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News from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

SPECIAL ISSUE

WOMEN Vote!



THE FEDERAL ELECTION: WOMEN AND THE ISSUES

National Action Committee on the Status of Women
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*Women's Action
Know the Issues
Ask the Questions
The Women's Equality Accord*



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THE FEDERAL ELECTION: WOMEN AND THE ISSUES

At the last Annual General Meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, it was declared a priority that a strong women's voice be raised in the next federal election. Four issues whose outcome will have a profound impact on the lives of women in Canada have been set as priorities: Child Care, Free Trade, Reproductive Choice and Violence Against Women and Children.

To use our vote effectively as women, NAC has developed a number of strategies and materials on the theme: **Women Vote! / Femmes: On Vote!**, to let the candidates know that the women's vote is significant, and that women's issues are on the agenda in the election.

In addition to this **ELECTION KIT**, NAC has also prepared:

- radio and television Public Service Announcements on the theme **Women Vote!**
- the Women's Equality Accord (the centre four pages of this kit) that asks all party leaders and candidates to agree to a Women's Equality Agenda
- a **Women VOTE!** button
- a leaflet outlining the four priority issues
- regular Action Bulletins throughout the election campaign
- another televised Leaders' Debate on Women's Issues
- a national **Women Vote!** Day

THIS ELECTION KIT CONTAINS

- Information on How To Be Involved Effectively in An Election Campaign
- Background, Discussion and Questions to Candidates on a Variety of Women's Issues
- The Women's Equality Accord (centre pages)

THE ISSUES

There are four central issues which are addressed in the Women's Equality Accord, and there are a number of other issues which affect us as women living in Canada.

The Issues pages contain some background on each issue and questions to ask your candidates. Further information on these issues is available from the NAC Committees, and back issues of **Feminist Action** (including the November 1987 Election Planning Issue).

Several pieces of legislation of particular interest to women have been on the legislative agenda over the summer. We are very concerned that these will be passed immediately on the formation of a new government, if those who are elected are not informed by women voters of their concerns.

You will note that in reference to some of the issues, we did not know at the time of publication whether legislation before the House would be passed into law prior to a federal election (for example, the Canada Child Care Act).

Implicit in our discussion of the issues is the recognition of the special and different roles of the federal and provincial governments in financing and delivering programs to Canadians. The questions are intended to elicit commitments from candidates on important issues rather to suggest any changes in the balance of responsibilities between levels of government.



HOW TO USE THIS KIT TO BEST ADVANTAGE

The Election Strategy Committee at NAC has produced this kit with these goals in mind:

- To get our issues on the national agenda
- To provide a Women's perspective on all election issues
- To involve more women in the political process
- To get more women out to vote

Elections offer us the opportunity to flex our political muscles. We can exercise power, educate candidates and the electorate, and empower women to be involved in the process. Elections further challenge us to strategize, organize, and set our political agendas.

This year, this election, the issues are critically important to the future of Canada. These issues demand both women's involvement and women's perspective to truly reflect the feminist agenda.

The kit provides women and women's groups with background information on the issues in the election, NAC's platform on them, and ideas and strategies for local action and activity.

START SMALL AND THINK BIG

Don't assume that getting involved in the election means chaining yourself to a telephone or candidate for 2 months. Consider taking on a small project by yourself, or with others, within a political party or in an interest group. It is easy to decide on other small self-contained projects later.

Every action taken by an individual or group adds up.

NAC Campaign During the Federal Election



The following materials are available for the federal election. When ordering, please specify whether you want the materials in English or French.

- 1 WOMEN VOTE! BUTTONS** are available in minimum orders of 10. \$1.00 each plus a 10% handling charge.
- 2 WOMEN VOTE! T-SHIRTS** will use the same logo as the buttons. \$7.00 each for NAC member group orders. \$10.00 each for individuals.
- 3 ELECTION ISSUES KIT.** Extra copies of this Special Election Issue of Feminist Action have been printed for wider distribution. \$2.50 / issue (no Handling charges).
- 4 LEAFLETS** focusing on Free Trade, Child Care, Violence Against Women and Reproductive Choice. Free.
- 5 "WHAT EVERY WOMEN NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT FREE TRADE" BOOKLET.** These new 12-page booklets include summaries in Spanish, Greek, Chinese, Portuguese, and Italian. Indicate in your order which language(s) you will need. Free.



WOMEN'S ACTION

Women's votes add up. More and more the candidates and the federal parties are recognizing that many women vote and many voters vote on the issues raised by women's groups.

The success of the NAC leaders' debate in 1984 puts women in an excellent position to pursue their issues with federal leaders and local candidates in this election.

Getting women to the polls is not enough. We must influence how politicians set their agendas and we must convince them to adopt our perspective on issues.

Political parties set policy and election strategy well before the election is called. Party members pursue routes within the establishment to influence these actions. During election campaigns candidates and leaders make commitments based pressure and perceived public opinion. It may be appropriate to work with other groups or associations to form a coalition on some issues.

Outlined below are some tactics you might employ:

- **ACCORDS** are position papers written by interest groups to ask candidates for commitments. The NAC Accord has both a federal and local use. The National Office will distribute it to the party leaders. Local members can also use it effectively with their candidates.
 - Compare findings.
 - Send out a news release.
 - Call a news conference or consider publishing the results in a pamphlet.
 - Let the public know where the candidates stand.
- **POSTCARDS** are quick and easy tools to show support for an issue and educate candidates and

voters. They require money to produce and legwork to distribute.

- **LETTER WRITING** allows a two way communication between writer and candidate.
 - Be sure to outline your point clearly, make a demand and ask for a response. Great for the tongue tied and for getting detailed and complicated information.
- **TELEPHONE CALLS** to candidates offices are logged and responded to.
 - Organize other people to call on the same issue.
 - Ask to speak to the candidate.
- **PHONE-IN SHOWS** give you an opportunity to state your point and get commitments from candidates. Many media sources use these as a source of public opinion.
 - Check schedules, and prepare questions in advance.
- **NEWSPAPER ADS** are a way of reaching out to a broad audience, and can be a method of raising funds for your group.
- **ALL CANDIDATE FORUMS** provide a public forum to get information. Make certain you get:
 - Straight answers and clear positions
 - Promises and commitments
 - Audience acknowledgement of your position
 - Organize before you go to have supporters in the crowd, to sit close to a microphone and to follow up on your questions.
- **HOSTING PRIVATE MEETINGS** produces a more casual atmosphere but needs to be as carefully organized as for all candidate meetings.

"The country is yours ladies; politics is simply a public affair. Yours and mine and everyone's. The government has enfranchised you, but it cannot emancipate you, that is done by your own processes of thought."

—Nellie McClung (1917)



GETTING OUT THE WOMEN'S VOTE

Get Out The Vote campaign begins now!

The more women know about the issues and the candidates in the election, the more likely they will be to take an interest in the campaign and ultimately VOTE.

Any actions you undertake in order to influence the candidates and the public should include a local perspective and local examples that women will identify with. The closer the issue is to home the more real any election campaign becomes.

A Get Out The Vote campaign can involve a little or a lot of effort. Some activities are cheap and work well independently, others are costly and require a lot of commitment, planning, and coordination.

GET OUT THE VOTE DURING THE CAMPAIGN

- Talk to friends, co-workers, neighbours, people at the child care, or any one in the supermarket. Ask them about their concerns, encourage them to vote.
- Write articles for newsletters, newspapers, and publications. Consider alternative or ethno-cultural papers and community networks.
- Arrange time on local cable television. You could be interviewed, arrange a film showing or produce a program.
- Share the NAC Election Kit. Photocopy or order more copies from the NAC office.
- Produce brochures or leaflets discussing the importance of the women's vote. Take them to meetings, community centre, insert in newsletters, etc.
- Purchase advertising space in the media.
- Encourage local radio and television outlets to run NAC Public Service Announcements.
- Posters with a Get Out the Vote message can be distributed to many locations (i.e. laundromats, bingo halls, child care centres etc.)
- Booths or displays at malls, conferences, country fairs, or festivals attract attention and get your message to a different audience.
- Make contact with media representatives. They may be able to do a feature story or arrange interviews.

GET OUT THE VOTE ON ELECTION DAY

- Phone your contacts and remind them to vote. Develop a phone tree.
- Organize child care to enable more women to vote.
- Arrange a car pool for those who may not be able to get to the poll.
- Coordinate a media story on your Get Out the Vote strategy (perhaps covering your group engaged in one of the above activities).
- Write a short report on your local activity and send it to the NAC representative in your region to help her in future planning in your area.

"An emancipation process is meaningless unless its objective is to take power or share power."

—Claire Bonenfant



CHILD CARE

Child care services are essential for the achievement of the equality of women and men and are an important investment in the future of all Canadians. The majority of Canadian families need child care to enable parents to work, study, and meet personal obligations.

NAC supports the development of a comprehensive, high-quality, non-profit, publicly funded child care system, available to all families who want it. The development of a model child care system requires substantial public funding and supportive policy to ensure that a range of services are available to families across Canada.

FACTS

- Child care has become a very prominent political issue since the last federal election. Two federal level committees have studied child care and issued reports and recommendations for action to meet the needs of Canadian families.
- The new Canada Child Care Act does not provide a framework for building a comprehensive, universally accessible, high-quality, non-profit child care system. Indeed it is effectively a new way of transferring money to the provinces, without any requirement that services are developed in a planned, coordinated way that meets the needs of families across Canada.
- The Act lacks national objectives and guiding principles that would establish criteria for quality, availability, and affordability. Without guidelines and a long-term vision, the Act will entrench the current fragmented situation of child care in Canada.
- Instead of helping to expand child care services the legislation introduces new ceilings on child care spending. Child care expansion in some provinces will be limited by the introduction of this Act.
- For the first time, the government will make operating grants available to privately operated commercial child care. This will act as an incentive to the growth of the commercial sector, which has been shown to be more likely to provide poorer quality care.
- The government has also announced plans to spend \$2.3 billion on a new tax credit to families who do not have receipts for child care. Giving parents \$100 or \$200 does not help them find non-existent services, or afford annual costs of \$5,000 per child if they can find care. These tax credits are a poor use of scarce resources which should be used to build day care facilities and develop comprehensive services

- for the needs of all families (single parents, two working parents, one working parent).
- The need for extended maternity and parental leave has not yet been addressed. Leave for childbirth and care for young children is a necessary part of a comprehensive child care system and it is essential for facilitating the full participation of all parents in Canadian society.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you oppose, defeat or repeal (if necessary) the Canada Child Care Act?

Will you introduce amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act to provide 17 weeks of paid maternity benefits for birthing mothers, and an additional 24 weeks of paid parental benefits to be taken by either or both parents including adoptive parents?

Will you introduce new legislation which will establish national objectives and guidelines for quality, availability and affordability of child care services?

Will you introduce new legislation which will offer capital and operating funds to non-profit child care programs only?



DISABLED WOMEN

Like immigrant and visible minority women, disabled women are victims of multiple discriminations. Beyond the obvious exclusions forced on disabled women with limited mobility, inequitable educational, training, and employment practices force disabled women into a much greater dependence on state benefits.

The disabled are consigned to the paternalism of a justice system which may subject them to medication and surgery, including sterilization, without consent, often without medical justification of any kind.

In addition to our concerns about equal access for the disabled, we are also concerned about the lack of government interest in addressing some causes of disability. Despite mounting evidence of the debilitating short and long-term effects of a number of drugs, including DES and Depo Provera, successive governments have been reluctant even to advise the public of risks to which they may have been exposed, much less to introduce legislation which could prevent similar future tragedy.

FACTS

- According to the 1985 Canadian Health and Disability Survey, there are 2.7 million physically disabled people in Canada, more than half of whom are female.
- Disabled women who work for wages earn 64% of the wages of able-bodied women, who in turn earn 60% of the wages of able-bodied men. This is 38 cents to every dollar a man earns.
- Unemployment and underemployment of disabled women is close to 80%; most existing government incentive programs provide only for the short-term hiring of the disabled at the minimum wage.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you take appropriate action to prevent the further sterilization of any women, including disabled, native, immigrant, visible minority, low-income or other women, without their clear and informed consent?

What measures are you prepared to take to ensure that disabled women have equal access to educational, training and employment opportunities, so that the talents of disabled women will be recognized on a par with the rest of society?

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Women make up a large proportion of the unemployed and increasingly are found in low wage and part-time jobs. Even more disadvantaged are visible minority, immigrant, disabled and native women who suffer higher unemployment and lower wages than other women, as documented by Judge Rosalie Abella in her Royal Commission report.

Within the framework of policies that will lead to full employment in Canada, special measures are needed to break the discriminatory molds that result in certain groups always being at the bottom of the wage scale. In addition to the policy of equal pay for work of equal value, mandatory affirmative action or employment equity is necessary to correct the systemic discrimination that pervades our society.

After the last election the government promised to implement a comprehensive employment equity bill that would help correct the massive inequalities in the work force. The Federal Employment Equity Act introduced a requirement for federal employers to draft employment equity plans and report on their progress. However, there is no enforcement provisions to ensure the plans are introduced or filed with a supervising agency. Only the reporting requirement can be enforced.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Are you committed to a policy of full employment in Canada?

Will you amend the Federal Employment Equity Act to ensure that employers are required to establish employment equity plans with mandatory targets and timetables, including substantial penalties to ensure compliance, and creation of an independent commission to monitor the implementation and compliance?

Will you commit yourself to amending the Canada Labour Code and the Canadian Human Rights Act to give equal hourly pay and pro-rated benefits to people working less than 24 hours a week, and to give equal hourly pay and full benefits to those working 24 hours and more?

Will you support increasing the minimum wage to 50% of the average industrial wage and indexing it to the cost of living?



FAMILY LAW

The new directions in family law, including moves toward involuntary joint custody, mandatory mediation and smaller and shorter-term support payments, are not in the best interest of women and children. These trends, which are lauded by the burgeoning mediation industry, and fathers' rights groups, increase the victimization of ex-wives and worsen the economic situation of women heads of single-parent families.

In the public debates on these issues, father's rights promoters exploit the language of equality in order to gain greater legal powers over their ex-wives and children without having to contribute more to the day-to-day care of their families. They also try to silence women and children by casting doubt on their credibility in cases of physical and sexual abuse.

FACTS

- In 1986, 56% of all female-headed single-parent families had incomes below the poverty line in Canada.
- Though enforcement of support orders has improved in recent years (mainly to reduce social assistance costs), the criteria established by the new Divorce Act for setting support amounts are so inadequate that maintenance for ex-wives is now very rare while child support payments are set at ridiculously low levels.
- Joint custody which is legally imposed, rather than agreed to by both parents, has been proven to increase stress for the children and to have no beneficial effects on guaranteeing regular support payments and preventing child-snatchings.
- There are no standards regulating the practice of divorce or custody mediation in Canada. Currently, mediators generally assume that both partners have equal bargaining power, and ignore the numerous social and economic inequalities between women and men.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Do you support amending the Divorce Act to ensure adequate financial protection to ex-wives who have young children or who have been long-term homemakers?

If you win the election, will you order the Justice Department to publish regular statistics on child support orders and to develop realistic and mandatory child support schedules?

Will you commit yourself to opposing involuntary joint custody and mandatory mediation?

What steps will you take to establish an effective system of maintenance enforcement throughout the country?

Will you support a national investigation into judicial awards of custody to a parent alleged to have committed child abuse?



FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

It's hard to think of an initiative that is more far-reaching in its effects and so potentially damaging to women than the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Across the country polls show a large 'gender gap' on this issue. More women than men are against it. This is because free trade effects every issue of concern to Canadian women: employment, working conditions, education, child care, health care, social services, the environment, prices, consumer protection, and peace.

The Trade Deal is not simply about the free flow of goods between Canada and the U.S. In fact, the Deal does not guarantee access for Canadian goods in the U.S. market since all existing American trade remedy laws still remain. The Deal is really about a more wide-ranging merging of the economies and policies of our two countries (referred to as 'harmonization') with its emphasis on the free flow of investment and delivery of services.

For women the most obvious losses will occur in employment. Women's employment in manufacturing is concentrated in industries where jobs are most at risk: textiles, clothing, food processing, and other consumer goods. Women who will be particularly affected by these job losses are immigrants, women of colour, older women, disabled women, and women with low levels of formal education.

The majority of women in the labour force are in the service sector, where jobs will be threatened as restrictions on the provisions of services from outside the country are removed. For example, the removal of current regulations regarding data processing will eliminate many clerical jobs. Almost one-third of all women in the labour force hold clerical jobs.

Under free trade women will also experience lower wages and poorer working conditions. The major competition for many industries in Canada will come from states which have poor labour legislation and low levels of unionization. To compete, Canadian companies will fight unions even harder and in unorganized workplaces, will simply reduce pay. They will also increasingly resist government intervention, such as minimum wage, equal pay and employment equity legislation.

Our social services (such as health care, daycare and unemployment insurance) will also be affected. U.S. firms can still challenge any public program they feel is an unfair subsidy to business. In the past, challenges

have included regional development schemes, the national railroads, and aspects of the unemployment insurance system.

The Agreement will also encourage the privatization of many social services. This is because U.S. firms will be given the right of establishment and the right of national treatment in 299 service industries. This means that U.S. firms may freely do business here and be treated as Canadian firms. The door is open to U.S. firms that provide private services in areas such as day care, health care, nursing homes, adult training.

In many cases private companies may be able to claim equal access to public funding. In the case of day care, for example, U.S. firms could claim access to public funds for establishing centres here. This could lead to more "for-profit" child care delivery in Canada. Private day care companies usually pay lower wages to their workers and have lower standards for care-giving.

The Free Trade Agreement will adversely affect the well-being of consumers. A primary concern is the effect product "harmonization" will have on consumer standards in Canada. The Free Trade Agreement commits Canada to "work toward equivalent guidelines, technical regulations, standards and test methods" for use of chemical substances such as herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones, and steroids in agricultural production. Harmonization with U.S. testing methods will result in lower Canadian standards.

The trade deal will also reduce the possibility for an independent Canadian voice on peace and security issues. Women are particularly concerned about the potential use, under the free trade deal, of our resources and labour for military purposes.

There is an exemption in the Agreement under the 'unfair subsidy' section for 'any industry sensitive to the defence of the country'. It is widely assumed that in any government subsidized regional development scheme, industries that produce for the military will be favoured over industries that produce consumer goods. As we lose textile factories, we will gain munitions plants.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Given its extremely detrimental effect on women in Canada, will you commit to tear up the Free Trade Agreement with the United States?

Information for NAC Member Groups on Using This Document

The Women's Equality Accord represents NAC's approach to the priority issues for women in the 1988 federal election campaign.

NAC's intention is to ask both party leaders and candidates to sign the Accord, as their commitment to immediate action on improving the status of women in Canada, should they assume office after the federal election.

The Accord is a useful educational tool on the priority issues. In addition to the questions for your candidates, the Accord focuses on the record of government on these issues, and their importance to women.

- Use it as a popular education tool.
- Give it out to co-workers, neighbours, women at all candidate meetings, women in the committee rooms, and to canvassers at your door.
- **MOST IMPORTANT**, get your candidates to sign the Accord. It can be particularly effective if you bring the Accord into the campaign office of every candidate in your constituency. Ask your candidates to call or visit you with his/her answers on the Accord.
- When your candidates have signed the Accord, give them a copy, and send a copy to the NAC office.

National Action Committee on the Status of Women



WOMEN'S EQUALITY ACCORD

The Women's Equality Accord is an agenda for immediate government action. It consists of a limited number of measures which a government could implement immediately upon assuming office and which would greatly improve the lives of women in Canada.

The Women's Equality Accord was drawn up by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC). NAC is Canada's largest voluntary feminist organization, representing almost 600 nongovernmental women's groups across the country.

The Women's Equality Accord takes as its starting point the full equality of all individuals regardless of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, economic status, or sexual orientation.

The Women's Equality Accord is based on the conviction that true equality for women will only be achieved in a world free of sexism, racism, militarism and economic exploitation.

To achieve these goals, the Women's Movement has been fighting for justice and equality for women in specific areas. During the last federal election, women's equality issues were deemed to be a priority by all three parties. All three leaders promised major steps to correct the economic and social inequality faced by the majority of women.

To focus our concerns, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women is inviting candidates to commit themselves to women's equality by agreeing in writing to the immediate implementation of the following measures on four priority issues.



PRIORITY ISSUES FOR

CHILD CARE

The new Canada Child Care Act is a backward step for child care in Canada. Instead of helping to expand services the legislation introduces new ceilings on spending. The new Act lacks national objectives and guidelines for quality, availability and affordability. Without guidelines and a long-term vision, the Act will entrench the current fragmented child care situation across Canada.

The Act will make operating grants available to commercial child care for the first time, providing an incentive to the growth of commercial care which has been shown to provide poorer quality care. The Act's use of tax credits in place of direct subsidy is a poor use of scarce resources; giving parents \$100 to \$200 does not help them find non-existent services or afford fees of \$5,000 per year. Federal government dollars should be put directly into the development of services and programs.

COMMITMENTS

I and my party will oppose, defeat or repeal the Canada Child Care Act and introduce a new Child Care Act with national objectives which will:

- establish long-term cost-sharing agreements with the provinces/territories to develop a comprehensive, high quality, accessible, non-profit, ethno-culturally sensitive child care system;
- provide more generous cost-sharing for less affluent provinces/territories;
- dispense with schemes to fund child care programs through tax deductions and credits;
- ensure capital and operating funds for child care programs serving Native Canadians; and
- guarantee subsidized child care for low-income Canadians under the Canada Assistance Plan until a better funding mechanism is in place.

I and my party will introduce amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act to provide 17 weeks of maternity benefits for birthing mothers and an additional 24 weeks of parental benefits to be taken by either or both parents, including adoptive parents.

Candidate's Comments: _____

Candidate's Signature: _____

Date: _____

THE FREE TRADE DEAL

It's hard to think of an initiative that is so far-reaching and potentially more damaging to women than the Free Trade Accord between Canada and the United States with its economic, social and cultural impact.

Women, and particularly immigrant and visible minority women will lose jobs. Lower wages and poorer working conditions caused by the downward pull of competition with American companies will affect the most disadvantaged more severely. Hard fought equality rights like Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value will be more difficult to achieve.

The Free Trade Deal will threaten the quality and universality of health, social services and child care not only because it permits unfettered American private investment in these areas but also because the 'harmonization' which will inevitably result from the deal will mean that Canadian services will start looking more and more like those of the United States.

The move towards a Canada which is no different from the U.S. - with more reliance on a market economy with less government intervention, more privatization, and a more competitive economy - will severely threaten everything the Women's Movement has been fighting for, and the gains Canadian women have made.

COMMITMENTS

I and my party will tear up the Free Trade Agreement, and will work to develop trade and economic policies that will improve the economic and social conditions of women.

Candidate's Comments: _____

Candidate's Signature: _____

Date: _____



WOMEN'S EQUALITY

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The right to control our reproduction is basic and fundamental to women's autonomy. This year's Supreme Court decision granting women the right to make their own decision concerning abortion is perhaps the most important step forward in women's equality since the last federal election.

The Supreme Court decision, consistent results in public opinion polls, and most recently, a resolution by the Canadian Medical Association, are all telling the government not to re-criminalize abortion.

While abortion is no longer a criminal offence in Canada, there is not equal access to abortion services for women in different regions, because the provinces are developing inconsistent policies on the funding of abortions through their respective provincial medicare schemes.

Recent cutbacks in funding for birth control and sex education are also depriving women of their right to choose and plan their families.

COMMITMENTS

I and my party will work to ensure that abortion remains out of the Criminal Code.

I and my party will amend the Canada Health Act to ensure access to and funding for birth control and abortion services in every province and territory.

Candidate's Comments: _____

Candidate's Signature: _____

Date: _____

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

We live in a world in which a woman is sexually assaulted every six minutes. At least one woman in eight is abused by her husband or partner every year. Four out of every ten girls are sexually abused before they reach the age of eighteen, and 90% of the perpetrators are male.

Violence against women and children is epidemic in Canada. Stronger laws and more appropriate penalties must be instituted to help put an end to all forms of violence. If the courts are to prove a tool for victims, the judiciary and all relevant professionals must be educated. Courts are not enough; an approach of prevention of violence and victim support must also be adopted.

COMMITMENTS

I and my party commit to increased funding for rape crisis centres, services for battered women and their children, and services for the survivors of incest and sexual abuse, both for facility development and ongoing operation.

I and my party will work towards funding a prevention program that includes both public education, and education for the judiciary, police, and other relevant professionals on the gender, class and race biases inherent in the system and the need for respect and support to the victims of violence.

Candidate's Comments: _____

Candidate's Signature: _____

Date: _____



CHILD CARE

Will you oppose, defeat or repeal (if necessary) the Canada Child Care Act and introduce new legislation which will establish national objectives and guidelines for quality, availability and affordability of child care services?

DISABLED WOMEN

Will you take appropriate action to prevent the further sterilization of any women, including disabled, native, immigrant, visible minority, low-income or other women, without their clear and informed consent?

What measures are you prepared to take to ensure that disabled women have equal access to educational, training and employment opportunities?

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Will you amend the Federal Employment Equity Act to ensure that employers are required to establish employment equity plans with mandatory targets and timetables, including substantial penalties to ensure compliance, and creation of an independent commission to monitor the implementation and compliance?

FAMILY LAW

Do you support amending the Divorce Act to ensure adequate financial protection to ex-wives who have young children or who have been long-term homemakers?

Will you commit yourself to opposing involuntary joint custody and mandatory mediation?

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Given its extremely detrimental effect on women in Canada, will you commit to tear up the Free Trade Agreement with the United States?

HOUSING

Will you implement a federal land-banking system to protect federally-owned land from speculative and inflationary cost increases so that it could be available at low cost for non-profit housing?

IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY WOMEN

What will you do to improve the current inadequacy of language training for women whose language is neither English nor French?

What will you do to create adequate skills training and retraining programs aimed at immigrant and visible minority women?

LESBIANS

Will you amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination?

Will you end the discriminatory practices against programs related to sexual orientation that exist in the funding policies of the Secretary of State Women's Programme?

MEDIA AND BROADCASTING

What will you do to ensure that equal rights and dignity are extended to women in the programming and operations of the Canadian broadcasting system?

THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD

Will you guarantee that the rights of women will be protected by ensuring women a place at all constitutional talks?

NATIVE WOMEN

Will you ensure that within a six-month period the reinstatement process will be accelerated to bring a fair and conclusive response to the 60,000 applicants awaiting a reply as of June 1988?

Will you ensure that effective action be taken to provide adequate funds to improve present housing and infrastructures on reserves; and that housing funds for off-reserve Native persons be reinstated?

PENSIONS

Will your party raise the Guaranteed Income Supplement for the aged to bring the federal guaranteed income of all seniors up to the poverty line?

Is your party committed to ending the discrimination of the Spouse's Allowance program by introducing an equivalent federal benefit for all low-income people aged 60 to 64?

PRIVATIZATION

Do you oppose the closing of rural post offices and the privatization of postal services, and do you support the re-hiring of women postal workers who have lost their jobs through privatization?

Do you oppose the privatization of the social and health services?

PROSTITUTION

Will your party commit to the repeal of Sections 193 and 195 of the Criminal Code so that all prostitution-related activities will be decriminalized?

Do you support excluding prostitutes from Bill C-61?

REFUGEES AND IMMIGRATION

Will you work to oppose, defeat or repeal (if necessary) Bills C-55 and C-84?

How will you ensure that women have the same access to becoming Canadian Convention Refugees as men, and that refugee selection will not favour the most able, healthy, trained and wealthy?

REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

Will you ensure that abortion remains out of the Criminal Code? Will you amend the Canada Health Act to ensure access to and funding for abortion services equally in every province.

RURAL AND FARM WOMEN

What will you do to ensure rural women equal access to the same health and social services currently available to women in urban centres?

What measures will you take to protect the future existence of the family farm in Canada, and recognize women's role as agricultural workers?

SECRETARY OF STATE FUNDING

Will you support increasing the budget of the Secretary of State's Women's Program, so that women's groups throughout Canada can have long-term, guaranteed operational funding, indexed to the cost of living?

Do you agree that the government should not interfere with the established priorities of the women's groups through the funding mechanisms?

SURVIVAL

Will you support withdrawal of the White Paper on Defence? Will you oppose the purchase of nuclear-powered submarines?

TAXATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS

Will you commit to the full indexation to the cost of living of family allowances and all tax credits?

Will you introduce a low-income credit to ensure that people with incomes below the poverty line will no longer have to pay income taxes?

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In light of increasing violence against women and children in Canada, will you support ongoing federal or provincial core funding for rape crisis centres, services for battered women and their children, and services for the survivors of incest and sexual abuse?



HOUSING

Poverty, lack of affordable housing and discriminatory housing practices against women, and particularly older women and women alone with children, are fundamental obstacles for women seeking economic independence and security. Across Canada the availability of decent affordable housing varies greatly; however the growing numbers of visibly homeless people and lineups at food banks in urban centres, indicate that the problem is worsening.

While some solutions to our housing crisis lie within the sphere of provincial legislation and municipal by-laws, the federal government could be playing a greater role in ensuring access in both private and public sectors by tying federal housing funding to standards of quality, affordability and security of tenure, and by including women as equal participants in policy and legislative planning.

FACTS

- Women comprise 86% of single persons and 96% of single parents in the public housing and non-profit and co-operative housing programs in Canada.
- A 1987 Canadian Council on Social Development study estimates there are 500,000 homeless families in Canada. In an election the eligible voters in these families will be disenfranchised because without a permanent address they will not be enumerated.
- Within the federal government the recent trend has been toward cutbacks in non-profit housing, and a shift in responsibility to the provinces and to the private sector. The government currently funds 19,000 not for profit housing units annually. To double the number of units would cost \$60 million. The current annual government expenditure, in aid to homeowners through grants and tax incentives is \$3 billion.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you amend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to entrench the right to housing, as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human rights, to which Canada is a party?

Will you commit to increasing funding for non-profit housing?

Will you implement a federal land-banking system to protect federally-owned land from speculative and inflationary cost increases so that it could be available at low cost for non-profit housing?

What will you do to ensure the equitable participation of women at all levels in the provision of housing within the federal sphere?

IMMIGRANT AND VISIBLE MINORITY WOMEN

By multiplying all the problems encountered by Canadian women by at least three, one can begin to appreciate the challenge faced by visible minority women. In addition to other disadvantages, most visible minority women come to Canada as dependents, some speak neither English nor French, and all come from a very different culture. As they struggle to integrate, they are confronted with sometimes covert and often brutally overt discrimination.

For all of these reasons, immigrant women are most often trapped into low-paying, insecure, dead-end jobs which do not enable them to gain access to the larger work force. In this position, immigrant and visible minority women find themselves particularly vulnerable to all types of exploitation including sexual harassment and racial discrimination.

Immigrant and visible minority women tend to be concentrated in the manufacturing, textile, and service industries. The proposed Free trade Agreement will have a devastating impact on these particular sectors of the Canadian economy.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

What will you do to improve the current inadequacy of language training for women whose language is neither English nor French?

What will you do to create adequate skills training and retraining programs aimed at immigrant and visible minority women?

Do you support the introduction of legislation to amend the Employment Equity Act to enforce mandatory employment equity programs with timetables and targets which will include visible minorities in all sectors?

Will you remove the fee imposed on domestic workers with temporary work permits who apply for landed immigrant status?



LESBIANS

Lesbians face a double discrimination in areas like housing, employment and custody of their children because of social attitudes to their sexual orientation. Although some provincial and territorial Human Rights Codes have been amended to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination (Ontario, Quebec and the Yukon), the federal government has failed to make similar changes to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Lesbians want the same legal protection from discrimination granted to other Canadians.

Of immediate concern is the Secretary of State Women's Program's recent refusal to fund lesbian groups and their activities, and its refusal to fund activities related to lesbian rights within broader women's organizations.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination?

Will you end the discriminatory practices against programs related to sexual orientation that exist in the funding policies of the Secretary of State Women's Program?

MEDIA AND BROADCASTING

Canadian children spend more time in front of the television than they do in any other waking endeavour including classroom instruction. The mass media determines the kind of society in which we live. In prime time drama on Canadian and U.S. television, a 1985 study found that 70% of characters were male and 30% were female. Other monitoring studies have shown that of cartoon characters on Canadian English language television only 16% were female, and that in television news 91% of experts were male. The stereotyped portrayal of women and girls, their sex object status, and the absence of a female perspective are well documented.

In order to achieve the changes in attitude which will ensure women achieve economic, social and legal equality in Canada, women must be portrayed with dignity in Canadian television and radio, have equal opportunities for employment in the industry, and have access to communicate their views and issues.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

What will you do to ensure that equal rights and dignity are extended to women in the programming and operations of the Canadian broadcasting system?

Do you support affirmative action programs for women in the broadcasting industry, so that women may participate equally in our country's major means of communication and socialization?

THE MEECH LAKE ACCORD

The debate continues about how the Meech Lake Accord will affect women. Women's groups are in agreement that the process by which this accord was reached was undemocratic. Because the Constitution and amendments to it can change the fundamental rights of women, women must be given the right to be consulted.

QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES

Will you guarantee that the rights of women will be protected by ensuring women a place at all constitutional talks?



NATIVE WOMEN

NAC has always opposed the section of the century-old Indian Act which provided that a Native woman who married a non-Indian man lost her status (while her brother's marriage to a white woman conferred Indian status on her and their children), and supported Native women's demands that this Act be amended. In 1985 the Indian Act was finally amended to remove this section and to allow the reinstatement of women who had been victimized under the old Act.

Although this change allowed many women to regain their status, reinstatement has been a disaster because processing is very slow and because the government has failed to act on its assurances that sufficient funds would be made available to Indian bands to provide housing and other needed services to reinstated women and their children. And the small sums of money that have been available are directed to the band councils rather than to the women concerned directly. Moreover, the government's unwillingness to settle land claims adds to the problem of finding extra space to build on many reserves.

FACTS

- Three years after the Indian Act was amended, only 43,000 persons were reinstated to Indian status out of 103,000 applications.
- Of those reinstated, only a very small number of women succeeded in obtaining a home on their reserve.
- In 1985, just before the women regaining their status could benefit from it, the Department of Indian Affairs cancelled its off-reserve housing programme.

Will you ensure that special funds to house native women who have regained their status be used for the sole purpose of building houses for them, and that this special funding be extended for the next ten years after 1989 when it will otherwise expire?

Will you ensure that effective action be taken to provide adequate funds to improve present housing and infrastructures on reserves; and that housing funds for off-reserve Native persons be reinstated?

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you ensure that within a six-month period the reinstatement process will be accelerated to bring a fair and conclusive response to the 60,000 applicants awaiting a reply as of June 1988?

Will you do everything in your power to ensure that the Canadian Constitution contains a clause that will recognize Aboriginal people as a distinct society with equal rights for Native persons negotiated into self-government terms?

PENSIONS

After spending their lives taking care of others, most Canadian women end their days alone with incomes below the poverty line. Only meaningful pension reform can put an end to this national disgrace.

Old Age Pensions and Guaranteed Income Supplements are two federal programs that are supposed to produce an adequate minimum guaranteed income to Canadian seniors. In fact, they only give an adequate income to married seniors, thereby giving more protection to elderly men, who stay married until death in greater numbers than women. OAS/GIS rates for single elderly people, most of whom are widows, are more than \$2,000 below the annual poverty line.

Spouses' Allowances were introduced by the federal government to guarantee a minimum income to poor people aged 60 to 64. This benefit is flagrantly discriminatory since it is only given to people aged 60 to 64 who are widowed or married to someone aged 65 and over. Single, separated, divorced and other married 60 to 64 year-olds are entitled to nothing at all.

Canada/Quebec Pension and Employer Pensions were set up to allow people to keep the same standard of living after retirement. The CPP/QPP only replaces 25% of earnings and does not protect homemakers, while only one third of female earners participate in employer pension plans. Family laws were changed throughout the country to divide the spouses' assets more equally upon divorce but the federal government has reneged on its promise to make the splitting of the CPP/QPP credits mandatory and automatic upon marriage dissolution.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will your party raise the Guaranteed Income Supplement for the aged to bring the federal guaranteed income of all seniors up to the poverty line?

Is your party committed to ending the discrimination of the Spouse's Allowance program by introducing an equivalent federal benefit for all low-income people aged 60 to 64?

Do you support giving all Canadians adequate pension protection through substantial increases in Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefits, through the direct inclusion of homemakers in this Plan, and through mandatory inflation protection in employer pension plans?

Will you commit yourself to making changes to the Canada Pension Plan and all other plans under federal control to ensure that pension credits will automatically be split on marriage breakdown?



PRIVATIZATION

Privatization is the process of transferring government functions and ownership of certain industries to the private, for-profit sector.

Sometimes this involves the outright sale of assets to the private sector, such as the sale of Crown Corporations. It also takes the form of contracting-out of work, a practice whereby government funding continues, but private firms are asked to deliver the service. Deregulation is another form of privatization which involves abolishing or reducing public regulation of private industries.

Privatization has major effects on women in their dual roles as workers and consumers. The combined deregulation of the transportation industry and the sale of Air Canada, for example, is expected to mean both substantial loss of jobs for women and higher prices and poorer services to people outside major metropolitan areas.

Contracting-out of services has meant lower wages and poorer working conditions for women in industries where this has occurred. Since all cleaning work in Canada Post facilities was contracted-out in 1986, workers (in this case largely women and immigrants) who were previously protected by a collective agreement and earning between \$8 and \$12 an hour, were forced to accept much reduced wages, with no benefits and no job security. The privatization of the delivery of postal services is having a devastating effect on women in rural areas. In some communities postal services have been eliminated altogether, while in others postal workers (more than 80% women in rural areas) have been forced to become private 'entrepreneurs' whose only income is from commissions on stamps. This income is very low, insecure, and the benefits associated with being a government employee have been eliminated.

Recent initiatives, such as the Canada/US Free Trade Agreement and the Child Care Bill, promote increased privatization in the delivery of social services. Of particular concern to women are any moves towards privatization that would effect the quality of health and child care.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Do you oppose transportation deregulation and the privatization of Air Canada?

Do you oppose the contracting-out of government work, such as cleaning in postal operations, and would you support the

direct hiring of workers, such as cleaners, by the government?

Do you oppose the closing of rural post offices and the privatization of postal services, and do you support the re-hiring of women postal workers who have lost their jobs through privatization?

Do you oppose the privatization of the social and health

PROSTITUTION

Prostitution itself is not a criminal offence. Rather, prostitution-related activities are, such as communicating for the purpose of prostitution, keeping or being in a 'common bawdy house', procuring, and living on the avails of prostitution. In other words, while prostitution itself is not illegal, any attempt to work as a prostitute is subject to criminal sanction.

Women working in prostitution are subject to state regulation of their business and personal lives in ways in which no other working people are. As social outcasts, they have almost no access to the criminal justice, health and social services systems, even though they are especially vulnerable to harassment, assault, rape and murder.

Although intended to stop coercion and exploitation, legislation prohibiting procuring and living on the avails of prostitution makes anyone (including children, parents, lovers) supported by, or habitually in the company of, a woman who works as a prostitute subject to charges as well. This situation could be exacerbated by the passage of Bill C-61, which deals with profits from "enterprise crimes", and lists prostitution as one of the 'offenses' for which property and assets could be seized prior to conviction.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEGALIZATION AND DECRIMINALIZATION OF PROSTITUTION

Legalization means that prostitution is allowed within specified legal limits, including licensing, 'sin taxes', redlight districts, or state-controlled brothels. Decriminalization means the complete removal of all prostitution-related offenses from the Criminal Code.

Legalization would only add to the exploitation to which prostitutes are currently subject. If prostitution were decriminalized,

women could use existing laws to respond to violence and exploitation they encounter in their work as prostitutes.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will your party commit to the repeal of Sections 193 and 195 of the Criminal Code so that all prostitution-related activities will be decriminalized?

Do you support the exclusion of prostitutes from Bill C-61?

Do you support full and equal access to existing social services and support for the autonomous development of self-help and other alternative assistance services for adult prostitutes?



REFUGEES AND IMMIGRATION

Immigration policies developed over the past four years make it easier for money, and people with money, to move across national borders, particularly over our border with the U.S., while at the same time, make it more difficult for workers and people without money (women) to cross those same borders.

FACTS

- Bills C-55 and C-84 outline the bureaucratic and legal apparatus for a system which will make it virtually impossible to arrive at Canada's borders and make a successful refugee claim without having already gone through a complex screening process. The current screening processes systematically discriminate against women. The two new pieces of refugee legislation will make it virtually impossible for women to enter Canada without male sponsorship.
- Women and girls make up over 80% of the world's refugee population. Of these, over half the adult women are solely responsible for themselves and their families.
- Very few women apply for refugee status in Canada. While there are no exact statistics, the highest estimate from Department of Immigration data is that sole-support women comprise 20% of all applications to Canada for refugee status.
- Women encounter difficulties in travelling to our embassies, making claims which are recognized as legitimate, and having access to enough political power, knowledge, and bureaucratic literacy to press a claim to its successful conclusion.
- The period of transit from the original country of persecution is often as dangerous for women as not leaving. A disturbing number of women have been deserted, raped, robbed or murdered on their way to safety.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you work to repeal Bills C-55 and C-84?

How will you ensure that women have the same access to becoming Canadian Convention Refugees as men, and that refugee selection will not favour the most able, healthy, trained and wealthy?

Do you support the inclusion of 'persecution based on sex' in Canada's legislation and in the U.N. Convention on Refugees?

Will you oppose the return of any refugee women to a country which will not assure the protection of women who are in transit?

"When I hear men talk about women being the angel of the home, I always, mentally at least, shrug my shoulders in doubt. I do not want to be the angel of any home; I want for myself what I want for other women, absolute equality. After that is secured then men and women can take turns at being angels."

—Agnes Macphail



REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

The right to control our reproduction is basic and fundamental to women's equality. In addition to accessible and insured abortion services, other reproductive rights include accessible sex education, affordable and safe birth control, unbiased and unconditional genetic counselling, free pre/post-natal and midwifery services, and adequate maternity leave. Without government policies that provide for all of these rights or services, women are controlled by, rather than in control of their reproductive lives.

This year's Supreme Court Decision to strike down Section 251 of the Criminal Code was a major victory for women's equality. This Decision has decriminalized abortion, allowed free standing abortion clinics to exist within the law, and has granted women the right to make their own decisions concerning abortion.

As the Supreme Court judgement written by Chief Justice Dickson pointed out "Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction, to carry a fetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus an infringement of security of the person".

The Supreme Court Decision, consistent results in public opinion polls and the recent resolution of the Canadian Medical Association are all telling the government that the decision to have an abortion should remain between a woman and her doctor. The women's movement must oppose any government attempts to re-criminalize abortion, including any federal law prohibiting abortion when a certain stage of the pregnancy has been reached.

While the suggestion of a stipulated legal gestation limit in the later stages of pregnancy might seem reasonable, this is a dangerous precedent that women must oppose because it assumes that a woman is incapable of making an informed decision in consultation with her doctor after a certain stage in her pregnancy, and because any specified time limit put into legislation can be changed at any time by any successive government.

Leadership in affirming the Court Decision is called for by the federal government especially since the responses of the provinces have been so divergent. Some provinces have refused to fund therapeutic abortions performed in hospitals through the medicare scheme. Others have insisted that therapeutic abortion committees remain in place, an action which is unconstitutional following the Supreme Court Decision. While at the other end of the scale, some provinces (Ontario and Quebec) are disbanding therapeutic abortion committees, and are willing to fund free standing clinics in principle, but not at sufficient levels to allow them to operate without charging fees to patients.

FACTS

- The standard medical practice for the past 20 years has generally limited abortions to the first two trimesters.
- Less than one-half of one percent of abortions were ever performed after 20 weeks, and these were specifically in the cases of grave fetal deformity, life-threatening pregnancies, and unavailability of early abortions (often due to the delaying tactics of an anti-choice doctor).
- The introduction of a federally-legislated cutoff date would create grave problems in cases of fetal deformity and life-threatening pregnancies. It would do nothing to improve access to early abortions for groups such as economically disadvantaged women and inexperienced teenagers.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you ensure that abortion remains out of the Criminal Code?

Will you amend the Canada Health Act to ensure access to and funding for abortion services equally in every province.

Will you commit to adequately funding a comprehensive women's health program which includes family planning, sex education, and research into safe methods of birth control?



RURAL AND FARM WOMEN

Women in rural communities do not have access to many of the services available in urban centres. Formal child care is very limited and shelters for women in violent situations are only as close as the nearest city. The economic situation continues to decline as the federal government pushes forward with privatization of postal services. Often post office jobs are the only decent paying jobs for women in rural areas. The present agricultural crisis (the decline of the family farm, record drought levels, high debt levels and farm foreclosures) has a direct impact on rural and farm women.

FACTS

- The percentage of women farm workers has increased almost fivefold in the last 30 years.
- Two-thirds of unpaid family farm workers are women. Women do 60% of the 1.3 million hours of unpaid work performed on farms each year.
- It is roughly estimated that 60 to 70% of seasonal farm workers are women. Vegetable, fruit and mushroom pickers earn an average of \$2 to \$3 an hour.
- In most provinces farm workers are excluded from legislation governing provincial minimum wages and hours of work.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

What will you do to ensure rural women equal access to the same health and social services currently available to women in urban centres?

What measures will you take to protect the future existence of the family farm in Canada, and recognize women's role as agricultural workers?

SECRETARY OF STATE FUNDING

In 1970 the Royal Commission on the Status of Women recommended that the government fund women's voluntary organizations working in areas of special concern to women. This is done through the Secretary of State Women's Program with a current budget of \$12.4 million. The purpose of the Women's Program is to promote greater participation by women in all aspects of society, particularly in decision making and the political process and to increase the capability and effectiveness of women's organizations working to improve the status of women.

The Standing Committee on Secretary of State in 1987 examined the objectives and criteria of the Women's Program and heard testimony from 144 witnesses and received 265 written briefs. It recommended that the current funding level be maintained and indexed to a cost of living allowance. It reported "the Women's Program receives excellent value for its money in terms of volunteer hours and staff dedication." It recommended granting operational funding for a period of up to three years and encouraging self-sufficiency among the groups.

As the numbers of eligible women's groups grow, and existing women's groups are expanding their operations, existing levels of funding to the Women's Program are insufficient and must be increased.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

Will you support increasing the budget of the Secretary of State's Women's Program, so that women's groups throughout Canada can have long-term, guaranteed operational funding, indexed to the cost of living?

Do you agree that the government should not interfere with the established priorities of the women's groups through the funding mechanisms?

"Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good. Luckily, this is not difficult."

—Charlotte Whitton, 1963



SURVIVAL

The future of the human race and preservation of our fragile planet's life support systems must become the paramount concern of our time and of all peoples. The real threats are ecological destruction, ongoing genetic damage and nuclear catastrophe.

Women deplore the escalating costs of the arms race at the expense of social programs. The government's 1987 White Paper on Defence perpetuates out-dated cold-war rhetoric, increases the danger of nuclear war by supporting the arms race, and contains an expensive military wish-list that could divert federal funds from much needed social and economic programs.

FACTS

- In spite of recent opinion polls and contrary to the interests of world peace, the government:
 - plans to spend \$10 to \$15 billion for 10 to 12 nuclear-powered submarines;
 - allows U.S. cruise-missile testing over Canada;
 - does not oppose NATO's adherence to first use of nuclear weapons, contravening our long-standing non-nuclear policy;
 - allows access of nuclear-capable submarines and ships to our sea and lake ports.
- In 1986-87, government programs provided grants and loans of \$190 million for arms manufacturers, a 9% increase over the previous year. War industries are replacing production of consumer goods in the name of regional development. This tendency will be exacerbated under the proposed Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., which exempts only subsidies to military production from potential charges of unfair trading practices.

TAXATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS

The government announced tax reforms to 'ensure the fair sharing of the tax burden among taxpayers'. What it delivered was a new tax system giving more to the rich, less help to parents and the disadvantaged, and promises of an even heavier tax burden on lower-income Canadians in the future.

The government has announced major sales tax changes that would apply not only to merchandise, but also to services such as hairdressing and child care. If implemented, this would certainly produce a less progressive tax system and proportionally larger tax burdens for lower-income people.

FACTS

- As of 1988 the maximum federal tax rate applicable to the highest incomes is lowered from 34% to 29%.
- Since 1984, upper-income taxpayers were granted generous new tax breaks, including large increases in deductions for Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs).
- Family allowances were partially de-indexed, with their value shrinking by 3% each year.
- Thousands of Canadian families with incomes below the poverty line continue to pay tax, as much as \$2,000 a year in some cases.
- This year's tax changes will remove 850,000 low-income taxpayers from the tax rolls. This is less than the 1 million low-income people who were added to the tax lists as a result of the government's partial deindexation of the tax exemptions and its abolition of the low-income tax credit in 1985.
- Tax benefits for low income families were increased re-

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- Will you support withdrawal of the White Paper on Defence?
- Will you oppose purchasing nuclear-powered submarines?
- Do you support making Canada a nuclear weapons-free zone?
- Will you urge that Canada join the majority at the United Nations and vote for a comprehensive test ban treaty?
- Will you urge an end to participation in war games, including low-level flight training?
- Would you phase out uranium mining and cease export for U.S. nuclear weapons?
- Will you oppose testing chemical and biological weapons at Suffield, Alberta?

cently, but by less than necessary to compensate for the increases in sales taxes imposed in each of the last four years.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

- Will you promise to raise the maximum federal tax rate on highest incomes to at least its previous level of 34%?
- Will you commit to the full indexation to the cost of living of family allowances and all tax credits?
- Will you introduce a low-income credit to ensure that people with incomes below the poverty line will no longer have to pay income taxes?
- Will you promise to reduce, rather than increase, the proportion of federal revenues that comes from sales taxes?



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

We live in a world in which women and children are most often the victims of violence, and men most often the perpetrators.

The seriousness of this ugly reality is only partly reflected in the numbers. The impact on women's lives, in physical, psychological, and emotional terms is often devastating with long term consequences.

Pornographic materials, increasingly violent in their representation of the victimization of women and children, are increasingly available in Canada.

The reality of women's experience of violence illustrates that, regardless of the gains women may have made in legislative change, status, and choices, for many, those benefits are illusory as long as they are subject to physical, psychological, economic and/or verbal intimidation, coercion, and violence.

Gaining redress through the courts is difficult and the courtroom setting often acts as an arena for further victimization. For example, Bill C-127, the new Sexual Assault legislation, was supposed to remove the right of the defence to question a woman on the basis of her past sexual history, but instead left in a clause which permits judges to decide, based on very particular criteria listed in the Code, when past sexual history is admissible. If a woman has had any sexual relations with the assailant previously (as in the case of an ex-husband or ex-lover) her past sexual history with the accused is considered admissible.

Strong laws and more appropriate penalties must be instituted to help put an end to all forms of violence. If the courts truly exist to help the victims, the judiciary must be educated about the facts which surround violence, and how sexism, racism and class biases distort the application of justice.

Front line rape crisis and transition house workers, as well as sexually assaulted and battered women must have a real voice in policy making. The current government's new "Family Violence" initiative is a clear example of policies that lack sufficient input from the women who know the issues from firsthand experience.

New Government funds in this area have gone to the creation of facilities, and too little allocated to their operation, despite the fact that the recent Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women reports states that, "Funding should increasingly emphasize the expanded service-delivery role of shelters to include services for children and follow-up and preventative services, rather than just their residential role." In addition, funding is not included for second stage housing. Rather, the rest of the money goes to five other departments, including to the Corrections Branch of the Department of the Solicitor General for treatment of offenders.

Without long-term secure operational funding for shelters and support services, the future of high quality services that respond to the needs of women is in doubt. We need a coordinated community approach that expands on existing services and integrates the functions of shelters with advocacy centres and resources for public education, support groups and counselling for women and their children and follow-up programming.

FACTS

- A woman is sexually assaulted every six minutes, and sexually assaulted in the form of rape every 17 minutes.
- One woman in four will be sexually abused or sexually assaulted in her lifetime.
- Four of ten girls are sexually abused before their eighteenth birthday.
- At least one woman in eight, or as many as one million Canadian women every year are abused by the men with whom they are living.
- The histories of four of every five female offenders under federal sentence (more than two years) include one or more episodes of incest, child sexual abuse, or battering.
- A 1987 analysis of admissions to a large Toronto hostel for street youth revealed reports of incest or child sexual abuse for 93% of males and 95% of females.
- The present law concerning sexual assault in Canada includes a clause referred to as the 'defense of honest belief' which allows a rapist to be acquitted if he convinces a judge or jury that he thought he had the woman's consent. No other crime in Canada allows for such a defence or contains such a clause.

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

In light of increasing violence against women and children in Canada, will you support ongoing federal or provincial core funding for rape crisis centres, services for battered women and their children, and services for the survivors of incest and sexual abuse?

Do you support a community-based integrated service model designed by and for users? Will you ensure that such services are effective, and are responsive to needs of users, and ensure that front-line service delivery workers are consulted in the development of such services?

Will you support the funding of a prevention program that includes popular education and education program for the judiciary, police, and related professionals on the gender, class and race biases inherent in our society and the need for respect and support to the victims of violence?

Will you commit to introducing comprehensive anti-pornography legislation, which will not be a form of censorship, and which addresses violence against women and children and provides enforceable penalties?

WOMEN Vote!

Since the last federal election in 1984 the NAC membership has more than doubled to nearly 600 member groups across Canada. In each province/territory NAC member groups are working and fighting for women's equality in all areas of our society.

This election more than any other is of vital importance to Canadian women. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has prepared a number of tools for the election, on the theme: **WOMEN VOTE!**

Our message to women is - make your votes count.
Our message to candidates is - women's issues are on the national agenda and women's votes will make the difference across the country.

It's expensive to run a national campaign. We have the plan, but we count on you to make it happen.

National Action Committee on the Status of Women
344 Bloor Street West, Suite 505
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M5S 3A7

(416) 922-3246

(613) 234-7062

HELP US HELP WOMEN VOTE!

Count me in.

Here's my cheque / money order for

\$25. \$50. \$100. \$200.

\$ _____

to guarantee **WOMEN VOTE!** will be a successful campaign

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____