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Our Story

The Brief
presented by
Women Rally for Action
to all B.C. MLA'S on
March 22, 1976



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RESOURCE CENTRE

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO WOMEN OF BRITISH COLOMBIA

A Brief Presented to B.C. MLA's

By WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION
March 22, 1976

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FOREWORD

On March 22, 1976, hundreds of women from every corner of British Columbia converged on Victoria, in one of the most organized and large-scale actions ever undertaken by the women's movement of B.C.: WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION.

While a demonstration was staged outside, lobby teams of women from every riding in B.C. met with their MLA's in the Legislative Buildings. Each MLA was presented with the Women Rally for Action Brief, and questioned on his or her stand on several specific issues.

This is a reprint of the Brief and Addenda as presented on that day.

The Brief went through a process of evaluation, like the Rally did, in the two months of organizing before the final day. The main Brief (pages 3 to 28) was drawn up by a committee of about ten women who solicited input from relevant women's groups and individuals on the various topics. This Brief was distributed to all lobbyists about three weeks before the Rally, and one copy sent to each MLA. With hundreds more women becoming involved every week, more suggestions for additions to the Brief were made, and then we decided to draw up an addendum to cover those issues we had previously neglected (pages 30 to 36). This section was available on March 19th. Simultaneously, it became apparent that the health page in the original Brief was unfortunately not adequate. Consequently, a group of women involved in the health field drew up a comprehensive health addendum (pages 38 to 45). This too became available on March 19th.

Additions to the Brief didn't stop there, however!

On March 21, 1976, all the lobbyists came together in Victoria for a massive workshop to consolidate our knowledge on lobbying tactics. At the workshop, once more several issues were raised that had not been fully dealt with by the existing Brief and Addenda. That night seven more pages were drawn up (pages 47 to 53), duplicated, and available for each lobby team by 8:00 a.m. the following morning, the day of the Rally.

Although the continuous addition of more information made for a somewhat disjointed final Brief, it was felt to be more important that all Women Rally for Action participants had input into the Brief, and that as many issues as possible could be presented to the MLA's. In future, with the knowledge and experience we gained, hopefully these problems could be prevented.

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Furthermore, this Brief is still an incomplete document. It was never meant to be the definitive statement on all the issues of the women's movement in British Columbia. The focus was only on those issues under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Legislature. Also, it spoke only to those issues common to women all across B.C., and left issues of a local nature to each individual lobby team to raise. Many issues require more research and re-writing, but we felt that it was important to publish this Brief as a historical document.

Two other booklets are being produced as follow-up to WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION. The first, called Members of the Legislative Assembly Tell Stories, is a reprint of the lobby team reports. The second is called A Rally Storybook and is detailed history and analysis of how Women Rally for Action was organized, and what transpired on March 22, 1976.

To obtain copies of any of these three booklets, contact:

Women Rally for Action
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Vancouver, B.C.

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WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION
August 1976

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INTRODUCTION

"The achievement of equality between men and women implies that they should have equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities to enable them to develop their talents and capabilities for their own personal fulfillment and the benefit of society. To that end, a reassessment of the functions and roles traditionally allotted to each sex within the family and the community at large is essential. The necessity of a change in the traditional role of men as well as of women must be recognized. In order to allow for women's equal (fuller) participation in all societal activities, socially organized services should be established and maintained to lighten household chores and especially services for children should be provided. All efforts should be made to change social attitudes - based mainly on education - in order to bring about the acceptance of shared responsibilities for home and children by both men and women.

In order to promote equality between women and men, Governments should ensure for both women and men equality before the law, the provision of facilities for equality of educational opportunities and training, equality in conditions of employment, including remuneration and adequate social security. Governments should recognize and undertake measures to implement women's and men's right to employment on equal conditions... their access to the whole range of economic activities... should ensure improved access to health services... and maternity protection."

--- From the report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, Mexico 1975. Issued by United Nations Economic and Social Council, 59th Session, July 1975.

These words are excerpted from a report outlining the United Nations "Ten Year World Plan of Action" promoting equality of opportunity, rights, and responsibilities between men and women. There are many more words, paragraphs, briefs, and books detailing the discrimination all women face in all societies. This brief presented by the WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION details the issues of particular concern to women in British Columbia.

All of the points raised in the United Nations excerpt are relevant to the women of B.C. Discriminatory incidents occur every day in the courtrooms, in hospitals, social service agencies, employment situations and in the day-to-day life in the home. Discriminatory attitudes towards women are especially visible and especially dangerous. The needs of half of the province's population cannot be ignored or dealt with lightly. Comprehensive programs designed to consciously integrate women into the political, economic and social structure must be developed and implemented.

International Women's Year in British Columbia was marked by the opening of an office with a broad mandate in the area of women's issues. The terms of reference of the Office of the Provincial Coordinator on the Status of Women included: 1) To advise the government on matters affecting the status of women; 2) To coordinate government programs relating to women; 3) To monitor government programs and policies to ensure that equivalent benefits accrue to both men and women. Proposals were completed on affirmative action and women's centre funding programs, that if implemented, would have begun to improve the status of women in two important areas -- the public service and the community. Extensive liaison between international, federal and provincial governments was instigated as well as the opening of important communications with other departmental branches and committees dealing with women's issues. Public education and funding of women's projects were also areas of concern. This work ceased with the closure of the Provincial Coordinator, Status of Women office in January 1976.

While it is recognized that government spending everywhere is being cut due to world-wide inflation, it is necessary to remind all elected representatives that responsible government deals not only with the economy, but with the human beings who live and work within that economy. If one-half of that population is not receiving fair and equal treatment because of their sex, it is the responsibility of government to introduce policies and legislation that will eliminate that discrimination.

REPRESENTATION FOR WOMEN WITHIN GOVERNMENT

Discrimination against women is entrenched in our social, economic and political systems and women will not seriously affect the centres of decision-making until they are a part of the organization, the machinery, the administration, and the structure of those systems. Within government, there should be a clear commitment at all levels to take appropriate action to implement targets and priorities that take fully into account women's interests and needs; to make adequate provision to improve their situations and increase their contribution to the development process. This must include equitable representation of women at all levels of policy and decision-making, as well as the establishment of interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within government to more effectively accelerate the achievement of equal opportunity for women.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Women's Responsibility Centres be set up within the Department of Health, the Department of Labour, the Department of Human Resources, and the Department of Education.
2. The mandate and terms of reference of the Women's Economic Rights Branch in the Department of Economic Development be used as a model for the development of the Women's Responsibility Centres. (See Appendix B for mandate and objectives of W.E.R.)
3. The office of Provincial Coordinator, Status of Women, be re-established, reporting either to the Attorney-General or the Provincial Secretary.
4. The office of Provincial Coordinator, Status of Women, have included in its mandate:
 - a) an interdepartmental responsibility within government.
 - b) responsibility to act as a resource and coordinating body for the Women's Responsibility Centres in other Departments.
 - c) responsibility for advising cabinet on matters affecting the status of women.
 - d) responsibility for coordinating government programs relating to women.
 - e) responsibility for the monitoring of government programs and policies to ensure that equivalent benefits accrue to women and men.
 - f) responsibility for funding women's activities within the community.

WOMEN'S CENTRE CORE FUNDING

It is recommended that:

1. The Provincial Government adopt and implement the proposal for the core funding of Women's centres as presented to the Human Services Committee of Cabinet, by the Provincial Co-ordinator of Status of Women, 1975.

Excerpted points and recommendations for discussion:

British Columbia has some 200 women's groups concerned specifically with women's rights issues. Many operate as "women's centres". Each women's centre is unique and develops in response to the particular needs and interests of women in the specific community. Women's centres are of special need and service in rural and outlying areas of the province, where services normally available to city people are non-existent.

Most women's centres are founded on the premise that while changes in the law are crucial to achieving equality for women, these must be supplemented by the work of women in the community. As long as women are treated unequally in society, they will require compensatory services such as those offered by women's centres.

Women's centres are engaged in activities aimed at fighting discrimination against women and collectively improving their status. This involves communications projects, ombudservices, sharing experience and information on women, public education on women's rights, workshops on human rights, women's health, women's history, women's employment, women and the law, as well as diverse research and production of written material.

Due to insufficient funds, all women's centres rely heavily on volunteer labour and shoestring budgets. They handle an overwhelming caseload, not knowing from month to month if they will have a job or be able to provide a vital service to women. Women's centres are unable to charge a fee for service as the women who most need their services are the least able to pay. Private sector funding is unavailable for core funding purposes and unsuitable because services must then be designed according to the priorities of the funding source rather than the needs of the community.

While the operating and salary expenses of women's centres are not guaranteed, they have been able to secure federal grants for specific short-term projects and have demonstrated great effectiveness in their communities. Development of an adequate funding policy by the provincial government would ensure that already proven services are continued for women. The appropriate funding for services directed at the community should be a collective responsibility of the provincial government which has recourse to collective revenue.

continued

Therefore, recognizing that:

1. women's centres constitute the beginning of a broad base of support in those communities where they exist, and
2. women's centres provide a source of information to the government in determining the needs of women in all regions of the province, and
3. women's centres constitute participatory democracy in that women are identifying their needs within the community and organizing the community to meet those needs, and
4. services offered by women's centres are clearly of a provincial nature, falling within Section 92 (16) of the B.N.A. Act - matters local in nature - and not coming under any of the heads of Section 91, which sets out federal matters,

It is recommended that:

1. the provincial government assume the responsibility for the funding of women's centres on a permanent basis.
2. funding include operating expenses and salaries to others doing similar work, i.e. information officers in government.
3. women's centres be funded for a period of a year at a time with an evaluation of effectiveness to be completed by the women's centre, by the community in which the centre exists, and by the Department of government responsible for re-funding.
5. priority in funding be given to women's centres proposing to serve unmet needs in the community, particularly in outlying areas; and women's centres already established and functioning well.

FAMILY LAW

One root cause of sex discrimination is the law of the family. Family law reform is one keystone to the arch of human dignity. The present family law is a product of the Victorian era - the statutes on family law are an amalgam of feudal status concepts expanded by medieval matrimonial fault doctrines. The object of reform of marriage laws is to remove very specific examples of sex discrimination in these laws. In order to achieve that goal, it is recommended that:

1. the sixth report of the Berger Commission on Family and Children's Law, which recommends full and immediate community of property, become legislation immediately.

Operating from the belief that all people are equal under that law; that marriage is a partnership of equal responsibilities; that the roles of economic provider and homemaker are of equal value to the marital relationship; and that married women are economically competent; the community property scheme provides for the sharing of assets which are acquired during a marriage, with joint management throughout the marriage, and a fifty-fifty distribution in the event of a marriage breakdown.

One important amendment is suggested however: that the \$2,000 limit on transactions which require the signature of both spouses be lowered to \$500, effectively protecting families with lower incomes.

2. the eleventh report of the Berger Commission on Family and Children's Law regarding the Change of Name Act be instituted in full.

The recommendations are as follows: that the spouses may use either the husband's or the wife's last name; that spouses keep their original last names; that both spouses may apply for a joint or hyphenated last name; that both spouses may apply for an entirely new last name. These recommendations also provide for the last names of children under the above conditions.

3. the concept of illegitimate status of children be eliminated, as recommended by the fifth report, Part Two, of the Berger Commission on Family and Children's Law.

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4. revisions to the law regarding maintenance on divorce, as recommended by the Federal Law Reform Commission, be enacted.

The concept of "no fault divorce", from which maintenance would be set based upon reasonable need, rather than retribution, is endorsed. The Federal Law Reform Commission encourages the view that maintenance should be rehabilitative rather than pension-like, that is, providing for the dependent spouse until she/he is able to be self-sufficient.



EDUCATION

An egalitarian society begins with the education system. Studies have documented that discrimination against female teachers and students exists at all levels of our education system. It is clear that females are given second class opportunities. Over the past four years, many problem areas have been identified and possible solutions have been presented to the Department of Education. A Special Advisor to the former Minister of Education worked closely with a Provincial Advisory Committee on Sex Discrimination and had begun the long process towards equalizing educational opportunities.

In order to continue the work of eliminating sex discrimination from public education in British Columbia, it is recommended that:

1. the Department of Education make a public commitment stating that the elimination of sex discrimination from the schools of British Columbia is a priority issue.
2. this commitment include a plan of action, a timetable and the allocation of funds to ensure that the plan is implemented.
3. the Provincial Advisory Committee on Sex Discrimination in Public Education be re-instated.
This committee was struck in June of 1974 and consisted of representatives from the Home and School Association, the B.C. Teachers' Federation, the School Trustees Association, the Department of Education, and women's groups. (See Appendix 'A' for terms of reference.)
4. the contract position of Special Advisor to the Minister of Education on Sex Discrimination be renewed after the present contract runs out in June 1976.
5. the development of non-sexist books and materials be encouraged.
6. the selection of all new non-sexist books and materials follow the guidelines presented in "Equal Treatment of the Sexes". (See Appendix 'C'.)

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7. non-sexist books and materials be distributed to all schools throughout the province.
8. teacher training institutions offer courses in sex-role stereotyping in education, and that all student teachers be required to take such courses on sex-role stereotyping in education.
9. in-service courses on sex discrimination be mandatory for all teachers, librarians and counsellors.
10. a women's studies course be available as part of the provincial curriculum.
11. a policy be developed that ensures all courses, programs, activities, and clubs be open to all students regardless of sex, race or religion.
12. equal funds be committed to sports programs for both sexes.

CHILDCARE

Childcare services are essential to the women and children of British Columbia. Forty-three percent of the labour force is female, and over half of them have small children at home. Women work out of financial necessity, and for many the choice is between welfare and work, depending on whether they can find and afford childcare. If women are to have equal opportunity in the labour force, they must be relieved of exclusive responsibility for childcare. In order that adequate childcare be available province-wide, it is recommended that:

1. the number of childcare services be increased.

There are thousands of children who are presently in need of childcare, and waiting lists are extremely long. Children do not have to wait to get into schools, nor should they be required to wait to get into childcare facilities.

2. the number of childcare centres existing outside the Lower Mainland be increased.

The need for childcare services exists outside of an urban setting as well. If women are to have equal employment opportunities in the smaller centres throughout B.C., childcare services must be provided.

3. the childcare funding system be restructured on a costs per month basis.

Presently, every cost of operating a childcare centre is tied to the fee scale. The government sets the limit on this fee. However, the childcare workers must bargain their wages and working conditions with their parent board/church board/agency. These boards have no control over fee setting or funding. This leaves the workers in a futile bargaining position. The fee presently being charged does not provide enough income to pay for program costs and working conditions. It forces the childcare centres to run on a shoestring budget, paying their staff indecent wages. All childcare centres must work from the same budget regardless of their operation costs. This causes inequality in wages, working conditions, and the quality of care, i.e. some centres pay no rent while others pay up to \$325; some pay no maintenance while others pay up to \$150.

4. there be one agency established by the provincial government to handle the licensing and funding of childcare centres and the training of childcare workers.

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Under the present system, the legislation affecting childcare services comes from different levels and departments of government. For example, the Department of Human Resources cost shares with the Federal Government under the Canada Assistance Plan to provide subsidies for childcare, while the Department of Health is responsible for the licensing regulations. The Department of Health demands that certain standards be met but funds adequate to meet those demands are often not supplied by the Department of Human Resources. With one body to coordinate the legislation affecting childcare, the establishment of centres would be more expedient.

5. the provincial government require all childcare centres to permit user-controlled childcare services.

The amount of input that parents and staff are allowed is decided arbitrarily by the particular childcare centre. A requirement like this would give parents and staff the opportunity to get involved with the childcare centre to the extent that they wished.

6. wages of childcare workers be improved.

Community childcare workers presently receive \$500-\$700 per month, in contrast to \$1,000 per month which is paid to childcare staff employed by the government under the childcare classification.

7. licenses for childcare centres be based upon the particular merits of each childcare centre.

Licenses are presently granted based upon the recommendations of fire and health inspectors, and not based upon the quality of the care itself. The attempt is not to standardize childcare, but to provide the parents with a choice of childcare centre which is most compatible with their own child-rearing philosophies.

8. childcare services be available on a 24-hour basis.

Many of the people who require childcare services work shift work.

9. childcare services be available on school premises after 3:00 p.m.

10. childcare services be available to homemakers who are ill.

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11. childcare services available to children under the age of three years be increased.
12. more in-service training for childcare staff be provided.
13. the following alternative ways of funding childcare centres to provide adequate wages and working conditions be re-searched:
 - a) childcare centres be financed through a combination of fees for service charged to users plus financial grants to cover operational deficits of childcare services for children to a pre-determined budget limit. This limit should be established between the childcare organization and the Department of Human Resources.
 - b) the program costs be separated from salaries and working conditions. The fee for service will cover program costs while the Department of Human Resources takes responsibility for costs of salaries and working conditions. This would allow for direct negotiating with the government.
 - c) childcare centres submit a budget annually to the Department of Human Resources covering the total costs of operating the centre. The childcare centre receives the money from the government to operate and the Department of Human Resources takes responsibility for collecting fees from the parents.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights legislation and agencies are very important vehicles for protecting and improving women's rights. We find that the present B.C. Human Rights Code does not extend protection to women in a number of circumstances. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. Section 6 of the B.C. Human Rights Code be amended to read "equal pay for work of equal value".

The current "equal pay for equal work" clause is being interpreted too conservatively, meaning that, to warrant equal pay, work done by women must be exactly the same as that done by men. As the majority of female workers are in sex-typed job ghettos where few men are employed, they are not covered by this legislation. For those who do hold the same jobs as men, it is almost impossible under the current law to prove that equal work is being performed. Hence, the gap between male and female earnings is increasing at an alarming rate.

2. a section which prohibits discrimination by landlords against families with children be incorporated into the code.

A recent Vancouver study revealed that only 10 percent of landlords will rent to families. Even fewer will rent to single parent women who are the sole economic provider of the family. No doubt this situation is prevalent in the rest of the province. Families have the right to accommodation. Denial of this right is another factor leading to the breakdown of the family unit.

3. a section prohibiting discrimination on economic grounds be incorporated into the Code.

The majority of people on social assistance are single parent families headed by women (76 percent). These women are not only discriminated against because they have children, but they are frequently denied accommodation because they are on social assistance despite the fact that their monthly cheque is guaranteed.

4. a section prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation be incorporated into the Code.

5. the number of human rights officers be increased.

The B.C. Human Rights Branch can handle only about half the complaints it receives from the public and complaints are

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increasing steadily. Nova Scotia, a smaller province than B.C., has the same number of human rights officers, NINE. Ontario, which has three and one half times the population of B.C., has FIFTY human rights officers. We request that the B.C. Human Rights Branch be assigned a budget to allow for the hiring of at least five more officers, to total fourteen.

6. the jurisdiction of human rights boards of inquiry be increased.

Human rights legislation can only deal with discrimination after the fact. It does nothing to prevent discrimination from happening in the future. Therefore, human rights boards of inquiry should have the power to: order employers found guilty of discrimination to enact affirmative action/equal employment opportunities programs for females, minorities, and disadvantaged groups.



MATERNITY PROTECTION

The British Columbia Maternity Protection Act is one of the poorest and weakest in the country. It does not adequately protect the rights of pregnant working women. Equal employment opportunities for women must be safeguarded by strong maternity protection labour standards ensuring that women are not penalized on the job by loss of work, seniority or fringe benefits due to pregnancy leave. To better protect the rights of pregnant working women it is recommended that:

1. the present Maternity Protection Act be amended to prohibit dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy at any time during the pregnancy.

The current law prohibits dismissal of a woman from her job on grounds of pregnancy only for any part of or the whole of a six-week period prior to the birth of her child. It does not prohibit dismissal for pregnancy during the other seven and one-half months prior to the birth.

2. the present Maternity Protection Act be amended to allow the woman to return to work as soon as she wishes.

The current law prohibits employers from allowing female employees to return to work until six weeks after the birth or a period recommended by a doctor, whichever is the longer. As many women are fit to resume work in a shorter period than this and wish to do so, the act should be amended to permit this.

3. the present Maternity Protection Act be amended to extend protection and guarantee of job and pay security on return from maternity leave.

Under the current law, women who go on maternity leave are offered no guarantee that they can return to the same or similar job at the same rate of pay.

4. the present Maternity Protection Act be amended to ensure that leave be considered as continuous employment for the purposes of pension, fringe benefits and seniority.

Maternity leave should not be categorized as a break in job-service.

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5. the present Maternity Protection Act be amended to provide job security for up to six months due to pregnancy complications.

The current law guarantees pregnant working women job security for a total of 16 weeks including the optional period prior to birth and the mandatory leave of six weeks after the birth. Women who experience complications due to pregnancy and birth who are unable to return to work by the end of the 16 week period should have their jobs protected for up to six months.

6. the present Maternity Protection Act be amended so as to include effective means of enforcing the provisions of the Maternity Protection Act.

Current law does not include any provisions for enforcement which effectively nullifies the entire Act.



RAPE

Since the establishment in 1973 of several Rape Relief Centres, rape has been exposed as a very serious problem in the province of B.C. Current statistics indicate that rape is increasing at an alarming rate. The eradication of rape requires action on all fronts: rationalizing and humanizing the procedures of the legal, police and medical institutions; changing the law; eliminating the myths about rape through extensive public education; teaching prevention tactics for women; and eradicating the concept of sexuality that encourage maleness to be equated with dominance and aggression, and femaleness with passivity and sex-objectification.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. funds for additional courts, judges and prosecutors be substantially increased.

The delays of up to a year and a half before trial are reprehensible.

2. prosecutors' pay to be increased.

Rape victims have a right to be well-represented. Poorly paid prosecutors soon return to private practice, leaving the case for the Crown represented by young and inexperienced lawyers.

3. there be expansion of training on sexual offences at the B.C. Police College.

A total of one afternoon is now devoted to training on sexual offences. The manual contains only two paragraphs on dealing with rape cases.

4. there be provision of sufficient police personnel in all areas of B.C.

The understaffed state of police forces in both rural and urban areas results in loss of evidence, lack of in-depth investigation and hurried inadequate interviewing of rape victims. The Crown's case suffers considerably because of this.

5. female police officers be available for rape investigations in all B.C. police forces.

Countless cases go unreported due to the embarrassment of rape victims to speak to a male officer. Other cases are reported with crucial details missing because of embarrassment on the part of the victim.

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6. all hospitals examine and treat a rape victim regardless on whether or not she has yet decided to press charges.
7. all hospitals have and provide a private room where a rape victim can wait for examination.
Rape victims often have a particularly long wait as a specific doctor usually has to be called in to do the examination.
8. all hospitals have a female doctor available for examination of rape cases.
9. police departments employing their own doctor for cases, employ at least one female doctor.
10. funds be made available for Rape Relief Centres in all areas of the province.



HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN

It is recommended that:

1. hospitals receiving money from the provincial government be required to set up and operate therapeutic abortion committees.
Of some 100 B.C. hospitals, only half have such committees and not all of these are functioning. Consequently, many women must travel long distances to undergo the approval procedure and operation, and this results in dangerous delays.
2. overbilling common to therapeutic abortions be stopped.
3. every effort be made to encourage the optimal use by physicians and the public of the diagnostic facilities now provided for hospitals under the diagnostic breast cancer detection program.
4. development of a mass screening mammography project for the women of B.C. be given top priority by the Department of Health.
5. a massive public education program on breast cancer and breast cancer self-examination be initiated in high school classes and public health clinics by nurses and health workers.
6. more monies be made available for research on safer and more effective birth control devices for men and women.
7. birth control devices be made available free.
8. birth control information and counselling be made available free in all public health clinics and centres.
9. more V.D. and pelvic disease clinics be set up throughout the province.

continued....

10. more funding be committed to the training of para-medical workers.
11. sessional payments be given to clinics run by lay women who are providing health care services not otherwise available.
12. specialists be instructed to accept referrals from agencies other than General Practitioners without increasing their fees.
13. a health ombudsperson be appointed to deal with public health care complaints.
14. the B.C. Medical Association make medical records available to patients involved.
15. only a woman's signature be required for medical procedures affecting her body.
16. the definition of health care be expanded to include promotion of health by sound preventive measures.
17. the maternal childcare complex at Shaughnessy be built.

PENSIONS FOR HOMEMAKERS

Every woman has the right to be assured of financial security in old age after a lifetime of work in the home. The value of goods and services produced in the home is estimated at 25 percent of the annual gross national product. The contribution of the homemaker to the economic unit of marriage must be recognized and rewarded not as a privilege but as a right.

In order to effectively guarantee an adequate pension for homemakers, it is recommended that:

1. the provincial government act upon the proposal for inclusion of homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan, as submitted by the Department of Human Resources to the meeting of Ministers of Social Services, May 1975.

For purposes of discussion, the main features of this proposal are as follows:

1. Independent recognition of homemaker's contribution is achieved by attributing a wage to housework on which to base pension credits. For instance, it is estimated that the average woman in a family with young children works a hundred-hour week, seven days a week. In breaking down her tasks and comparing them to wage earners in similar jobs, it is calculated that the work of a housewife is worth about \$300 per week, or almost \$16,000 a year.
2. The benefits for married couples would be greater than presently recommended in that the woman's pension would be received by the couple in addition to the man's pension. The husband's pension alone is not adequate to split between two people, especially in lower income homes.
3. The total pension payable to each partner would be split equally between the two spouses. If one person receives \$274 and the other receives \$197, the total income through pension is \$471. Each partner would receive half, or \$236.
4. Equal benefits would accrue to both marriage partners through retroactive splitting of pension credits. Without retroactive legislation to enact recommendation #3, it would take almost fifty years for homemakers to get equal pensions.
5. The pension plan would not discriminate against women on the basis of sex, marital status, or relative wealth of the wage earner. All homemakers, including widows, single parents and men would be eligible for pensions.

FARM AND DOMESTIC WORKERS

The majority of farm and domestic workers are women and as they are currently unprotected by basic provincial labour standards legislation, they constitute one of the most disadvantaged and exploited sectors of the working population. In order to ensure that these farm and domestic workers receive the protection afforded other workers, it is recommended that:

1. farm and domestic workers be covered by the basic provincial labour standards legislation.

LABOUR STANDARDS

At the present time, 16 separate statutes deal with minimum standards labour legislation. In order to more effectively deal with these statutes, it is recommended that:

1. all 16 statutes dealing with minimum standards labour legislation be codified into one piece of legislation.

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"Industrial and resource development now comes with a concern for impact on the physical and social environment and includes the necessary physical and social infrastructures. Women have a special role here... it is the women who by the very reason of the roles forced upon them by society will see certain areas more urgently and more clearly as an essential part of economic development than will many of the males in the community. These women after all are the persons who are enduring long hours of frustration in the trailer camps, who are living without adequate daycare facilities, who are often at work fearing for the actual physical safety of their children, who are lacking adequate transportation systems, who cannot raise funding for women's centres, who do not see their needs adequately met in the recreation centres, who are developing mental health problems in significant numbers because of a sense of isolation, boredom, loneliness and frustration -- these are the women who know what social infrastructure should be built into economic development plans."

From a speech made by the Director of the Women's Economic Rights Branch of the Department of Economic Development, September 1975 in Terrace, B.C.

In February 1975, the Women's Economic Rights Branch was established within the Department of Economic Development. The mandate and objectives of the W.E.R. Branch can be found in Appendix 'B'.

The participants in the WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION wholly endorse the objectives and fully support all programs run by the Women's Economic Rights Branch.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS WITHIN
THE PUBLIC SERVICE

"There are 37,701 persons in the British Columbia Public Service. Although approximately 55 percent of these public servants are women, they are not represented at significant levels in this power structure. There are no female Deputy Ministers; there are no female Associate Deputy Ministers; there are only 8 women at the salary level of Program Manager 1 and above.

The British Columbia Public Service is the structure which translates policy-making into administrative action. Although there are no women involved at the decision-making level, these administrative actions affect the quality of life of women throughout the Province.

The opportunities for women within the Public Service continue to be restricted because of traditional attitudes, stereotypes and practices. Thus, women are the prime group at which the Equal Employment Opportunities Program is aimed. However, as the same processes operate against native Indians, handicapped and other minority groups, they will also benefit from the Equal Employment Opportunities Program."

Rationale from Equal Employment Opportunities Program proposal submitted by an Interdepartmental Committee under the auspices of the Provincial Coordinator, Status of Women, May 1975.

As the largest employer of women in British Columbia, the provincial government has an obligation to set an example to the private sector by eliminating employment discrimination within the Public Service.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

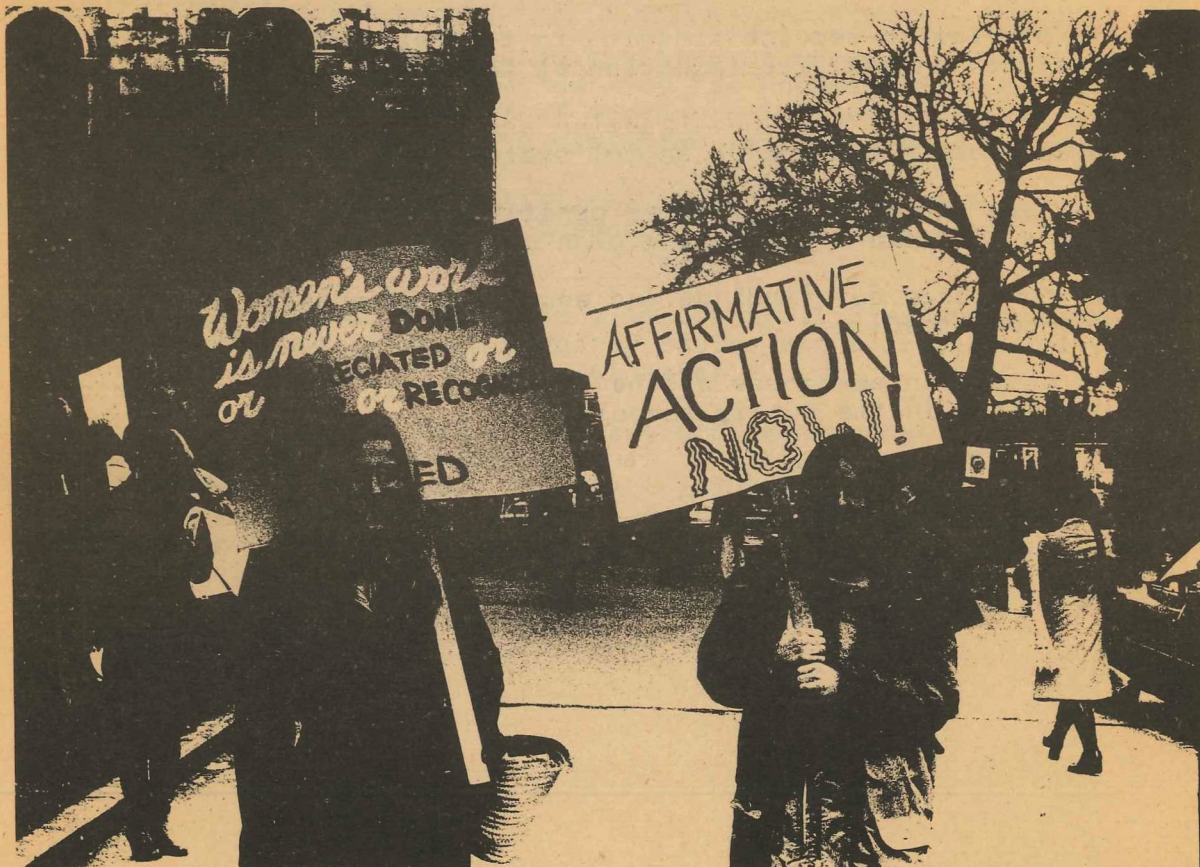
1. the provincial government implement the proposal for an Equal Employment Opportunities Program, as presented to the Provincial Secretary by the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunities Program, May 1975.

ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In 1970, the federally appointed Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada released its Report. In it, there were 167 recommendations that, if implemented, would do much to improve women's status in this country. One third of these recommendations fall under provincial jurisdiction; indeed, many of the issues raised in this brief were fully documented five years ago in the Report of the Royal Commission.

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. the office of Provincial Coordinator of Status of Women and the women's responsibility centres within provincial government departments fully research the recommendations of the Royal Commission Report which fall under provincial jurisdiction, for implementation by Cabinet.



APPENDIX 'A'Terms of Reference of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Sex
Discrimination in Public Education

1. To review or arrange for the review of learning materials and to recommend changes, optional materials and deletions of books as practical and as suitable materials are available.
2. To arrange for and advise on the preparation of materials and suggestions that teachers can use in their classrooms.
3. To work with publishers to make specific suggestions for revisions of materials and to advise on proposed materials which they intend to publish for the school system.
4. To encourage teachers to prepare locally developed materials for use in their school.
5. To provide in-service training to teachers and encourage study and work on sex discrimination at the school and district level.
6. To arrange for the investigation and correction of discriminatory practices in the public school system.
7. To have designed or prepared positive programs, materials and plans of action for dealing with sex discrimination.
8. To publicize our findings and encourage discussion among everyone concerned.
9. To create an awareness of the importance of non-discriminatory practices in the public school.

APPENDIX 'B'

Women's Economic Rights Branch

Mandate

To examine, plan and recommend on all issues affecting the economic rights, economic development and socio-economic status of women in British Columbia.

Objectives

1. To ensure that all economic development programs and projects of the Department of Economic Development offer equivalent benefits to women and men. Specifically, to ensure that the impact of departmental programs and projects on women will be considered at the design, implementation and evaluation stages, that, where necessary, women will be considered as target groups for special programs, and that women themselves will be involved in the decision-making, evaluation, and program delivery process of economic development falling within the jurisdiction of the department.
2. To document the socio-economic status of women in this province in such a way that the method used for documentation whether it be policy papers, reports of working committees or workshop resolutions may be used as a basis for action leading to change.
3. To provide an annual statistical publication where a substantial part of the content is in response to direct requests from women's groups in the province.
4. To review available programs with the Small Business Director to ensure the provision of support, advice and encouragement for women setting up their own businesses.
5. To make the resources, activities and recommendations of this Branch known to the women of this province using suitable media approaches. To provide a contact point for all women's groups concerned with the economic rights of women and the impact of the economic development programs of this province on the women of the province.

APPENDIX 'C'

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Women's Centre Core Funding

What Is A Women's Centre, by Western Canadian Women's News Service, 1975.

Family Law

Berger Commission Reports on Family and Children's Law
Federal Law Reform Commission Recommendations on Family Law

Education

Breaking the Mold Lesson Aids, by B.C. Teachers Federation
Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes, by Provincial Advisory
Committee on Sex Discrimination in Public Education
Sexism, Schools and Society, by B.C. Teachers Federation

Farm and Domestic Workers

Immigrant Women in the Labour Force, YWCA, 1974.

Equal Employment Opportunity Plans

Affirmative Action Guidebook for Employers, U.S. Equal Employment
Opportunity Commission.
Affirmative Action Brief to Labour Minister, Western Conference,
May 1973.
A Future for Women, Proposal for E.E.O. in Attorney-General's Dept.,
Task Force on Women's Issues.
E.E.O. in the Civil Service of Manitoba, Manitoba Civil Service
Commission, 1974.
E.E.O. Program, by Interdepartmental Committee under Provincial
Status of Women.
Employment of Women in Public Service of Canada, Federal Public
Service Commission, 1973.
Guidelines for Ministries and Crown Agencies of Ontario Government
on Affirmative Action, by Ontario Ministry of Labour,
1974.

ADDENDUM 1.

WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION BRIEF

Presented to all B.C. MLA's, March 22, 1976

Transition Houses	page 30
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Available March 19, 1976

TRANSITION HOUSES

Transition Houses provide accommodation and services to mothers and children when it is impossible for them to remain in the family home, usually due to their having been assaulted by the father. This accommodation would cost the Department of Human Resources considerably more if it were provided by them in hotels, motels and restaurants. Moreover, the supportive atmosphere of the transition houses would be lost. In addition to accommodation, transition houses provide counselling services in respect to assault charges, family court, employment possibilities, all of which would fall on the Department of Human Resources directly if they were not provided by the transition houses.

Transition Houses are an integral part of the network of social services in their area, and other agencies and organizations now depending on transition houses would have to provide their own facilities if the transition houses ceased to exist. More than half of the referrals dealt with by transition houses come from the Department of Human Resources.

If Ishtar Transition House, located in Aldergrove, is not re-funded, the lower Fraser Valley will lose its only 24-hour crisis resource centre.

It is clear from these statements that transition houses meet the objectives of the Class 'A' priority group Community Grant funding of the Department of Human Resources, and it is therefore recommended that:

1. the funding of Transition Houses in Victoria, Vancouver, Aldergrove, Kamloops and Prince George be continued and that further transition houses be set up throughout the province.

WOMEN IN PRISON

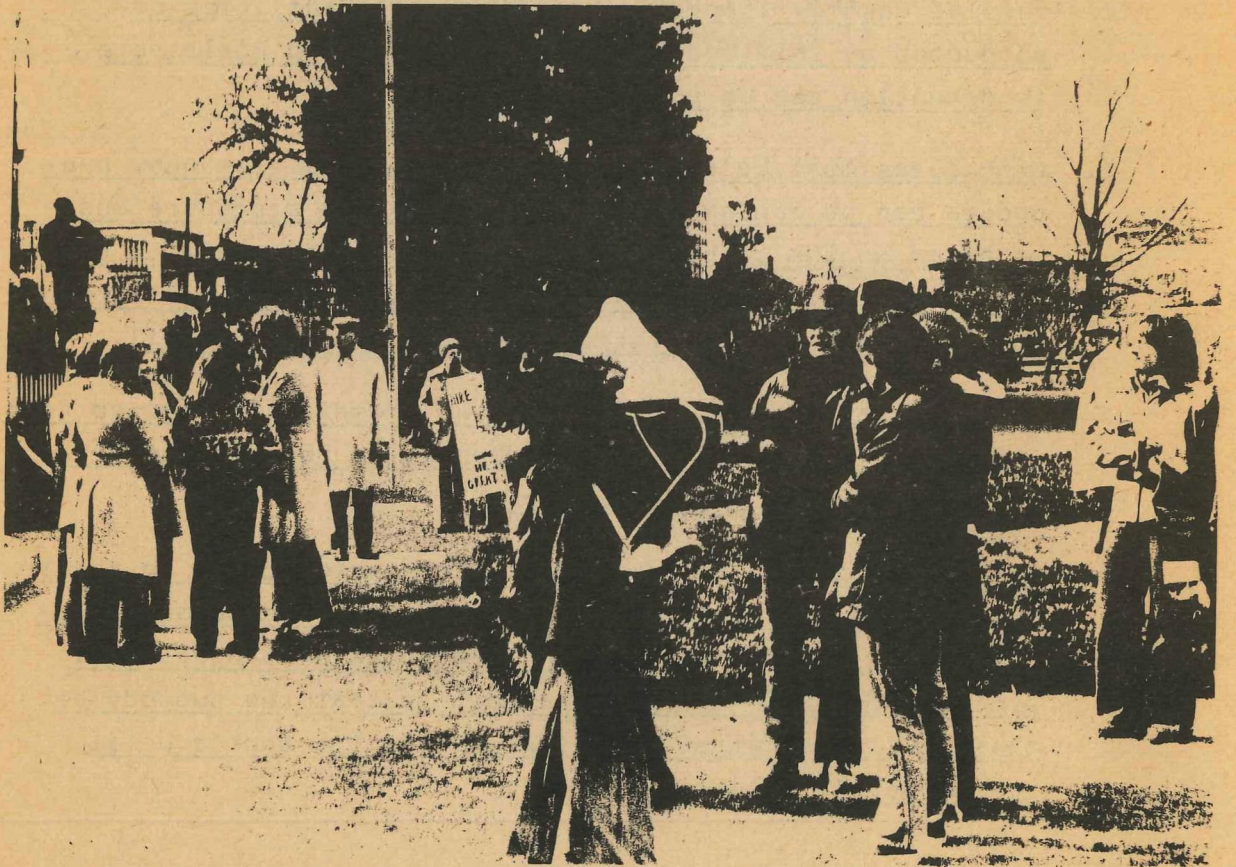
An area of women's lives which is least publicized but which is the most distressful is that of the fate of women prisoners in this province.

Setting aside the background and legalistic reasons for their detention (which is not within the frame of reference of this brief), what cannot be ignored are the deplorable circumstances in which these women find themselves during this period. While serving their judicially imposed sentences it should not be deemed acceptable that women be deprived of their rights as human beings - and unfortunately, in many instances, such is the case. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. an Advisory Council of concerned women be approved, funded and recognized by the Department of the Attorney-General to deal with the issues concerning women in prison.
2. regular monthly inspection tours of all facilities be conducted by this body so that all women and girls held in detention can be personally viewed.
3. procedures must be set up whereby a genuine grievance procedure can be implemented. This grievance procedure must be based on the right of inmates to meet privately to discuss their grievances and then to meet with Administration together with representatives of the Advisory Council.
4. solitary confinement in any form be immediately removed from the prison environment as recommended by Federal and Provincial authorities in this area.
5. mothers in prison be assured of reasonable access to their children, guarantee of adequate financial and housing provision for their children, and guarantee of proper legal protection (while mother detained) so that the custody of their children cannot be ruled upon by the courts until the mother is released.

continued....

6. medical, educational and job training facilities be inspected and revised to meet the real needs of the inmates.
7. commitments made by provincial authorities for the past twenty-five years to dismantle existing inadequate facilities and build new ones, be given priority rating in provincial Cabinet decisions.



WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health problems among women in our society are too often diagnosed within the context of traditional sex-role stereotyping. Women's depression is often treated as an internal unnatural depression rather than a response to an external unhealthy society in which women are expected to fit a prescribed role, deprived of personal choice and decision-making. Psychiatrists could better serve women by making them aware of the social conditions that exist within society instead of merely adjusting their behaviour so that they may function within these stereotyped roles.

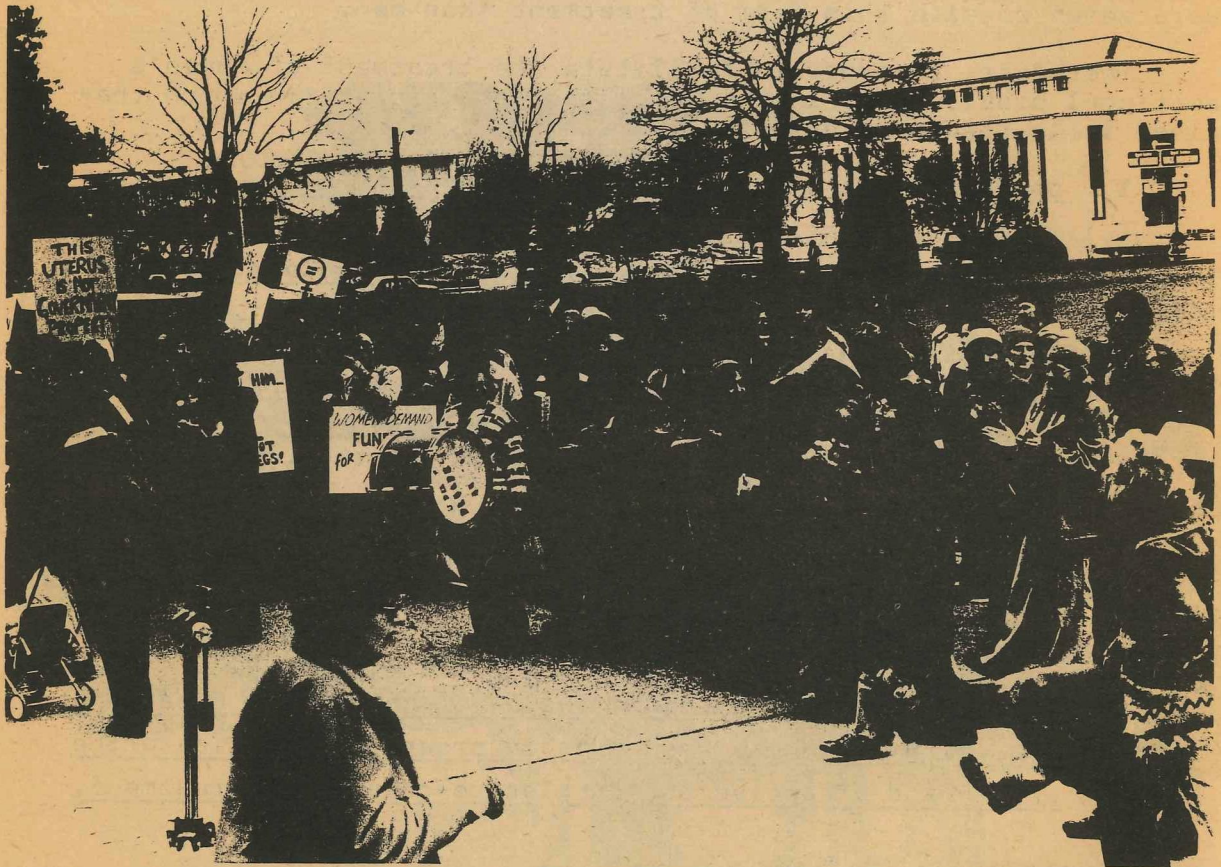
In psychiatric facilities, women's behaviour can be manipulated in isolation from their social environment by two main forms of treatment: psychiatric drugs causing mood alterations, and electro-convulsive therapy causing memory loss and temporary lifting of depression. In B.C., statistics gathered by the Committee to Investigate Shock Treatment consistently indicate that more women receive this form of treatment than men.

Therefore, in order to facilitate the treatment of women's emotional problems within the context of the society in which they live, it is recommended that:

1. psychiatrists and other workers involved in counselling women with emotional problems be required to take courses to understand the harmful effects of sex-role stereotyping.
2. community facilities be established throughout B.C. for women in need of support, advice and/or treatment such as:
 - a) emergency homemaker services to assist a mother in the home and prevent a breakdown of the family during times of stress
 - b) temporary residential facilities where women (and their children) could be provided with a secure, comfortable, drug-free environment where non-sexist, para-professional workers would assist in the resolution of their problems.
3. an interdisciplinary committee be struck by the Departments of Health and Human Resources in order to investigate the safety and effectiveness of electro-convulsive treatment.

continued....

4. an "informed consent" form be given by the woman to the type of treatment administered.
This includes both an explanation of the FULL range of possible side effects of the treatment and her signature on a consent form to the SPECIFIC type of treatment employed.



NATIVE INDIAN WOMEN OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(submitted by the Indian Homemakers Association of B.C.)

The improvement of the living conditions of all the women of this province is of great concern and gets the support of the Indian Homemakers. We need to and must work together for only with united planning and action can we break away from the physical and psychological chains that have controlled, demeaned and restricted us in so many ways.

Our Native Indian women have suffered the most of all with their poverty, discrimination, poor housing, medical services, nutrition, employment and education opportunities and advancement. Our educational levels are the lowest and unemployment and welfare the highest. Our general health, nutrition, and childcare conditions are deplorable. Too many of our women suffer from alcoholism and incarceration. Very few of our children complete their education, for the drop-out rate is from 80% to 90% and they are without job skills and job training. Our Indian women are crying for help to us and we are relaying this to women's organizations and to governments.

The Federal Government's Indian Affairs, National Health and Welfare, CMHC and other departments have helped a little, but too little and too late. We depend too on the Provincial Government for needed financial assistance and the expertise of resource personnel, but our requests have been largely ignored. The organization, the skills, and the finances could be available from the Provincial Government, but we have seen little of these.

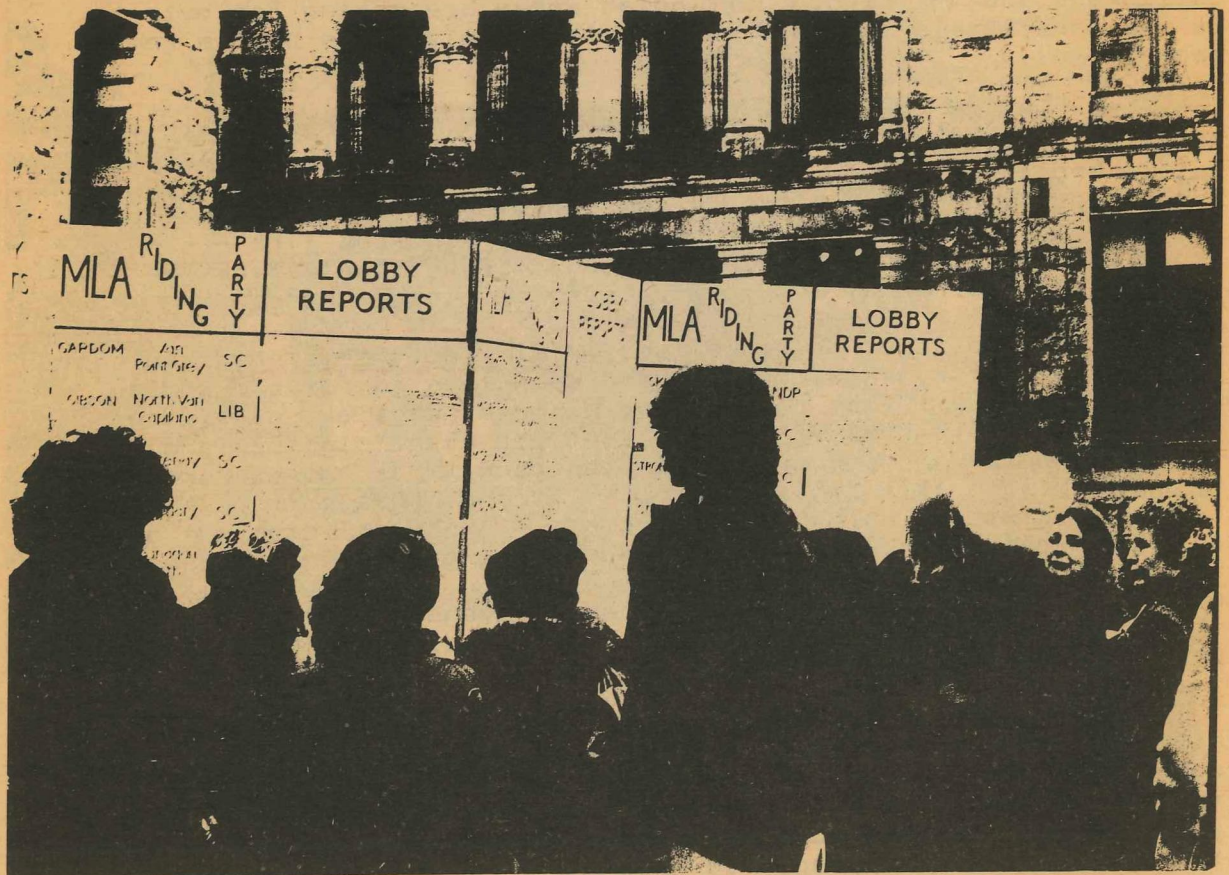
We are concerned that the new Social Credit government is not responsive to the needs of women and even less so for our Indian women. We request that the provincial government set up a women's centre for the removal of restrictions and discrimination and for the development and improvement in the conditions and circumstances of women within this province, and we request that this centre include at least one native Indian woman. Plans, policies and action must be provided and produced for the awful general conditions of the Indian women and families are shocking. Our provincial government has responsibilities for all the citizens of this province, and those with the greatest needs, the Indian people, require serious and determined attention and action.

We, the Indian Homemakers Association of British Columbia, have not only the responsibilities of representing and expressing the needs, wants, and deprivations of the Indian women and families, but for all the Indian people of this province. We have been working for many years to correct deficiencies and to propose plans of action and to represent our Indian people to governments and organizations.

continued....

We know that the new Minister of Labour and Indian Affairs, Mr. Allan Williams, has commenced work on the Indian cut-off lands, but we have not been invited to meet with him concerning all of the other serious and urgent native Indian problems. We want and need a number of meetings with him so that he and the government will become aware and become ready to put forth policies and actions to make this 'Beautiful B.C.' a part of our feeling. British Columbia to most of the Indian people is a place of discrimination, poverty and injustice.

Our provincial government is in a position to make beneficial changes for the native Indian people and we hope, request, and demand that this provincial responsibility will no longer be ignored. Should our invitation for communications and assistance for self-help be overlooked, our further meetings could be rather emphatic.



ADDENDUM 2.

WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION BRIEF

Presented to all B.C. MLA's, March 22, 1976

Health Concerns for Women

page 38

Available March 19, 1976

HEALTH CONCERNS FOR WOMEN

1. ADMINISTRATION OF HOSPITALS

A. THERAPEUTIC ABORTION COMMITTEES

In 1975, 29% of all therapeutic abortions performed in Canada were performed in the Lower Mainland. A therapeutic abortion may only be performed if it is approved by a hospital therapeutic abortion committee as defined in the Criminal Code. Of 111 general hospitals in B.C., only 54 have such committees and 7 of these effectively deny virtually all applications. This situation is unfair and unsafe for women living in regions where no hospital has a committee.

We believe that all publicly funded hospitals should be required to appoint Therapeutic Abortion Committees, except in cases where there are inadequate qualified personnel either to sit on the committees or to perform the abortions.

B. CONSENT TO HOSPITALS PROCEDURES

There is no consistent policy for all provincially funded hospitals concerning the obtaining of consent for medical procedures. For example, some hospitals may require special age considerations (beyond the legal age of consent) or the additional consent of a spouse before allowing certain medical procedures. This situation is inequitable. No special consent procedures should be instituted by individual hospitals beyond the informed consent that is ordinarily given by a patient for medical procedures. Hospitals should be instructed to drop all special consent requirements.

C. STERILIZATION

We propose that legislation should be adopted to enable medical doctors to perform non-therapeutic sterilization at the request of a patient free from any civil liabilities towards patient or spouse except liability for negligence.

2. MEDICAL PLAN

- A. The medical services plan should be directed not to reimburse physicians for services for which the physician may be "double-billing" the patient. This practice is followed particularly by some physicians in regard to the performance of therapeutic abortions.

continued....

- B. The medical services plan should be directed to recognize reasonable fees charged by physicians for preventive health procedures such as the teaching of breast self-examination and for visits which require special teaching and extra time, such as birth control, pregnancy or nutrition counselling, or diaphragm fitting. All encouragement should be given to physicians to spend more time on educational and preventive medical practice.

3. OMBUDSPERSON

The only existing avenue for making a complaint about a physician (short of court action) is writing a letter to the College of Physicians and Surgeons. If the complaint is investigated at all, it is done so without further input from the person filing the complaint. This is clearly inadequate and serves only to reinforce the separation of the person from her own health care. It is therefore recommended that an ombudsperson or board be established to deal with and investigate public complaints. The following factors must be included in the structure of such a board:

1. The patient making the complaint must be allowed to appear before the Board.
2. The patient must have the right to representation in the form of a patient advocate.
3. Lay participation on the Board be required, the number of lay people being equivalent to 50% of the total membership of the Board.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH

A. BREAST CANCER DETECTION PROGRAMS

In December 1974, the B.C. Minister of Health authorized the provision to 25 community hospitals of specialized radiological equipment for the X-ray examination of breasts (mammography equipment). The use of such equipment in screening of selected groups of women has been shown to increase the rate of detection of early breast cancer and hence decrease the mortality rate from this disease. In 1975, the program to purchase this equipment at an estimated capital expenditure of \$700,000 - \$1,400,000 was begun, but as yet there is no plan from the Department of Health to utilize this equipment fully with breast cancer screening programs. The policy of the former government was merely to educate physicians and the public about broad criteria for mammography in the hopes that the equipment would be used, and to analyze data from large experimental screening

continued....

programs in the United States before developing B.C. criteria for the best use of the equipment.

1. What is the present status of the program to provide mammography equipment to 25 community hospitals in British Columbia?
2. What special programs have been proposed or implemented to educate physicians and lay people in the best use of this equipment?
3. What consideration is being given to the implementation of pilot screening projects already suggested by the Vancouver Ad Hoc Committee and/or the Cancer Control Agency?
4. What progress is being made to specify appropriate criteria for the use of mammography in high risk or other groups?
5. What efforts are being made by the province to provide information and instruction in breast self-examination to women in outlying areas and small communities?

In 1975, there were an estimated 1,000 new cases of breast cancer in the women of B.C. The successful treatment of this disease depends on early diagnosis. We demand at least that full use be made of the facilities already available to the Cancer Control Agency for more investigation of breast diseases.

B. VENEREAL DISEASE

In 1975, there were 9,809 reported cases of gonorrhoea and 382 of syphilis in B.C. This represents a reported prevalence of approximately 400 cases per 100,000 population -- an epidemic! In fact, these reported cases represent only 20% of actual cases; that is, there were probably more than 35,000 actual active VD infections in 1975 in B.C. (Estimate used in 1974 Annual Report of Division of VD Control, Department of Health). This issue is of special concern to women because 85% of women with gonorrhoea have no symptoms (as compared with 5-10% of men), so that they have no warning of serious complications which may cause chronic debilitating illness and sterility.

We believe that this problem can only be approached by institution of screening programs in high risk areas of the population, i.e. sexually active people in the 15-30 year age group. Such screening procedures may be impossible unless the Provincial Laboratory facilities for detection of gonorrhoea are improved and expanded.

continued....

1. Will funds be provided for the improvement of Provincial laboratory facilities for the detection of gonorrhoea?
2. Will screening programs be instituted for the detection of gonorrhoea in high-risk population groups?
3. Will the educational program instituted in 1973 by the Division of VD Control be expanded so that more medical and lay people may be taught the proper diagnosis and treatment of VD?

5. FAMILY PLANNING

A. FAMILY LIFE PROGRAMS

Whilst recognizing that abortion is a necessary alternative - since no method of birth control is 100% safe or effective - we do not condone it as a primary means of birth control; it is both physically traumatic for the woman and costly for the province. Therefore, we consider that birth control education and counselling should be readily available for all groups of people. Abortion counselling and education should be available for all women who undergo abortions. Planned Parenthood provides essential services in the aforementioned areas. At the present time, they operate only 13 clinics in B.C. This number is grossly inadequate for a province with a population of approximately 2½ million people. This lack of available information may contribute to the fact that hospitals in the Lower Mainland are inundated with demands for abortions. Younger women are particularly discriminated against economically, and have fewer available sources of factual information.

1. The province should provide funding for more clinics of this nature to be established throughout B.C.
2. The dissemination of birth control for younger women must be considered a priority. In the case of low income women, birth control devices should be distributed free.

6. IMPROVED OBSTETRICAL CARE

A. LICENSING OF MIDWIVES

More and more women, alienated by the illness-oriented hospital setting, are choosing to give birth to their children at home. The training and licensing of midwives is essential to meet this demand. Old arguments citing the dangers

continued....

of home births lose their validity in light of the fact that Holland and Japan (where midwives are commonly employed at births) have a lower infant and maternal mortality rate than Canada. Back-up services (mobile emergency units, back-up doctors on call, etc.) must be made available to women choosing home births to insure the safety of mother and child in case of complications.

Childbirth is not a disease and usually does not require a hospital environment (96% of births are without complications). It would be economically more feasible to employ the use of midwives rather than doctors for normal births. Training and licensing of midwives must be initiated immediately.

B. LAY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FACILITIES

New facilities must reflect the desires of the people who will be utilizing those facilities. Any planning of new facilities must therefore include consumer input. It is recommended that any board or advisory committee involved in investigating needs and/or planning of new obstetrical facilities be comprised of 50% lay women.

C. IMPROVED OBSTETRICAL CARE IN RURAL AREAS

Women living outside of metropolitan areas often have to travel great distances to find adequate facilities. Decentralization of medical services is imperative. The training and licensing of midwives will greatly improve obstetrical care for women in rural areas. Investigation into existing obstetrical facilities in rural areas must be a priority.

D. CHILD-MATERNAL HEALTH UNIT

We are dismayed by your seeming lack of concern and information regarding maternity care in B.C. In the Child Maternal Health Unit, we had a facility which could provide the kind of maternity care needed and desired by the women of B.C. By eliminating the Child Maternal Health Unit of the Shaughnessy site, the government has shown its total lack of concern for women and children. In order for healthy women to give birth to healthy children, they require appropriate facilities such as could have been provided by the Child Maternal Health Unit (for example, the labour-delivery-recovery rooms and rooming-in for the vital parent-infant bonding). We know of no existing facility in the Greater Vancouver area which could provide these necessary functions.

continued....

Further, costly personnel and equipment for high-risk mothers and infants is currently being wasted in too many separate institutions.

You recently stated that your mail has indicated that women desire home delivery. When women perceive that hospitals are so inadequate as to be a threat to the health of themselves and their infants, naturally they seek alternatives. The alternative of home birth is made risky and difficult by the ban of midwifery and the complete absence of back-up emergency equipment. Home delivery under present circumstances is a strong statement about the condition of existing facilities.

Finally, we feel that consumer input is an invaluable asset in future health care planning.

1. What are the plans of this government to improve maternity facilities now that the CMHU is not being implemented?
2. What are the plans of this government to renovate facilities at existing hospitals?
3. Are there plans to include maternity care in the proposed "community" hospital at U.B.C.? If so, will the CMHU plans be incorporated?
4. What about consumer input in the planning of this hospital?

7. LAY PARTICIPATION

The current health care system fails to meet the needs of the women it is intended to serve. This system, which enhances the role of the doctor as the person with the exclusive power to treat illness, divorces a woman from the care of her own body. Preventive services are virtually non-existent, resulting in such grim situations as the current VD epidemic. Information is often incomplete and fragmentary (i.e. watch out for side effects, examine your breasts). Women desiring information about their natural physiological functions are not able to enter the health care system without being viewed as "ill" -- by their doctor and by their medical plan. Basically, it is a structure in which the development of individual responsibility for health care is not a priority.

In an attempt to fill the wide gaps in the current system, women's groups such as the Vancouver Women's Health Collective, the Nelson Women's Centre, and the Port Alberni Women's Centre have arisen. Groups such as these focus on educating and encouraging women to become active and informed participants in

continued....

their own health care. The basic objectives of such groups is the development of self-knowledge and individual responsibility as crucial components of adequate health care.

Lay health workers play a crucial role in the existing health care system. By working in those areas in which extensive medical expertise is not necessary (i.e. counselling, diaphragm fitting, etc.) they are providing essential services at a cost which is far below that of the medical professional. For example, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective (whose reputation for thorough and conscientious diaphragm fitting has been verified by many doctors) fit over 400 diaphragms in the last year. This would amount to the equivalent of between \$2,500 and \$4,000 in doctors' fees.

In view of these facts, important questions must be asked of this government:

1. What steps will be taken by this government to insure the participation of lay health workers in the existing health care system?
2. What funds will be made available to such lay women's groups who are involved in providing essential health services to women?
3. What steps will be taken by this government to insure participation by lay people in administrative and policy-making positions?
4. What are the priorities of the Department of Health for improving health care for women in B.C.?

8. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The medical establishment in B.C. is male-dominated. 94% of the physicians working in B.C. are men; as are 60% of those in administrative positions in the field of health care. Yet, women still comprise the over-all majority of health workers. 82% of those employed in the "healing" occupations (nurses, orderlies, occupational therapists, etc.) are women. The lack of proportionate representation by women in decision-making and policy-making positions is clearly intolerable.

Therefore, we recommend an Affirmative Action program to be initiated immediately to correct the current imbalance:

1. Inclusion of a quota in all B.C. medical schools in which priority is given to women applicants for 50% of the total enrollment.

continued....

2. Regulation of hospital boards, health advisory committees, and all other administrative bodies to insure that the inclusion of women (50%) is a priority.
3. An investigative committee, whose total membership is comprised of 50% women, be established to oversee the enforcement of these provisions and to deal with public complaints.



ADDENDUM 3.

WOMEN RALLY FOR ACTION BRIEF

Presented to all B.C. MLA's, March 22, 1976

Labour	page 47
The Welfare Issue	49
Lesbian Rights	52

Available March 22, 1976 - 8:00 AM

LABOUR

Because women are often not protected by membership in labour unions, the role of the Department of Labour in creating, implementing, and enforcing the rights and responsibilities of working women (frequently the sole support of their families) is strategic. Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. enforcement of existing labour legislation.
This would entail hiring more industrial relations officers in the Labour Standards Branch of the Department of Labour.
2. public information about working rights and existing legislation be widely publicized in language that people can understand. (This includes languages other than English).
3. affirmative action in placing women in apprenticeship training in all occupational classifications.
4. that existing legislation in the Occupational Environment Branch be enforced, and that increased research be done in this field, with particular attention to the effects on women.
5. that standards of compensation for injury under the Workers' Compensation Board take into consideration that women's incomes are frequently lower than those of their male counterparts, and that compensation should therefore place greater emphasis on need, as opposed to income.
6. that the role of the Women's Bureau in the Labour Portfolio be reviewed and re-activated.
7. that the student summer employment programs branch under the Labour Portfolio give female students priority for jobs in small business and farms on the basis that women are a disadvantaged group in the same category as the handicapped and Natives.

continued....

8. the Department of Labour has jurisdiction in Manpower planning, as well as immigration. In these areas of of Federal-Provincial task-forces, British Columbia should take the lead in bargaining with its Federal counterpart to advance equality of opportunity in the labour force.



THE WELFARE ISSUE

For those who have not been able to plug in to our social system in a way society deems valuable, society provides a minimum allotment: welfare. Being on welfare is a humiliating and alienating experience for those whose options are limited. Contrary to popular opinion, it is not a life of ease but an ongoing struggle, and there are thousands of women on welfare in this province.

The problems that face us all - high rents, rising prices of food, clothing, etc., discrimination - are intensified for women who are in effect married to the welfare bureaucracy, which, in the role of provider, has the power to influence all the major decisions of a woman on welfare's life. It is not a simple case of qualifying, by virtue of being destitute, for welfare and each month receiving a dole. The welfare department concerns itself with all household re-arrangements, all efforts at self-improvement, and any attempts to earn a bit of extra money to supplement welfare's meagre fare. Any change of circumstance must be reported immediately, and generally results in deductions from the welfare check and pressure from the welfare department to conform to their standards. On the other hand, those on welfare are not informed of many rights allowable to them, such as special needs allowances or other benefits, and the social workers often intimidate their so-called clients to the extent that many prefer to just let things be, and do not apply for the few fringe benefits, such as a food voucher at the end of a hard month, that they could get if they were more secure of their rights.

The basic rate for a single person on welfare is \$160 a month. Try imagining surviving on this. For a single welfare mother, the rates go up proportionately. Yet there is a gap between actual and theoretical rent which must be made up from the portion of the cheque earmarked for utilities and food and other essentials. Realizing that in most cases the money left over is inadequate for survival, the welfare department allows a single person to earn an extra \$50; a family, an extra \$100. Any earnings over and above this amount are deducted from the welfare cheque: not exactly an incentive to earn extra money. Not surprisingly, there are very few jobs available for someone who must comply with regulations such as these.

Accordingly, a program was set up, ostensibly as a re-training program, that would enable a welfare recipient to become involved in the community and get paid an "incentive allowance" for work done at volunteer jobs. This privilege is now being withdrawn and hundreds of people on the road to self-sufficiency have been abruptly cut off, a loss not only to themselves, but to the organizations which benefited from their help.

continued....

What about help from other sources? An amicable arrangement with a former husband is virtually impossible, as the welfare department is insistent on the woman pressing charges against a "deserting spouse" to be eligible for welfare at all, forcing the issue and often permanently alienating couples that could have perhaps worked things out if not for the pressure by the welfare department. In the most agreeable circumstances, a woman can benefit from maintenance; \$50 for a childless woman, \$100 for a woman with children: anything over and above is seen as welfare's due. If she does receive any maintenance, furthermore, she is not allowed then to keep any money she might receive for work she might be doing herself, condemning her in effect to become another victim to the welfare syndrome, which would have her stay at home. When the bus rates go up, she will be further isolated and it is welfare women who will be affected most by this intended hike.

A word is due here about the situation of children in foster homes; not that anyone could begrudge these young victims the extra money they get as compensation for their plight - but it does seem ludicrous that a foster parent should get more to keep a child than his own family is allowed to care for him or her at home.

The list of injustices could go on. The point is, welfare is a trap for women, not a benefit. It does nothing to enhance her qualifications when she is ready and able to return to the so-called world, but breeds a servile, self-depreciating attitude and feelings of inferiority, which alienates her further from the social issues of her time. Obviously, a woman on welfare has not "made it" and therefore must keep her opinions - and her disgrace - to herself. NO longer! Premier Bennett mentioned a guaranteed minimum income for single parents. Of this, we would like to know more. Yet it must be recognized that it is arrogant and unreasonable to legislate change without consultation with those whom the change will affect.

Taking into consideration all that has been mentioned, we strongly urge that women on welfare should have:

1. equal opportunity for education and self-improvement. Suitability for a job must be a factor: they should not be forced to take a job that is not in the line of their interest.
2. daycare should be available for work or study but she should also have the option of staying home with her children.
3. transportation privileges such as provided with the aged.
4. opportunity to supplement their welfare with part-time work.

continued....

5. right to achieve some kind of financial security before going off welfare.

6. freedom to make any kind of living arrangements convenient to her: granted that a woman should be judged as an independent human being and not an appendage to a man.

7. a procedure set up whereby a genuine board of grievances be established; a liaison between those on welfare and the people set to administer them - in effect, a say in their own lives.

8. the right to be informed of all benefits and all changes in policy, accessible to all.



LESBIAN RIGHTS POLICY PROPOSALS TO THE B.C. FEDERATION OF WOMENPREAMBLE:

Society defines women in relation to men. Women who choose not to relate to men in traditional ways, or who choose not to relate to men at all, are regarded with contempt and fear. All women who do not fit the 'approved' female stereotype suffer severe consequences, especially those who deviate the furthest, that is, lesbians.

The goal of the feminist movement is to create a society where women are free, full human beings without being defined in relation to men; sexually, economically, politically, or socially.

1. Whereas, there is no law prohibiting a lesbian mother custody of her children; and
Whereas, custody cases are decided more on societal attitudes than on specific laws; and
Whereas, there has not been case in Canada where a woman being open about her lesbianism has been awarded child custody, therefore, be it:

RESOLVED, First, that lesbianism in itself should not be considered grounds for loss of custody.

Second, that children should not be discriminated against because of their parents' sexual orientation and/or living arrangements.

Third, that lesbians should not be discriminated against because of their living arrangements and/or openness about their sexual preference, i.e. living with another woman.

3. Whereas, celibacy and lesbianism are viable aspects of female sexuality; therefore, be it:

RESOLVED, First, that the medical and counselling professions recognize celibacy and lesbianism as viable aspects of female sexuality.

Second, that a therapy resource list for women living alternate life-styles be compiled and a therapy residence for women living alternate life-styles be made available.

5. Whereas, No. 8. Section 1. of the Human Rights Code of B.C. Act reads:

1. Every person has the right of equality of opportunity based upon the bona fide qualifications in respect of his/her occupation, employment, advancement, or promotion, and

continued....

without limiting the generality of the foregoing:

- a. no employer shall refuse to employ, or to continue to employ, or to advance or promote that person or discriminate against that person in respect of employment.
- b. no employment agency shall refuse to refer him/her for employment.

6. Whereas, our present societal attitudes enforce discrimination against lesbians, especially in jobs related to children and young people; therefore, be it:

RESOLVED, that there be no discrimination in the hiring or promotion of lesbians in jobs related to children and young people, such as childcare, teaching and counselling professions.

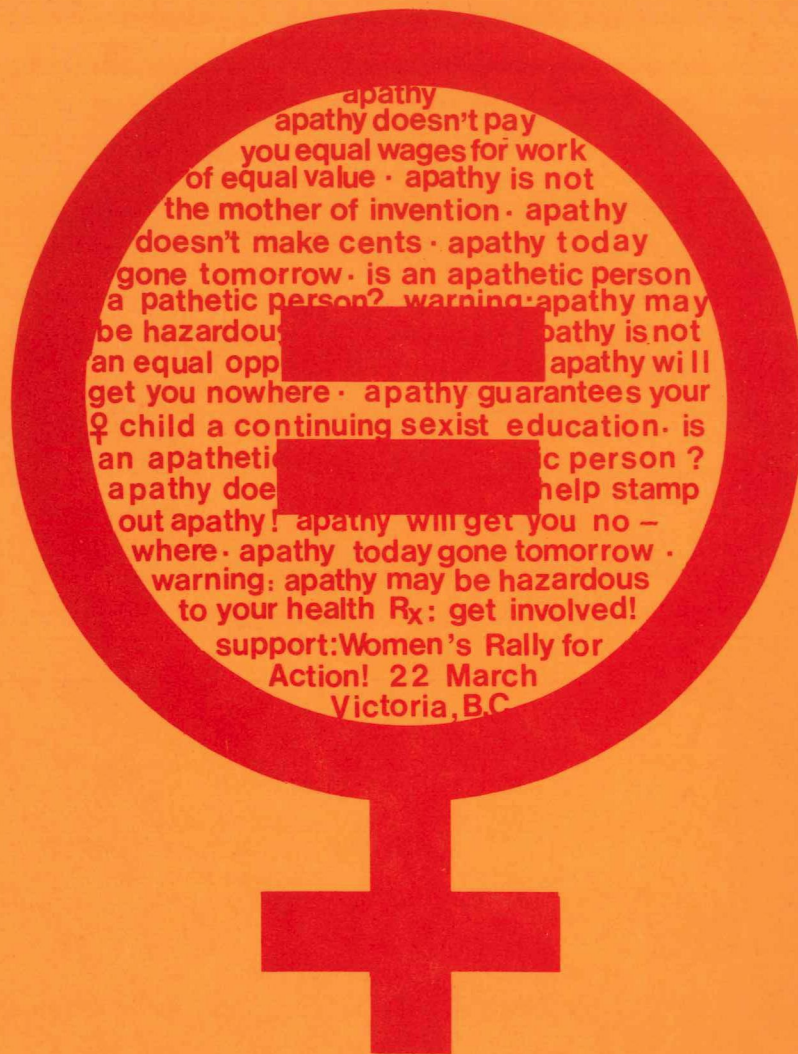
7. Whereas, No. 4, Section 6 of the 1973 Human Rights Code Act of B.C. reads:

1. No person shall deny to any person or class of persons the right to occupy as tenant any space that is advertised or otherwise represented as being available for occupancy by a tenant; or
2. Discriminate against any person or class of persons with respect to any term or condition of the tenancy of such space because of religion, race, colour, ancestry or place of origin of that person or class of persons; therefore, be it:

RESOLVED, that Subsection 6 should also include sexual preference, sex, marital status, or alternative living arrangements.







apathy
apathy doesn't pay
you equal wages for work
of equal value · apathy is not
the mother of invention · apathy
doesn't make cents · apathy today
gone tomorrow · is an apathetic person
a pathetic person? warning: apathy may
be hazardous · apathy is not
an equal opp · apathy will
get you nowhere · apathy guarantees your
♀ child a continuing sexist education · is
an apathetic person? apathy does
help stamp
out apathy! apathy will get you no -
where · apathy today gone tomorrow ·
warning: apathy may be hazardous
to your health Rx: get involved!
support: Women's Rally for
Action! 22 March
Victoria, B.C.