

October 1996

"REVIEW" AN ATTACK ON QUALITY CHILD CARE

Community and Social Services Minister Janet Ecker has released her *"Child Care Review"*. "This report is an attack on Ontario's child care system," said Ethel LaValley, OFL secretary-treasurer. "If the government is allowed to implement the recommendations outlined in this report, Ontario will quickly move to an American style delivery of child care."

The report recommends that monitoring, staff wages and working conditions, and accountability for public funds be destroyed.

- ▶ Day Care staff will lose over \$4,500 of their salaries.
- ▶ Preschool ratios will increase; staff will be paid less and must care for more children.
- ▶ Reduced licensing and inspections of centres.
- ▶ Reduced home visits for licensed home care providers.
- ▶ Child care subsidies could be used for unlicensed programs and babysitters.
- ▶ Child care centres will now be subject to minimal building codes, compromising the safety of children.

The Federation will join with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care to fight the Harris government's latest attack on working families. To get involved in this fight, or to receive information, contact Carrol Anne Sceviour at 1-800-668-9138 or (416) 443-7670.

PAY EQUITY FIGHT BACK

The Federation and the Equal Pay Coalition have launched a provincial lobby to preserve the *Ontario Pay Equity Act*. "With the release of the Read Report, the Harris government is again planning to introduce legislation that will be nothing less than a gift to 'Bad Bosses'," said Ethel LaValley, OFL secretary-treasurer. "Moving from a proactive to complaint based law -- limited retroactivity would take money from the pockets of

working women and add to the profit line of employers who haven't complied with the Act."

An activist kit has been developed which will be mailed to local unions, labour councils and women's groups across the province. For copies of the kit, or for more information, contact the Federation at 1-800-668-9138, Ext. 670, or (416) 443-7670.

NDP FIGHT TORIES ON CHILD CARE

The Ontario NDP Caucus will be holding public hearings on the Harris government's child care review document which recommends lowering standards of child care in Ontario, Frances Lankin, NDP MPP and Critic for Children and Youth, announced on October 2, 1996.

"Working parents in Ontario have fought for affordable quality child care and this government is tearing down the standards carefully built over the last decades," Lankin said. "What's more, the Minister has no plans to consult with the very people who have the most at stake in the child care system: the parents of young children," Lankin added.

The government's child care review recommendations will weaken the quality of care to such a degree that child care expert, Dr. Donna S. Lero, who served as a member of Community and Social Services Minister Janet Ecker's advisory committee on child care, cannot endorse the recommendations.

In her letter to the Minister, Dr. Lero said that "There is no way I can support proposals that would have such a terrible effect on Ontario's children and families." She said the government recommendations "would greatly weaken the quality of care built up so carefully in this province over a long period of time and destabilize the system in the process." Dr. Lero advised that "a proper public consultation process involving all stakeholders that is not so secretive is essential."

Dates and communities for the NDP child care hearings are: October 15 - Toronto (Queen's Park); October 16 - Toronto (West); October 17 - Hamilton; October 23 - Markdale; October 24 - Windsor; October 26 - Sudbury; October 28 - Ottawa; October 29 - Toronto (East); October 30 - Thunder Bay; November 4 - Cobourg. Information

kits are available by calling Stephanie Levesque (416) 325-7336.

LABOUR BOARD TO HEAR SEXUAL HARASSMENT CHARGE

Pauline Au has won the right to a labour board hearing on her charge that sexual harassment is a workplace hazard. A panel of the Ontario Labour Relations Board set a precedent in June when it ruled a full hearing should be held as Au's allegations of workplace harassment may be covered by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

A Divisional Court panel has dismissed Lyndhurst Hospital's attempt to halt the hearing, which is scheduled for January 1997.

INVISIBLE: ISSUES IN WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Here is a compelling, indispensable resource for workers, managers, researchers, activists and decision-makers -- and for anyone with a vital interest in the health and safety of women.

In *Invisible*, 18 researchers shed light on assumptions about women and work. By observing diverse occupations, the authors describe hidden hazards, reveal gender biases in research and explain delays in recognition of women's occupational health problems. The book includes 14 articles written in English and 4 articles written in French. Each article is introduced with a short summary in both languages.

Invisible is available at women's and university bookstores or order directly from: Gynergy Books, P.O. Box 2023, Charlottetown, PEI, C1A 7N7, Phone (902) 556-5750, Fax (902) 566-4473. Please include a cheque for \$21.95 per book plus \$3.00 shipping and handling and 75 cents shipping and handling for each additional book. Add 7% GST to the total amount.

STRIKING FLINT:

Genora (Johnson) Dollinger Remembers the 1936-37 General Motors Sit-Down Strike

At age 23, Genora Johnson was called the "Joan of Arc of Labour" for her role in the historic 1936-37 battle between General Motors and the United Auto Workers' Union. To stop G.M. from turning the women against the strike, Genora organized a Women's Auxiliary to the union and led its military wing, the Women's Emergency Brigade, which physically defended the occupied plants.

In October 1994, Genora (Johnson) Dollinger was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Women's Historical Centre. On that occasion, Victor and Sophie Reuther wrote:

"Genora was of the great tradition of Mother Jones who in an earlier generation was to the mine workers what Genora became to the auto workers. A living legend in her own time!"

In this 41 page booklet, Genora recalls the Flint Strike and her experiences directly after the strike: organizing the first unemployed union fighting racism and defending workers' rights in a Detroit factory during World War II. Genora's story highlights the creativity, courage and solidarity that made it possible for ordinary people to defeat the greatest corporation in the world. Introduction by Sol Dollinger.

TO ORDER: Single copies \$5.00 plus \$1.00 S & H. Bulk Discount Available. Send cheque or money order to Joyce Rosenthal, 49 Belvedere Blvd., Toronto, Ontario, M8X 1K3. Tel: (416) 239-5258, Fax: (416) 239-7307.

WOMEN AT ONLY 56 PER CENT OF MEN'S PENSION EARNINGS

Women lag behind men's earnings all their lives, but things get worse in retirement.

Working women earn about two-thirds of men's earnings in the workforce. As pensioners, however, the gap is even greater.

For pensioners aged 65 to 69 years, the average benefit paid by the Canada Pension Plan in January 1996 was \$517 a month for men. For women, it was only \$289, or 56 per cent of the men's benefit.

The same pattern applies to all age groups, those who take early retirement and those who are 85 and older who retired many years ago, according to the National Council of Welfare.

The discrepancy between men's and women's pension earnings is due to a number of factors. Lower percentages of women than men hold paid jobs, so proportionately, fewer women have their own CPP or QPP earnings, says a recent report of the Council. Women are paid lower wages than men on average, and are more concentrated in part-time than full-time jobs.

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