



NAC MEMO

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE
on the status of women

LE COMITÉ NATIONAL D'ACTION
sur le statut de la femme

Suite 306
40 av. St-Clair est
40 St. Clair Ave. E.
Toronto M4T 1M9
(416) 922-3246

APRIL/MAY 1980

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

Y. W. C. A.
RESOURCE CENTRE

*** 1940-1980 APRIL 25 ***

It is forty years since the women of Quebec obtained a significant victory -- the right to vote in their province.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Therese Casgrain and her colleagues, Quebec women regained the right to vote which had been denied since 1843.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

House salutes former senator, civil libertarian

OTTAWA (CP) — The House of Commons unanimously passed a motion yesterday honoring Therese Casgrain, a former Quebec senator who is credited with having won, almost single-handedly, the right for women to vote in Quebec. The date was April 25, 1940.

Mrs. Casgrain, 84, retired from the Senate in 1971 after serving there less than a year. Politician, author and civil libertarian, she served three terms as Quebec provincial leader between 1948 and 1961 of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, the forerunner of the New Democratic Party.

Quebec women, who had the vote before 1834, fought for more than a century to have the right restored. Women in most other provinces were given the right to vote during or after the First World War.

G&M Apr. 26/80

CALLING ALL FRIENDS OF NAC.....

Help is needed in ticket selling for the NAC FUNDRAISING DINNER in Toronto, June 13th, 1980.

For further information - and offers of help - please call the NAC office, or get in touch with your local NAC executive member or regional rep.

FEED - BACK ----- all too often we send the NAC MEMO out into the great blue yonder and unless we get a curt note saying "You left us out of...report", or "too much paper - too much Toronto - too much to do", etc., it is as if the entire issue had been filed away.

We know you must appreciate receiving the MEMO - subscribers are flocking in!....but we need your response and participation. Tell us what's happening out there - from coast to coast.

PLEASE....LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NAC EXECUTIVE MEETING, APRIL 29

17 of the 21 members of the Executive Committee were present for the first full meeting of the year. The Executive sent wishes for a speedy recovery to Lorene Clark.

The Treasurer presented a revised budget and NAC's application has been submitted to the Secretary of State for a grant to supplement NAC's own fundraising efforts. These were discussed extensively, as well as methods of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of NAC's entire operation.

Committees were established -

Operational

Finance	Jean Wood and Officers
Membership	Lee Grills (chair), Betsy Carr
Editorial	Cathy Devlin (chair), Kathy Kuusisto, Pat Preston, Betsy Carr
Friends of NAC	Kay Macpherson (chair)
Media Relations	Chaviva Hosek (chair) Eleanor Wright-Pelrine, Jill Porter, Dorothy Richardson, Pat Preston

Policy

Employment	Eleanor Wright Pelrine (chair) Penny Alderdice, Ann Bell, Kathy Kuusisto, Norma Scarborough, Claudia Francescut, Barbara Mazlowski
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Sub Committees:

Automation	Rosemary Billings
Domestic workers	Maria Tannenbaum
Occupational Health	

Immigration	Kay Macpherson (chair), Darcia Hiltz, Doris Dyke
Housing	Gerda Wekerle (chair), Leslie Oler, Jean MacLean, Jill Porter
Income Tax/Pensions	Jean Wood (chair), Chaviva Hosek, Pat Preston, Ann Bell, Beth Tachit, Sally Schrofel, Anna Bors,
Justice	Lorene Clark (chair), Eleanor Wright-Pelrine
Social Services	Betsy Carr (chair) (to be confirmed: Hazel Wigdor, Lily Borchenko, Jean Woodsworth).

Anyone interested in working on a committee, or who has special knowledge which could help us, please get in touch with chairpeople, c/o the NAC office.

ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOW - UP

Details of future actions were discussed at the Executive Meeting. These include:

1. Response to the Speech from the Throne
2. Briefs to and meetings with Ministers:
 - Finance
 - Justice
 - Employment and Immigration
 - Health and Welfare
 - Indian Affairs & Northern Development
 - Secretary of State

May 26 was set as probable date for the lobby, following the next Executive Meeting.

NOTES FROM THE REGIONS
past and future activities

-3-

- Nova Scotia Women's Action Committee co-sponsored a workshop on: getting women into unions; using unions to help women in the work force. 170 women attended.
- NAC to support Alberta Union of Provincial Employees in hiring women in correctional institutions. NAC support to Alberta nurses on strike - telegram sent to Alberta Minister of Labour. There is local interest in the divorce jurisdiction issue.
- A regional Newfoundland committee has been formed with Ann Bell, Penny Alderdice and other women from St. John's. Newfoundland issues: employment, offshore resources and training programs for women in this area. On May 5 there will be a provincial conference on family violence together with Newfoundland Status of Women Council. Maureen O'Neil and Linda MacLeod will attend.
- In B.C. the abortion issue is being publicized in a new organizational kit. Concerned Citizens for Choice on Abortion want to organize a national action on choice. Unemployment Insurance and fishermen's wives: NAC will send a letter to the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Court. There will be new recommendations coming for the B.C. Human Rights Code.
- Joint meeting held in Ottawa of Rape Crisis Centre people, the police, and court people. Press gave attention to NAC's resolution on City Hall Equal Opportunity position. City Hall pulled back and now has a committee to review Equal Opportunity. Jill Porter and Rosemary Billings met with local groups for liaison. Local NAC initiatives will include:
 - 1) domestic workers, immigration, automation
 - 2) to be clearing house for women's groups
 - 3) to do critiques of briefs
 - 4) to assist NAC in lobbying
- The 30th Annual Meeting of La Federation des Femmes du Quebec takes place on May 2, 3, 4, at l'Auberge Mont Gabriel, Quebec. Topic: Women and Poverty. Cathy Devlin will represent NAC at this meeting and we look forward to a report.

OTHER MEETINGS OF NAC MEMBER GROUPS

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA

Educational on Practical Politics, Trinity United Church, Toronto.
Sunday, May 4th, 1:30 - 5:00 p.m.

TORONTO ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY

200th Anniversary of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Dinner: Royal York Hotel,
Toronto. May 22nd. Guest Speaker: Flora MacDonald

C.A.R.A.L.

Annual Meeting held April 26, Toronto. A much more aggressive programme is planned for the coming year. Anti-choice groups are responsible for increasing women's health hazards. Money for anti-choice groups in Quebec reported to come from corporations such as Johnson & Johnson, baby supplies, and not so much from Church groups.

METRO TORONTO WOMEN'S CREDIT UNION

Annual Meeting held April 21, Toronto

WOMEN FOR POLITICAL ACTION

190 women attended WPA's dinner. Speaker: Marnie Paikin (Past Chairperson Governing Council, University of Toronto): "How to get on boards and commissions. A lively discussion followed.

Next dinner (always on 18th of the month) at Hotel Plaza II: "Women in Federal Politics". Speaker - Anne Cools. For information call: Margaret Bryce: 465-3250/534-7574.

MANITOBA ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

"Awareness and Education Day", Saturday, May 10th, 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Y.W.C.A., 447 Webb Place, Winnipeg. For information call: 943-0381-Ex.44.

CBC'S ACTION ON "OMBUDSMAN" PROGRAM.....

from the press.....

12/4/86

Ombudsman gets the axe

I read with considerable concern (Ombudsman gets the axe - April 3) that the CBC plans to end its television program Ombudsman and hear too that The Watson Report is slated for the axe.

It appears to be inevitable that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation sooner or later seems destined to drop every program which allows some degree of participation by the public, might in any way be considered controversial

or might be thought-provoking or even disturbing to the viewers.

The reasons usually seem to be that the ratings are poor, the public turns off the program and that the program is dull or not good "entertainment". I don't need to be told again that I am a small minority of the viewing public.

I know that. But who else but the CBC has a responsibility and a mandate to provide programming for minorities and special groups of Canadian citizens?

Kay Macpherson
Toronto

Viewers defend Ombudsman

As Canadians and regular viewers of CBC-TV, we are shocked and angry at the CBC executive decision to kill its Ombudsman program. We've almost always watched and enjoyed Ombudsman since it started in 1974, and because of Ombudsman we've learned a lot about Canadian abuses of people's civil and human rights and what can be done about them. Ombudsman was a classic example of what investigative television journalism should be but rarely is.

Ombudsman hosts Kathleen Ruff and lawyer Robert Cooper had the guts to expose many outrageous abuses and injustices suffered by Canadians, after sensitively listening to their complaints and grievances.

We have no respect for the CBC top brass who decided to axe Ombudsman. In fact, we most strongly protest against this decision. We wonder what will or can replace this outstanding human-rights program. Another packaged

variety or rock show? Another rigged quiz program? More bland and boring "news"? Stay tuned for more mediocre and less "controversial" programs brought to you by the CBC.

Don Weitz
Carla McKague
Toronto

from NAC President's letter to Al Johnson, President, CBC.....

"...We...note that the program has a viewing audience of one million. It is not an unpopular program, particularly since it is not shown at peak times. ...The cases brought up this year have included several specifically on discrimination against women. It has 100% Canadian content - always of importance to the CBC - and involves a wide audience. We believe the CBC has a very important role as our national broadcasting system, to encourage public interest and participation in matters of concern to Canadians, and in particular to Canadian women.

A program such as this can play an important role in bringing Canadians together in understanding problems confronting citizens across the country. We strongly urge you to press for reconsideration of the plans for "Ombudsman" next year.

Sincerely yours,
Lynn McDonald, President.

Mike Daignault, Director CBC News & Current Affairs, in replying to criticism (Toronto Star, April 28) of the ending of "Ombudsman", states: 1) there are provincial Ombudsmen now in every province but PEI, who can do the program's work; 2) the program has lost viewers (though it still has 979,000); 3) the CBC is planning "strong daily information programming" in prime time. These are his reasons for axing "Ombudsman".

We disagree. An information show is not an advocacy show and where did all Kathleen Ruff's cases come from if the provincial Ombudsmen are doing an adequate job??

YOUR LETTERS, PHONE CALLS, URGING REINSTATEMENT OF THIS PROGRAM, WOULD HELP.

CBC'S NON ACTION ON: SEXISM/DISCRIMINATION/INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN/VISIBILITY OF SEX-STEREOTYPES ONLY/ETC. ETC.

The NAC Executive discussed WHAT TO DO -----

We've tried briefs, submissions, letters - long and detailed, talking, meeting, Task Force, etc. Things seem to be as bad as ever.

A telephone tree exercise in tying up the CBC's switchboards - all at same time, on one day, coast to coast, is being considered. We're tired of being ignored. Another suggestion is to occupy offices or board rooms. Imaginative suggestions and actions which have brought results are wanted. Send your ideas - and VOLUNTEER FOR ACTION...WE'LL NEED YOUR HELP.

THE COALITION FOR FAMILY LAW IN MANITOBA submitted a brief in March, 1979, to the then Minister of Justice, Marc Lalonde, supporting the position of the Manitoba government in opposing the transfer of jurisdiction for divorce from the federal to provincial governments.

Since changes in several areas of Justice are involved, and since the Manitoba Action Committee suggests other provinces and the federal Minister of Justice be urged to oppose the same, we are giving some excerpts from the excellent reasoning provided by the Manitoba Coalition:

"RE: THE PROPOSED CHANGE IN JURISDICTION OVER FAMILY LAW

The Coalition on Family Law in Manitoba views with alarm the proposed transfer of jurisdiction over divorce from the federal government to the provinces. The Coalition supports the position of the Manitoba government taken at the Constitutional Conference. The Coalition is opposed to such a transfer of power for many reasons:

1. Mobility of the Canadian population: The current mobility of the Canadian population points to a need for uniformity in Canadian divorce law. Because of the variations in provincial property and maintenance laws, ranging from automatic equal sharing of marital assets in Quebec to no rights to equal sharing of those assets in some provinces, Canadian couples are already subject to great differences in sharing. To further such variations by transferring all authority over divorce to provincial jurisdiction can only exacerbate an already unjust situation.
2. Equal sharing of marital assets on marriage breakdown: The Coalition recommends further transfer of powers to the federal government in all matters of divorce so that, ultimately, all Canadians will have the right to equal shares of marital assets upon marriage breakdown. This should be a universal Canadian right, not subject to variations according to the politics of a particular government.

Your government has refused to change legislation to provide marriage breakdown as the only grounds for divorce, until all provinces have made adequate provisions for equal sharing of marital assets. Given the resistance to equitable family laws on the part of some of our provincial governments, it would appear that the federal government would be providing an opportunity for entrenchment of the reactionary views of some of our politicians, i.e. that marital and maintenance laws should not be changed to provide equal sharing.

3. Enforcement of maintenance and child custody orders: ...At the very least, there should be federal enforcement of maintenance and child custody orders. ...Though there are interprovincial agreements concerning these matters, they are cumbersome to use. Because of the non-existence of enforcement agencies in many provinces, the interprovincial agreements are largely ineffective. ...Even if the awarding of the order remains a provincial matter, the Coalition believes that the federal government should provide access to addresses (through income tax addresses or social insurance numbers) of delinquent payors, and assist, through the federal court system, in collection of such orders.

The Federal Law Reform Commission has reported that approximately 75% of maintenance orders are in some form of default - a situation which must not be allowed to continue...

4. Jurisdiction "shopping": The Coalition believes that people would be encouraged to move to provinces where divorces were easier to obtain. A situation could exist similar to that which occurred with gift taxes and succession duties, where residents of one province moved their assets to another province with more favourable laws...
5. Unified Family Courts: The Coalition recommends that provincial judges presiding in unified family courts be given the authority by provincial legislatures and by parliament, to administer federal legislation re divorce. If this was done, there would be no barrier to the setting up of unified family courts...
6. Increased cost to individual: If jurisdiction over divorce and ancillary relief (custody, maintenance, etc.) becomes provincial, there will be an increased cost to litigants...

CONCLUSION: The aim of the Constitutional Conference was agreement, but agreement of itself does not constitute progress. The agreement to have jurisdiction over divorce transferred to the provinces is retrogressive...

...We believe that its effect on women will be to further delay their achievements of equal rights in marriage, and hence in Canadian society."

(complete brief available from the NAC office or the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, 447 Webb Place, Winnipeg, Manitoba. R3B 2P2.

Star April 27/80

Montreal abortion haven:

Morgentaler

By Jill Rigby Toronto Star

Pregnant Metro women are getting abortions in private Montreal clinics because of restrictive laws and unnecessary delays here, Dr. Henry Morgentaler says.

"Desperate women from Toronto, Sudbury, Ottawa and as far away as the Maritimes and Labrador come to my clinic because facilities are either non-existent where they live or bureaucratic hospital delays would endanger their lives," said the controversial Montreal physician who served 10 months in prison (March '75-January '76) because he performed abortions.

"Women come to me because I respect their choice and provide an atmosphere of sympathy, understanding and competence," said Morgentaler, after the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Law, of which he is a founding member.

Yesterday the 6-year-old organization changed its name to Canadian Abortion Rights Action League.

Iona Campagnolo, former MP and minister for fitness and amateur sport, now a CBC broadcaster and fund-raiser for Cambodian refugees, addressed more than 50 people at University of Toronto's Hart House.

"Abortion is not and should not be after-the-fact contraception, it must be a last resort for failure of society,"

she said. "I don't feel that our quest for legal and medical protection of those of our sisters who make a conscientious decision to terminate their pregnancies, has ever had a fair hearing in this land."

Mrs. Campagnolo, almost 50, said she was becoming more radical at a time when the pendulum was beginning to swing "hard right."

"It is a reactionary sweep of despair for women," she said, that anti-abortion factions are "dedicated to turning back the hands of time which universally oppose the rights of women."

She said pre-teen sex is at an all-time high and "mandatory birth doesn't add value to life . . . It can immeasurably detract from it."

"I share absolutely the right to choose but am no longer convinced the law is the best means of controlling abortion . . . I am now utterly convinced it will never be men" who take extensive education on abortion.

Mrs. Campagnolo said politicians should not be expected to fight women's battles if women don't take defend and protect themselves.

"Provincial governments are not taking the initiative and responsibility that they are mandated to in the area of abortion."

She rejected the idea of holding a national referendum on abortion, saying "I do not believe it is possible to hold a fair, representative and totally demo-

cratic referendum in our country any longer — if, indeed, it ever was possible."

Morgentaler, who said he doubted Quebec would separate but refused to reveal how he'll vote in the sovereignty association referendum, said he wished the government would take over his clinic and offer women abor-

tions for free, instead of the \$175 he charges.

"After my third trial, the judge decreed there would be no more prosecution of any doctors with facilities like mine . . . Quebec law is much more enlightened now. In Montreal alone there are six clinics where women can get an abortion."

CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR CHOICE IN ABORTION (CCCA) INFORMATION PACKAGE

An excellent kit for organizing action on choice in abortion. Contains pamphlets, statements, Criminal Code Section 25, reproduction rights statement.

Available from: C.C.C.A. c/o Vancouver Status of Women,
1090 West 7th Avenue,
Vancouver, B.C. V6H 1B3 \$2.00

PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION

PLANNED PARENTHOOD WEEK 1980
WEEK OF MAY 25-31

"to alert young people to the fact that teenage pregnancy carries health risks for mother and child and that birth planning helps to increase a child's chances for the best start in life". Further information from:

Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada
1226A Wellington St., Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 3A1 -(613) 722-3484

FROM THE U.S.A.....ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL - WHAT ABOUT 52% OF US??

On May 10th the National Organization of Women is coordinating a March for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, in Illinois. Participants will wear white, and children will be specially included since the implications of the amendment for the family are particularly important.

GOOD WISHES TO OUR AMERICAN SISTERS!!

---Exciting FULL MOON CAMPING retreat for women - June 27-29, at Onoway. Write to Alberta Status of Women Action Committee, Box 1573, Edmonton. T5J 2N7 for information about this.

FOUND: EYE GLASSES - in red case (from Dahans Optical Ltd. Ottawa), at the NAC Annual Meeting in March. Held for safekeeping in the NAC office.
