

Breaking the Silence

a newsletter on feminism in social welfare
research, action, policy and practice

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CAUGHT IN THE CRISIS

The economic recession in Canada is a reality for all of us. It has brought about unemployment, cutbacks and real losses in earning power. But as women our particular position in the economy means that we are often the hardest hit in bad economic times.

The federal government's response to fighting inflation and getting the economy back on its feet has been to impose restraint — "the 6 and 5 solution". The government is trying to sell a voluntary program of wage and price controls for two years to all those who will listen.

But what of the federal government's own employees? No discussion, no negotiation, just a heavy-handed imposition of wage controls and the suspension of the democratic right of collective bargaining. In the following article, Joan Riggs explores the impact of Bill C-124 on women.

BILL C-124

One of the products to come out of the federal government's June 28, 1982 budget speech is the public sector compensation bill — Bill C-124. The bill, with its three components, effectively brings collective bargaining and the union process in the public sector to a standstill for the next two years. For women who are dependent on unions to negotiate for benefits such as daycare, the bill has a number of ramifications.

The bill affects all federal public sector workers in three ways:

- * it eliminates the right to strike
- * it imposes a freeze on all rights and benefits
- * it limits all wage increases to 6% in the first year and 5% in the year following.

The impact of the bill on female public servants will be felt in two ways:

1. Most women will receive lower wage increases than men. Women are presently in jobs that are at the lower end of the pay scale. In 1981, 68.6% of all workers earning less than \$10,000 were women, while they comprised only (continued, page 2)



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Bill C-124 (cont'd. from page 1)

3.1% of workers earning over \$50,000. Throughout the wage scales, the higher the income level, the smaller the proportion of women. With wage increases across the board of 6 and 5%, the higher the income level, the larger the annual increase will be. Bill C-124 will only widen the existing wage gap between men and women.

2. Women won't be able to bargain for new benefits. Women rely on the collective bargaining process to negotiate for important benefits. Some of the benefits crucial to women's equal labour force participation are:

- * Equal pay for work of equal value. Women only earn about 60% of what men earn, largely because they are found in low-paying female job ghettos. Through negotiations, unions can fight to establish equal pay scales for different jobs requiring the same levels of skill, effort and responsibility, thus assuring monetary parity between women and men.
- * Paid maternity leave. Only four public service contracts now have it. No other group will be able to negotiate for paid maternity leave until the bill's mandate is over.
- * Benefits for part-time workers. Eighty-four percent of part-time workers in the public sector are women. Part-time workers are underpaid and are not eligible for the same benefits as full-time workers.
- * Work-sharing — a very thorny issue at the bargaining table. There are obvious advantages to work-sharing for women who must often hold down a full-time job in addition to caring for a family. Eighty-four percent of all single parent families are headed by women and over 40% of married women with children are in the labour force.
- * Affirmative action. The collective bargaining process can be used to close wage gaps and stop discrimination in hiring, promotion and training. But not any more.
- * Sexual harassment. This has been tolerated by women ever since entering the labour force. Women face the real threat of losing their jobs by complaining or refusing to comply. Only within the last few years have the protections been negotiated into some contracts to allow women to lodge complaints against a harasser without fear of reprimand. Unions without these protections will have to wait until the end of Bill C-124 to negotiate for them.

Women must organize within and outside their union to present a solid front opposed to Bill C-124 and any legislation that halts our already slow progress toward equality in the labour force.

BREAKING THE SILENCE

This issue of **Breaking the Silence** was produced by the editorial collective of the Feminist Caucus with the help of numerous contributors. Special thanks go to Ellen Adelberg, Alicia Schreder, Alma Estable, Suzanne Pilon, Joan Riggs, Diane Chalmessin, Margaret Evans, Dana Hanson,

Wendy McPeake, Joanie Flynt, Karen Stotsky and Wendy Irvine.

We are now printing a thousand copies of each edition of **Breaking the Silence** — a far cry from our initial run of 300! Once again, there is a form at the end of the newsletter that you can fill out and send to us to be put on our mailing list. This is the best way to ensure that you and your friends receive **Breaking the Silence** hot off the press. There is still no charge — and you can't say that for much else these days. To those of you who have been enclosing donations with your forms — thanks — it really helps.

If you or your office could act as a distribution point, we'll be happy to make arrangements to provide you with a large number of copies. **Breaking the Silence** is for our readers. Please tell us what you think. Comments and submissions can be addressed to:

The Feminist Caucus
School of Social Work
Carleton University
Ottawa

The deadline for submissions for Issue No. 4, to be published in March, is January 15, 1983.

FEMINIST CAUCUS

Thanks to the effort and organizational abilities of Dana Hanson, the Resource Centre in St. Pat's now has a special section devoted entirely to feminist research by students of the Carleton School of Social Work. Not only are other women invited to read the papers and share the knowledge in them; but they are also urged to consider contributing their own work to the growing files. We are just beginning to build a very exciting collection of feminist research in the social welfare field. We'd like to thank Barb Harris, Resource Centre Co-ordinator for her help and support in this project.

ON THE POLICY FRONT

The New Law on Sexual Offences: Pros and Cons

Rape and related offences are the most violent and insidious manifestations of the patriarchal and capitalist system; a system in which women are treated as property and men have the privilege of ownership. Any form of sexual assault is an extreme and violent testimony of the right of men to power over women.

Current statistics indicate that one out of every five women will be sexually assaulted at some point in her life, and one out of seventeen will be forcibly raped. Yet 95% of all sexual criminals walk freely; they are never arrested. Only 2% of rapists are actually tried in court and found guilty.

Since the early 1970's, Canadian women have become increasingly aware of their vulnerability to male power, particularly as it is expressed through sexual oppression. Rape, as a women's issue, has moved from the concern of individual women to collective awareness and anger, to a demand for political and legal action.

Finally, after ten years of diligent lobbying on



the part of many women's organizations, the federal government has produced legislation that recognizes, albeit in a very limited way, that women's powerlessness is reinforced through the judicial system. On January 12, 1981, Bill C-124 was introduced into the House of Commons. Its purpose was to amend the Criminal Code relating to sexual offences and the protection of young persons. Originally it was an omnibus bill incorporating everything from sexual assault and child pornography to child kidnapping.

After 18 months of extensive examination and reworking, the bill was split in two and reintroduced. One half became Bill C-124, an Act to Amend the Criminal Code in Relation to Sexual Offences. That bill received final reading on August 4, 1982 and passed to the Senate for review.

The process the bill underwent at the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs was tedious and controversial. MPs on the committee were inundated with briefs and presentations from all sides. Many women's organizations, the most vocal of which were the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the National Association of Women and the Law, fought to establish the principle that sexual crimes should be viewed as crimes of violence and power.

The final outcome of the negotiations was a bill somewhat better than that which had existed before, but is still not good enough.

Good Points in the Bill:

- * Rape and other sexual assaults are now judged within a three-tier system according to the violence of the act. The three levels are:
 1. Sexual assault — broadly defined to include anything from touching to forced sexual intercourse with a minimum of violence.
 2. Sexual assault with a weapon — or with threats to a third party, or causing bodily harm to the complainant. Conviction would result in a sentence of up to fourteen years.
 3. Aggravated sexual assault — includes the wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering of life.
- * The law "theoretically" applies equally to both sexes.
- * Due to the elimination of rape as a crime, "penetration" as proof of rape is to be eliminated.
- * Spousal immunity no longer exists.
- * The bill acknowledges that lack of resistance does not constitute consent.
- * The Common Law doctrine of "recent complaint" has been eliminated.

Some Problems with the Bill

- * The "honest belief clause" provides the man with sufficient defence for acquittal, even in the face of fierce resistance from the woman if he "honestly" believed she was consenting. This is especially dangerous in marital situations where it is assumed that the wife must be available to all the husband's sexual advances and that flailing and screaming is "normal" sexual behaviour.

- * Sexual assault is not defined anywhere in the bill. This could lead to confusion in defining minor sexual offences.
- * Prior sexual history is admissible evidence if the trial judge decides it is relevant.
- * Buggery, bestiality and gross indecency do not fall under the sexual assault offences.

What was omitted from Bill C-127

- * Any legislation on child pornography.
- * Certain controversial proposals such as legalization of any sexual act in private involving two or more adults.
- * Changes in the laws on prostitution and soliciting.
- * Changes in provisions concerning child abduction.

Sexual assault is deeply entrenched as a quasi-acceptable way for men to relate to women in our society; a society that perpetrates power relations, superficiality and alienation — even within relationships. For these reasons, any legislation concerning this issue is likely to be extremely limited in its impact.

It is unlikely that the incidence of rape will be reduced by Bill C-127. However, the bill may alleviate some of the humiliation and harassment women victims have been made to suffer.

We must recognize that legislative changes are made within a patriarchal system, and it is only when the power dynamics created by that system are broken down that women will be rid of their fear of physical attack.

— Joan Riggs.

Native Women: A Status Report

On September 22, 1982, the House of Commons Sub-committee on Indian Women and the Indian Act recommended the retroactive return of Indian status to the thousands of women and their first generation children who lost their right to live on reserves and receive federal benefits because they married non-Indians. Further, the report recommended that Parliament should appropriate sufficient funds to provide services and programs currently available to status Indians, and other resources as needed to those persons who are reinstated. Women's groups across the country applauded the recommendations of the report. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), whose "bottom line" provided informal guidelines for the Committee, endorsed the results.

In all political decisions, the process is as important as the results, and this case is no different. Without denigrating the recommendations of the Sub-committee, it must be remembered that the discriminatory provisions of the Act will almost certainly be ruled unconstitutional when the appropriate provisions of the Charter of Rights come into effect in 1985. There is little doubt that the Liberal government would much prefer to make its own changes before that time rather than have changes determined by the courts imposed upon them.

The timing of this examination, and that of

Indian self-government has also been questioned. Complaints about both of these issues have plagued an unsympathetic Liberal government for years. Cynics have speculated that the issues are being examined now as a diversionary measure. A First Ministers' conference on treaty and aboriginal rights has been scheduled for Spring 1983, and with hearings underway for the preceding six months, the already limited resources of Native groups are rendered totally ineffective in both forums. In spite of the fact that the recommendations of the Native Women's Association of Canada were ultimately adopted by the sub-committee, the victory is becoming bittersweet as events continue to unfold. The NWAC struck a bargain in early September with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), a male-dominated group representing status Indians. Acknowledging that some important concerns of the women's group, such as reinstatement and band control of membership, could be addressed under the mandate of the second sub-committee on Indian band government, NWAC agreed to a hasty two-week examination of Indian Women and the Indian Act so that work on the second part could begin before Parliament reconvened on October 27th.

The agreement was repudiated on the assumption that the ex-officio status accorded NWAC during the first examination would automatically be accorded the group during the deliberations on Indian band government. It now appears as though the Assembly of First Nations deliberately planned to betray the women's group and that they have been convincing in their arguments to the sub-committee as well — in the second half of deliberations, only the Assembly of First Nations is being accorded ex-officio status. The status is significant in that ex-officio members have the right to question witnesses and thus to protect their own interests. In order to question a witness, the NWAC now has to ask the permission of the Chair, a cumbersome procedure which will effectively limit participation.

In commenting on the events, the NWAC issued a press statement which said, "The Assembly of First Nations has betrayed the native women of Canada by asking a Parliamentary Committee to give the women a token place only with a new Subcommittee on Indian Government." The AFN President said there is no logic to giving women an ex-officio seat, the implication being that matters of Indian band government and determination of band membership is of no importance to women. The NWAC statement said, "We are worried about the outcome of the Subcommittee because Chief Ahenakew, in his address to the Subcommittee on Indian Women and the Indian Act, said the Charter of Rights should not apply to Indian Governments. The discrimination we now suffer under the federal government will simply be transferred to the band level."

— Karen Stotsky.

The National Day Care Conference

A National Day Care Conference, co-sponsored by Health and Welfare Canada and the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) was held in Winnipeg in late September. Judy Erola, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, told the conference that day care must be viewed as a public utility and not as a welfare service, saying that day care is "part of the economic

stated that it fibre of the country...we must move quickly to catch up with the reality that so many more women with young children are in the labour force now." The CCSD, urging the government to pass a National Day Care Act that would provide the foundation for quality, affordable day care should no longer be seen solely as providing a service to those in extreme poverty but as a "necessary and important service for all day care children." The more than 700 delegates to the conference all agreed that high-quality, supervised day care must be made more accessible. However, discussion on the methods of service delivery produced bitter fights over the role of profit versus non-profit day care.

One side argued against federal funding going to operators and chains who have historically made money from day care at the expense of small children. There is evidence that for-profit operators reduce their costs and the quality of care provided by lowering staff wages and benefits as well as by using the highest possible child-staff ratios. The day care for profit sector has also consistently lobbied for the lowering of provincial standards established to ensure quality care. The group opposed to profit day care felt that "scarce government funds should be given for the delivery of day care services to organizations which are publicly approved and publicly accountable." The for-profit delegates were unable to convince the majority of delegates that day care, rather than being a social right should be a commodity to be purchased on the open market.

In order to continue work begun during the conference, and to build nation-wide networks for strength in pressing their demands, the delegates formed a steering committee composed of two members from each province and territory. This committee will also present the resolutions passed by the delegates to the federal government. The resolutions included statements demanding that the government:

- * establish a National Day Care Act and set up a federal department, free from the welfare stigma, to administer it
- * provide universal access to day care for children up to 12 years old
- * pay \$5 a day per child for spaces in non-profit, licensed programs (to be matched by the provinces)
- * provide sufficient funds to facilitate the access and integration of all special needs children in regular day care settings.

Before these resolutions could be brought to a vote, an angry group of 30 private operators and some early childhood educators walked out of the meeting demanding a guarantee of two seats on the Steering Committee over and above those given to the provinces and territories. This was a quorum-breaking move which effectively held the conference hostage, making it necessary to accede to this demand in order to get the resolutions passed.

It is most significant to note that among those walking out were some highly placed provincial executives of the Association for Early Childhood Education, Ontario (AECEO) which represents approximately 3,000 members across Ontario. The AECEO executives taking this action included the President, Executive Director, Chairperson

of the Board, and the Chairpersons of Public Policy, French Translation, and the Professional Development Committee. Although one of the women stated that her action was taken as an individual and not as an AECEO representative, one cannot help but wonder in what philosophical direction the AECEO is being taken, given the collective "individual" actions by some of its most senior elected members. In what direction will its 3,000 members want the AECEO to go in the profit versus non-profit day care battle when they are given the chance to vote, and thus break their silence on this issue?

The National Day Care Conference has clearly shown that day care isn't just another "motherhood" issue which can be sent away with political rhetoric and a patriarchal pat on the head. It is a societal/political/economic/labour, women's issue that will not go away. Women in all walks of life must continue to speak out forcefully and loudly until the rhetoric becomes reality and the pat becomes provision...provision of the quality, public day care service demanded in the conference delegates' resolutions!

- Dana Hanson

In the next issue, look for a report on the Ottawa-Carleton Day Care Task Force.

Day Care Resources

Parental Rights and Day Care: A Bargaining Guide for Unions.

This publication examines parental rights and day care as equality issues at the bargaining table. It includes background information and statistics as well as sample contract clauses on the following:

- * maternity leave, paternity leave and adoption leave
- * time off for illness in the family, transfer to safe work during pregnancy, family raising leave

It was written and researched by Catherine MacLeod and Shelley Acheson, and published by the Ontario Federation of Labour. For a copy, write to:

OFL Women's Committee
15 Gervais Drive
Suite 202
Don Mills, Ontario
M3C 1Y8

FIGHTING BACK

What are we being turned into? A welfare mother's demand

They treat us like children, they run our lives more than our parents ever did. If it keeps up and we cannot find a way to protect ourselves, will the welfare system turn us into bad mothers and whores?

The welfare system stresses that the needs of the children (physical and mental) come first. Yet, because of the rules of the system, they make it next to impossible for a single parent to have someone else help in the role of the missing

parent. Single mothers cannot form a good solid relationship with another man (one who is good to her children and gives them what their father never did) because if he is seen around the house too often they are classified as living together and she could lose her welfare. She is faced with the decision of either breaking up with him (in order to keep her only means of support) thus hurting the children by depriving them of a good relationship or she decides to move in with him before either is really ready and after a few months their relationship falls apart and it's the children who get hurt all over again. At the same time, how can she be a good mother when her own emotional state is so mixed up?

How would the system look at a man staying over three or four nights a week if it was a different man every night. This is allowed and we would be in no danger of losing our welfare. We can act like whores but don't try to rebuild our lives.

Why should we make prostitutes of ourselves by saying, "If I sleep with you more than one night a week, it's up to you to support me and my children." This is the position they are putting us in.

We are not children but adults with adult feelings and we do have needs beyond those of raising our children. Just because one relationship failed and we find ourselves in a position of having to raise our families on welfare doesn't mean we are bums, prostitutes or bad mothers.

What can we do to protect ourselves? Where can we turn when we need help without people closing doors in our faces because we are "single parents on welfare"? What are our rights? Do we have any at all? What can we do to protect ourselves, our children and our only means of support from those people who think we have no right to it?

- Diana McLean

(Diana McLean is a woman receiving welfare and raising her children in New Brunswick)

Groups of women (and men) on welfare have sprung up around the country to fight for their rights and their dignity. A coalition formed in Ontario to struggle against another repressive government policy is described here.

Sole Support Parents Organize

On October 27, 1982 while member groups of the Sole Support Parents Coalition were protesting in cities and towns throughout Ontario, in Ottawa, Prisoners of Welfare (a welfare rights group) presented a series of three outdoor skits and distributed leaflets to protest proposed changes to the administration of welfare benefits announced in June 1981.

Frank Drea, Ontario's Minister of Community and Social Services has proposed policy changes which would classify sole support mothers with dependent children as "able-bodied" and therefore able to work. However, simply declaring people employable does not create the jobs or the conditions that allow them to work. Sole support mothers on Mother's Allowance or General Welfare will be forced to hustle for a low paying or non-existent job in addition to their

full-time but unpaid job of raising children.

- * Where is the day care? There are only 18,000 subsidized spaces in Ontario.
- * Where is the employment training? There are only 800 openings in job training programs.
- * Where are the jobs? Right now, there are over 400,000 unemployed people in Ontario.

But there were more than 50,000 mothers on Family Benefits as of July 1982.

Hard questions must be asked and action must be taken. The Sole Support Parents Coalition includes groups from Toronto, Hawkesbury, Thunder Bay, Welland and Ottawa.

The coalition can be reached at (416) 438-7206 in Toronto and Prisoners of Welfare in Ottawa at 232-2677.

- Diane Chalmessin

INSIDE PARTY POLITICS

The following article is the first in a series describing the status of women in Canadian political parties.

Women and the NDP

Women's participation in the New Democratic Party can be traced back to the days of the CCF (Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the forerunner of the NDP), and is both similar to that found in other political parties, and unique to the NDP. Membership on committees constitutes an important forum for continuing participation in the party process, and women are represented — though too often under-represented — on the various NDP standing committees, such as Election Planning, Policy Review, Principles and Objectives, etc. In addition, the NDP has a wide network of women's committees at the provincial and federal levels which along with the women delegates, and the women's caucus, make sure that the "women's voice" is heard at the federal or provincial Council/Convention meetings.

Elections also provide women with a major arena for involvement in party politics, with women participating in everything from canvassing to candidacy. Within the NDP, women seem to be especially drawn to election organizing, working for example as campaign managers, canvass organizers, and chief financial officers. Unfortunately, this organization participation is not duplicated among the federally-elected members: only 3 of the 33 NDP seats (9.1%) in the House of Commons are held by women. Even this figure compares favorably, however, with the overall representation of women in the House: a scant 5.7%, or 16 out of 282 seats.

What differentiates the NDP from the other major political parties is its commitment to changing this shameful situation. The existence of a federal Women's Organizer, of the Participation of Women (POW) Committee, as well as an internal affirmative action policy are reflections of this commitment.

The position of federal Women's Organizer was created at the Federal Convention in 1976, replacing that of Director of Women's Activities created ten years before. Like her forerunner, the Women's Organizer falls under the auspices of the NDP Federal Party, and she is responsible to the party's federal secretary.

Initially, the Women's Organizer was mandated to "...aid and promote NDP policy for women and to develop liaison with other women's groups...", but other duties have been added since then, including publication of the newsletter Equal Times. She is aided in her task of monitoring federal legislation for impact on women and in providing feedback to the federal NDP caucus on women's issues by the Status of Women critic (Margaret Mitchell at present), a women's/social policy researcher in the Caucus Research office, and by the Federal Caucus Committee on Women. Furthermore, the Women's Organizer works closely with the POW committee in recruiting and encouraging women candidates, or in working on special projects, such as the current Task Force on Older Women in Canada, and in developing women's policy.

The Participation of Women Committee was also created by a federal convention in 1969 with a view to "assist(ing) and enourag(ing) women's participation in all forms of political activity", and it replaces the Federal Women's Committee. Initially appointed, POW members are now elected, one from each province/territory, by their local conventions and serve terms ranging from one to two years. POW members are automatically members of both Federal Council and their own provincial/territorial Executives, and may be named as representatives to any of the Party committees.

The committee meets three times a year to discuss issues of concern (e.g., women and pensions, Section 12.1B of the Indian Act), Party policy/response to women's issues, etc. At Council/Convention, POW is especially active in presenting resolutions on women's issues for ratification, and also ensures regular meetings of the women's caucus throughout Convention. In addition, POW shares responsibility with the Women's Organizer for liaising with women in each province/territory, sponsoring workshops for women, and candidate search. Because POW works so closely with the Women's Organizer, it has been accorded input into her hiring.

In short, POW is an action-oriented, consultative committee which provides both impetus and direction to the NDP on issues affecting women. This committee was central to the drafting and adoption of an internal affirmative action policy at the 1981 Federal Convention. The policy's explicit goal is male-female parity at all levels within the Party. It stresses the need for affirmative action throughout the Party structure (candidates, committee members, delegates, etc.) if this goal is to be realized. Not surprisingly, POW designated the party Women's Committees "watchdogs" of the plan, with a mandate to "consider proposals with more force.." if no change takes place.

However, actions speak louder than words and women familiar with the "success" of voluntary affirmative action programs elsewhere will be anxious to see if the NDP will put practice where its policy is.

- Suzanne Pilon

FEMINIST RESEARCH

Women across the country who are interested in sharing research, resources and skills with each other may now join no fewer than three organizations that offer related services. In addition to helping in your own work, registering in the various talent banks can make your name known and perhaps provide job possibilities.

One such service is the CRIAW Talent Bank of Researchers developed by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. The bank consists of a computerized database of resumes and is designed to promote feminist researchers and their work, identify speakers for conferences, workshops and panels, match researchers with contracts in research sectors and establish a network among researchers doing similar work.

All self-defined feminists who agree with the goals and philosophies of CRIAW, are doing Canadian research, and are located in Canada may join. For further information, contact:

CRIAW Talent Bank of Researchers
151 Slater St., Suite 415
Ottawa K1P 5H3

In Toronto, the Women's Research and Resource Centre at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education is establishing a research index which will make available names of researchers and their areas of work across the country. WRCC will also publish information about work in progress in Resources for Feminist Research, a journal whose scope and reach is world-wide. To become listed with the Centre, contact:

Women's Research and Resource Centre
OISE
252 Bloor St. W.
Toronto M5S 1V6

Women who wish to share skills with each other may become members of the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women and then join their Skills Bank. The Skills Bank allows Canadian women to consult each other as resource people in their field and to form national links to promote education and training. Further information can be obtained by writing:

CCLOW
692 Coxell Ave.
Toronto M4C 3B6

- Ellen Adelberg

WORK IN PROGRESS

I am presently preparing a brief to be submitted to the Ontario Human Rights Commission on behalf of married female students applying to the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP) for grants and loans to enter Ontario universities and colleges.

I plan to lay a charge of discrimination against the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities on the basis of sex and marital status using my own case as a test case.

The focus of my complaint will be on the definition of family income and independent status (or the lack thereof).

I hope to make the brief available to all student unions across the country so that the brief could then provide the basis for further test cases before other provincial human rights commissions.

- Denise Stone

HOT OFF THE PRESS

DEPO-PROVERA: A Shot in the Dark

A report by the Quebec Public Interest Research Group.

Q-PIRG undertook this study of Depo-Provera in an attempt to make information available about this drug, which Upjohn Canada is so eager to thrust on Canadian women. Indeed, if Upjohn and some sectors of the medical profession have their way, you or someone close to you will probably be exposed to Depo-Provera in the near future. Unfortunately, despite the fact that this powerful drug has been given to about five million third world women, few human test results are available which clarify the exact nature of Depo's side effects.

Depo medroxyprogesterone acetate (Depo's generic name), is an injectable contraceptive which functions by dealing a substantial shock to the hypothalamus, thereby suppressing hormone releases and subsequently, ovulation. It is injected every three months in 150 mg. doses. Depo-Provera IS a particularly effective method of birth control, and for this reason it has been highly recommended by such organizations as the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

In Canada, Depo-Provera has been approved for use in the treatment of endometriosis and as a pain killer in endometrial cancer. However, despite the fact that it is not approved as a contraceptive, it can be, and is, legally prescribed for this purpose. It is entirely within a doctor's prerogative to prescribe a drug for a non-approved use, when, in that doctor's opinion, the benefits outweigh the risks. The federal government does not assume the role of regulating drug use. Moreover, Depo-Provera has been used in various Ontario institutions to induce a state of amenorrhea in some mentally retarded women. This practice is justified on the basis that the women cannot control the effects of menstruation, and also to prevent them from becoming pregnant.

The possible side effects of this drug are devastating. Animal and clinical studies have indicated such possible side effects as: lowered life expectancy, temporary or permanent sterility, diabetes, permanent damage to the pituitary gland, lowered resistance to infection, deformities in offspring and cervical, endometrial and breast cancer. In addition to this head-spinning array of possibilities, are the "less serious" effects: depression, loss of sex drive and/or orgasm, headache, limb pain, nausea and dark spotting of facial skin, among others. Of course, for the woman who must

contend with any of these side effects, they can be serious. Furthermore, little or no research has been done to determine the drug's effects on future children of former users, or on the infants who are receiving doses of Depo-Provera through breast milk.

While the "experts" debate the legitimacy of the few tests which have been conducted on Depo, it is being considered for use as a contraceptive in Canada. At present, medical experts foresee a very limited market for Depo-Provera in Canada, but as we have seen, this market is too often determined at the discretion of individual doctors.

As women, our health is at stake, as well as our right to contraceptives which are safe and effective. Once again we must make ourselves aware of the dangers of a powerful contraceptive drug — and ensure that others are informed as well!

A copy of the report is available from:

QPIRG
2070 Mackay St., Room 399
Montreal, Quebec
(514) 879-4510/4500

— reviewed by Alicia Schreader

RESOURCES

The Women's Resource Catalogue, a bilingual publication put out by the Women's Program of the Secretary of State, draws together a listing of a print and audio-visual materials by, for and about Canadian women. It is designed to contribute to the sharing of information among women's groups.

Materials have been organized under broadly-defined issue areas such as Arts, Day Care, Labour, Law, Native Women, Sexuality, Violence etc. Each is listed with brief descriptions of content, production date, length, cost and source. The resources listed are inexpensive and readily available.

The catalogue is a valuable reference source and is available free of charge from:

Women's Program
Secretary of State
Ottawa, K1A 0M5

Write to the Ontario Status of Women Council for copies of their new briefs on:

- * Part-time Employment (August 1982)
- * Women and Aging (September 1982)

Their address is:

801 Bay Street
3rd Floor
Toronto, M5S 1Z1
(416) 954-1111

Three other useful papers just published by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women are:

- * Microtechnology and Employment: Issues of Concern to Women
- * Better Day Care for Canadians: Options for Parents and Children

You can obtain these from:

CACSW
66 Slater Street, 18th Floor
Ottawa, K1P 5H1

— Sherry Galey

Canadian Women's Studies Association

Women attending the Women, Power and Consciousness conference in Toronto in November of last year spent some time discussing the desirability of organizing a national association for women's studies.

This past June saw the birth of just such an organization at the special interdisciplinary session on women's studies held at the annual meeting of the Learned Societies in Ottawa. The Canadian Women's Studies Association, as it is called, is open to those interested in developing and promoting women's studies in all disciplines. It is not necessary to be affiliated with a university to join — those involved in high schools, colleges, alternative institutions and government research and policy are also welcome. The membership fee is \$5.00 for individuals and \$35.00 for institutions. A bi-annual newsletter is planned as a vehicle to share information about women's studies programs. All relevant information will be welcome. Contact:

Frances Early
History Dept.
Mount Saint Vincent
Halifax, B3M 2J6

TASK FORCES, COMMISSIONS & HEARINGS

The Task Force on Older Women, sponsored by the New Democratic Party and the NDP Participation of Women Committee, has been holding public hearings across Canada since June. To date, the Task Force has visited PEI, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba, Thunder Bay, Ontario, and the Yukon. Still to come are Hamilton, Ontario; Alberta, and Saskatchewan. BC, having just completed their own provincial Task Force on Older Women in 1981, will not be included in the federal tour.

Through the hearings/workshops and the use of a questionnaire, the Task Force is seeking information from individuals and groups on the kinds of problems faced by women over forty. The information gathered will serve as a basis for policy resolutions to be presented at NDP Federal Convention next June, and will hopefully spur legislative action to improve the situation of older women in Canada. Look for the final report in the Fall of 1983.

Briefs from concerned individuals and groups are welcome, and may be submitted by mail if one cannot attend the hearing. Please note that all submissions (briefs, questionnaires) must be received by the end of December 1982.

For more information on the hearing schedules, or to obtain copies of the questionnaire, contact:

Mary Humphrey
301 Metcalfe
Ottawa, K2P 1R9
(613) 236-3613

— Suzanne Pilon

WOMEN IN UNIONS

New Union Seeks Women's Input

By the time you read this issue of **Breaking the Silence**, Local 7, a new local of the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC) will have held a series of workshops on the issue of "Unions and Women".

On Nov. 3 the workshop looked at SORWUC's history and discussed the question "why a feminist union?" On Nov. 10 the problems of organizing day care workers was examined. The following session on Nov. 17 dealt with the fight for a first contract using the experience of the insurance workers at l'Union du Canada as a case in point. The last workshop on Nov. 29 addressed the difficult issue of how SORWUC can put into practice its commitment to working with unwaged women who have been denied the right to organize (e.g. welfare mothers, volunteers and domestic workers).

The workshops have been sponsored by Local 7 of SORWUC as a means of involving women (particularly those working in areas that are traditionally unpaid, low-paid and unorganized) in organized action.

If you are interested in getting further information of SORWUC Local 7 or becoming more directly involved as a "member-at-large" please contact us by writing to:

SORWUC Local 7
P.O. Box 4454
Station E
Ottawa, K1S 5B4

or calling 234-6706 or 234-8394 (evenings only).

— Margaret Evans

BREAD AND ROSES

Holly Near: A Concert to Remember

On October 6, 1982 Ottawa was treated to the music and fine company of Holly Near and her back-up musicians/friends Adrienne Torf, Carrie Barton and Susan Freundlich.

The mood was set on the stage by the musicians' relaxed and talkative rapport with each other. Bassist Barton and pianist Torf demonstrated faultless timing and obvious musical ability as they wove a backdrop for the delivery of Near's beautiful and thought-provoking compositions. Susan Freundlich, the sign language interpreter added a visual dimension that was perfect. She augmented the power of the lyrics, delivering a fine performance in her own right. Her interpretation of "Dancing Bird" was an example of creative signing at its best. Not only the physically challenged were riveted by Freundlich's joyous and fluid interpretation.

Holly Near sang mostly from her recent (1979-82) compositions — songs that made a statement — for feminism and non-violence. Occasionally she interjected a sensitive love song. "Foolish Notion" with its disarming lyrics — "Why do we kill people, who are killing people, to show that killing people is wrong"

moved the sympathetic audience to extended applause. Bravely coaxing a mixed audience, Near also had us singing the chorus of a non-classist, inter-racial and pro-gay song.

In my opinion, there are obvious connections between militarism, patriarchy, capitalism and rationalism that give rise to all forms of dominance — be it sexist, racist or classist. These connections are played down by those in control and those controlled.

On October 6, Holly Near made it clear that she sees these connections, while placing herself firmly before the inevitable attack from those still unconscious of them. In her concert she shared with the audience a world free of nukes, racial discrimination, the oppression of women and workers, and fear on all levels. An overly ambitious goal, perhaps, to some. But how can there be real peace without the elimination of all these forms of dominance? Bravo, Holly!

— Joanie Flynt

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AT LITTON

In a Remembrance Day action of non-violent civil disobedience in Toronto, over a hundred women and men blockaded Litton, manufacturers of the Cruise missile guidance system, in an attempt to prevent production for the day. Our action was symbolic. What better way to respect the suffering and death of past war victims than to prevent more killing? But our action was also a strategic demonstration of the people's power to effectively resist non-violently the development of unwanted weapons. If a hundred people can disrupt Litton for a day, imagine how long the thousands that demonstrated against the Cruise in Ottawa Oct. 30th could keep a blockade going! Litton would soon find the Cruise project highly unprofitable.

Civil disobedience (CD) involves disobeying unjust laws or breaking neutral laws (such as trespassing or obstructing police) in order to dramatize our committed opposition or to actually intervene (as in sit-ins and blockades). Canadians tend to be law-abiding people and so may find it helpful to remember the message of the Nuremberg trials: We have an obligation not to obey when our obedience means co-operating in actions we know to be immoral.

The Alliance for Non-Violent Action (ANVA) is committed to non-violent direct action, including CD. In our blockade of Litton we never tried to force our way through police lines even when they stopped us some distance from our objective. As soon as we met police resistance we simply sat down and blocked traffic there. When police ordered us to move we refused to co-operate, thus breaking the law, but we allowed ourselves to be dragged away without struggling. If we weren't arrested we would just get up, walk back and sit down again. Since we didn't antagonize them with physical or verbal violence we found many officers treated us gently, listened to our concerns and even expressed their support. Women will recognize the dynamics here. As individuals we have long experience with such disarming tactics. Heterosexual women, for example, often get their men to listen by approaching them in a supportive manner so as not to trigger their defensive

mechanisms. When police too begin refusing to co-operate by not interfering with peaceful Litton blockaders, Litton and the federal government, which gives the company millions in grants and interest-free loans, will have to respond to the people's will. (Remember, whole units of the National Guard refused to battle protestors in Chicago in 1968.)

ANVA is made up of affinity groups throughout southern Ontario and Quebec and northern New York. Disarming strategy is not the only model we take from women. Each affinity group, and the Alliance as a whole, also functions according to feminist principles. Decisions are reached by consensus, even in the midst of an "action." The groups are non-hierarchical. Responsibilities are rotated. Sexist language and behaviour are identified and corrected. Attention is paid to everyone's feelings.

I do not want to give an overly rosy picture of the Remembrance Day action. Like many, I had my moments of tears. The full coercive force of the state was brought to bear against us. Several police officers were unnecessarily brutal, throwing bodies around like sacks of flour. Horses were eventually brought in. By the end of the day over 70 people were arrested and now face criminal charges of obstructing police. For them the ordeal only began when the paddy-wagon door closed. After mug shots were taken they were driven to police stations where each was interrogated by intimidating officers, fingerprinted and, in most cases, kept in jail overnight. They were subjected to humiliating "strip searches", sometimes denied food and medicine, and generally made witnesses, if not victims, of behind-the-scenes police brutality. The jail stories are painful just to hear, let alone to relive in every encounter with a police officer on the street. If convicted, all these people face possible fines, prison sentences, and criminal records — because they were trying to protect you and me. It is going to cost a lot of money to defend them. If you can help and would like your dollars to go toward the defence of women only, please send your cheque to:

Women's Action for Peace
176 1/2 Nepean St., Apt. 2
Ottawa K2P 0B6

There will also be a Defence Fund Party for women only on December 3rd at the same address. If you want to help women and men both, please send your cheque to:

Ottawa Affinity Group
150 Rochester St.
Apt. 2
Ottawa K1R 7M4

For more information you can call 237-3495.

- Marymay Downing

RANTS AND RAVES

Rave reviews and applause to:

- * The Canadian Human Rights Commission for its ruling that, "chartered banks have no right to refuse a woman a credit card because of her husband's poor credit history." A small but important step towards the elimination of the dependency-producing concept of "family income".

Bouquets of boo's to the following:

- * The Bank of Montreal's senior vice president (Ontario operation), William Harker. When discussing impending bank closings and service cuts he stated that the bank would find jobs at other branches for "good employees", adding that he was less concerned about "housewives or other people working out of convenience" ("bad" employees??!)
- * Canadian universities, whose full-time academic staff in 1931 included only 19% women, and who by 1982 have managed to decrease that figure to 14%!
- * Ontario Labour Minister Russell Ramsay, who says that while he accepts the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and understands the statistics, he believes that the cost of narrowing the gap between women's and men's wages through legislation is too high in a sluggish economy — "...it would be another straw that would break the camel's back in some (business) cases." How about some concern for the millions of women struggling with the back-breaking reality of working in low paid female job ghettos and/or unpaid domestic labour at home, eh Mr. Ramsay?
- * Sally Barnes, former press secretary and close political advisor to Premier Davis and recently-appointed Chairperson of the Ontario Status of Women Council who also opposes equal pay for work of equal value on the grounds that policing this law would give rise to a large bureaucracy. This has not been found to be true in Quebec, federal government jurisdiction and in private enterprise where the equal value concept is presently in use, so why not give it a try Ms. Barnes and Mr. Ramsay?

-Dana Hanson

HELP

The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics has been formed to generate massive public support for legalizing free-standing abortion clinics in this province.

Why?

- * In 1969, the Federal Criminal Code was amended so that abortions remain illegal unless approved by a committee of three doctors in an approved hospital.
- * Hospitals are not required to perform abortions. Under pressure from the vocal and powerful anti-choice minority, many hospitals prefer to avoid controversy by not doing abortions at all.
- * More than 30% of women in Ontario live in communities where hospitals do not perform abortions. More than 70% of hospitals in Canada do not perform abortions at all.
- * Seventy-two percent of Canadians believe that women have the right to choose to have an abortion.

A free standing clinic is opening in Toronto. The Quebec government funds and supports these clinics in that province, despite the federal law.

It does so because of broad public support for the right to choose. The OCAC wants to mobilize the same kind of support in Ontario to ensure that these clinics can operate.

What can you do?

- * Join the Coalition.
- * Add your name to their mailing list
- * Make a financial contribution
- * Write to Larry Grossman, Minister of Health, to indicate your support:

Larry Grossman
Minister of Health
Queen's Park
Toronto, M7A 2Ks

OCAC
Box 935
Station G
Toronto, M4T 2P1

HELP

Mount Saint Vincent, Canada's only women's university, has launched a campaign to raise \$1,000,000. The president, Dr. Margaret Fulton, is asking women across Canada to donate \$1 each. She wants to build the **biggest network of women helping other women Canada has ever seen**. Without the money, the university can't provide deserving women (such as mature women returning to full-time study) with the scholarships and bursaries they desperately need;

nor can it fund the many neglected areas of research on women's issues.

Send your contributions to:

Development Office
Mount Saint Vincent University
166 Bedford Highway
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3M 2J6

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Ottawa Women's Centre is sponsoring a series of films in 1983.

The following films will be shown at 8 pm in the Odeon, 85 Hasteys in the University Centre at the University of Ottawa:

Jan. 11 Prison for Women

Jan. 25 L'une Chante, l'autre ne chante pas
(fantastic feature film from France about friendship between two women)

Feb. 22 Rape Culture
A Matter of Choice

March 15 Les Filles du Roy

You can contact the Women's Centre about their other programs at 231-6853. Their office is at:

85 Hasteys, Room 211-D
University Centre
University of Ottawa

FOR FUTURE ISSUES

Can we add you to our mailing list? (It's free!)

Please complete, detach and mail to:

Breaking the Silence
Feminist Caucus
School of Social Work
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6

Attention: Sherry Galey

We encourage you to enclose:

- * comments on the newsletter
- * information & notices for future issues
- * names of others who would like to receive copies

Donations will be gratefully accepted. Cheques can be made payable to the Feminist Caucus.

Name: _____

Telephone: Res: _____

Bus: _____

Address: _____

Organization or Place of Work: _____

Do you want your name placed on the mailing list? _____ Do you want additional copies to distribute? _____ How many? _____ Do you want your name placed on a list of those interested in forming a network of women interested in bringing feminism into social welfare? _____

