of Women Action Group, London, Ont.
Maison des femmes des bois-francs, Victoriaville, P.Q.
Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Winnipeg, Man.
Maternal Health Society, Vancouver, B.C.

Medical Reform Group of Ontario
Montreal Health Press Inc., Montréal, P.Q.
National Action Committee, Status of Women, Toronto, Ont.
National Association of Women and the Law, Ottawa, Ont.
National Association of Women and the Law, P.E.I. Caucus, Charlotte-
town, P.E.I.
National Association of Women and the Law, University of Victoria,
Victoria, B.C.
Nellie's Hostel, Toronto, Ont.
North Bay Women's Centre, North Bay, Ont.
North Shore Women's Centre, North Vancouver, B.C.
Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics, Toronto, Ont.
Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, Peterborough, Ont.
Ontario Committee on the Status of Women, Toronto, Ont.
Ontario New Democratic Party Women's Committee, Toronto, Ont.
Participation of Women Committee, N.D.P., Ottawa, Ont.
Personal Rights Association, Weyburn, Sask.
Peterborough Rape Crisis Centre, Peterborough, Ont.
Planned Parenthood, Edmonton, Alta.
Planned Parenthood, Peterborough, Ont.
Planned Parenthood, Westmount, P.Q.
Port Alberni Women's Resources Society, Port Alberni, B.C.
Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre, Port Coquitlam, B.C.
Prince Albert & District Pro-Choice Coalition, Prince Albert, Sask.
Prince George Women's Resource Centre, Prince George, B.C.
Queen's Women's Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont.
Queen's Women's Law Caucus, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont.
Rape Crisis Centre, Hamilton, Ont.
Regina Women's Committee Centre, Regina, Sask.
Richmond Women's Centre, Richmond, B.C.
Room of One's Own, Vancouver, B.C.
Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, Regina, Sask.
Saskatchewan Working Women, Saskatoon, Sask.
Saskatoon Abortion Rights Association, Saskatoon, Sask.
Saskatoon Women's Reproductive Rights Movement, Saskatoon, Sask.
Simon Fraser University, Burnaby Women's Centre, B.C.

Sudbury Women's Centre, Sudbury, Ont.
Timmins Sexual Assault Centre, Timmins, Ont.
Toronto Business & Professional Women's Club, Toronto, Ont.
University of Waterloo Birth Control Centre, Waterloo, Ont.
Vancouver Women's Health Collective, Vancouver, B.C.
Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon
Victoria Status of Women Action Group, Victoria, B.C.
West Kootenay Women's Association, Nelson, B.C.
Wellspring Women's Association, Whitecourt, Alta.
Women Against Violence Against Women/Rape Crisis Centre, Vancouver,
B.C.
Women's Centre of Hamilton-Wentworth, Hamilton, Ont.
Women's Centre, University of Regina, Regina, Sask.
Women's Centre, Student's Union, Ryerson Polytechnical Institute,
Toronto, Ont.
Women's Counselling, Referral and Education Centre, Toronto, Ont.
Women's Directorate, Saskatoon, Sask.
Women of Halton Action Movement, Oakville, Ont.
Women's Health Clinic, Winnipeg, Man.
Women's Issues Commission/University of Western Ontario, London,
Ont.
Women's Research and Resource Centre, Toronto, Ont.
Women's Resource Centre, St. John's, Nfld.
Women & Law, Faculty of Law, University Toronto, Toronto, Ont.
Women of the North, Ft. McMurray, Alberta
The Women's Centre/Carleton University, Ottawa, Ont.
Young Women's Christian Assoc. of Canada (YWCA), Toronto, Ont.
YWCA of Metro Toronto, Toronto, Ont.
Yukon Status of Women Council, Whitehorse, Yukon