

CANADIAN ABORTION RIGHTS ACTION LEAGUE (CARAL)  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LE DROIT A L'AVORTEMENT (ACDA)

# NEWSLETTER



WINTER

1983

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## From the President

The time since the last newsletter has been incredibly busy! Although we sometimes feel overwhelmed by what has to be done, we are also excited by what we have accomplished. We are going to win this battle!

First, I would like to say thank you for your tremendous financial support and suggestions for dealing with the results of the Gallup Poll. We have used as many of the suggestions as were feasible and the money you have sent us have allowed us to be more productive. The office is now covered part of every day by paid staff. This means that mail coming into the office is handled quickly, membership lists are updated immediately and we are able to deal with the media on a day to day basis.

This issue of the newsletter will give you information about our Annual General Meeting. We are particularly pleased that this year we will have a number of workshops led by members from across the country. This participation by our member groups and affiliates is the kind of activity which is making this organization the vital, growing, national pro-choice group it now is.

In response to our direct mail campaigns which, of course, go to others as well as members, we have had a number which could be put in the class of 'hate literature'.

However, to counteract this, we have had hundreds of positive, inspiring responses telling us why you support the pro-choice position. We will publish some of these letters in this and future newsletters to keep you aware of the number of people who want us to continue the fight until we have achieved real choice for women.

I look forward to meeting with many of you at the AGM on April 30th.

### NEW AFFILIATES

We welcome the following new affiliates to our swelling ranks:

Saskatchewan Working Women  
Aspen, Prince George, B.C.  
Prince Albert District Pro-choice Coalition  
WAWAW/Women's Health Network  
Alberta NDP Women's Committee

### NEW CHAPTER

We welcome the newly formed chapter from MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

*Norma Scarborough*

## Letters

Like all organizations, CARAL sometimes gets letters from members who disagree with something we're doing. For the benefit of others who may have had the same reservations as the writer of the letter below, we're printing her letter and responding to it here.

Dear CARAL,

I have been a member of CARAL since the spring of 1982. On the whole, I agree with and appreciate CARAL's presentation of information about abortion and its approach to reform. However, I feel that the "Stand Up and Be Counted" list does not provide our organization with a convincing argument for change. Certainly, the actual number of abortions performed annually and, perhaps more significantly those requested and refused indicate that a need does exist in society for safe and legal abortion. But, I feel that a personal declaration even made by a large number of women, works against CARAL. Let me explain why.

Last spring I was present at the annual CARAL conference. A speaker introduced the "Stand Up and Be Counted: list and invited everyone present who had had an abortion to come up to the front of the room after telling the audience about her personal experiences regarding abortion. At this point, I was

strongly reminded of a Gospel Hall scene in which the preacher, after a long and emotional sermon exhorts the sinners to come up to the front and be saved.

In the long run personal confessions and emotional appeals can only damage CARAL's image - that being of an organization that has dealt with the abortion issue in a rational and deliberate way. Weren't the "Pro-Life" groups scorned at CARAL's last conference for their techniques of emotional blackmail? One knows from experience that such stands can easily be dismantled by logical inquiry. I am not suggesting that abortion is an unemotional issue. On the contrary, since it is such an explosive one, surely CARAL can benefit us all by outlining the subject in rational terms. I hope that you will consider these points in future use of the "Stand Up and Be Counted" list.

I will continue to support CARAL and I greatly appreciate the existence of an organized group that stands up for the pro-choice position.

A concerned member.

Dear Friend,

Thank you for writing to tell us how you feel about the Stand Up and Be Counted (SUBC) campaign; I hope my response will help you to understand the rationale of what we're doing.

For a number of us who were at the annual meeting, standing up to publicly indicate that we had had abortions was a very significant experience. Having an abortion is like many other difficult life experiences in that, while no one can do it with you or for you, the knowledge that others have gone through it is supportive. One of the purposes of the SUBC campaign is to break through the wall of silence that isolates women who have had abortions and that prevents them from being able to talk about something important to them. I think only rape even approaches abortion in being a subject that people who have experienced it aren't allowed to talk about; there is still a stigma attached to it.

Shaking this stigma is a second purpose of the petition. One woman wrote to us, "Think you have hit on a good brain wave if you can get women to admit they had abortions. What a force we'd have if they would not be afraid." And we've had several letters like the one below.

"I cannot give my name for publication because I know deeply it would wound my elderly parents. But add one to the list of women who have had abortions from necessity, but will not stand and be counted because of the virulent condemnation society exacts from them and others."

I sympathize with women who feel that they cannot speak out publicly and feel even more strongly that those of us who can afford to take the risk must do so on behalf of all.

Legislators need to be confronted by the people whose lives they are affecting. Women who have had abortions, their friends and families are all well aware of the human costs exacted by poor legislation. We are surely the best persons to be reminding the politicians and the public alike that we are not talking about statistics - we're talking about mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters. We are saying, "If it hasn't happened to you, you're just lucky. What would you do if an unwanted pregnancy happened in your family?"

For me it is very rational and logical for us to form a lobby to present our case and that of women who are yet to be affected by political policies on abortion. It is irrational for people to ignore the evidence of their lives in their decision-making.

Leslie Pearl

Dear CARAL,

I can't begin to tell you how glad I am to have seen your January letter (ed: Our January letter appealing for funds). Ironically enough it is almost a year since I was trying to locate an organization such as yours, without success.

I experienced first-hand the facts you relate about the Therapeutic Abortion Committees. Up until last

February I must admit I was somewhat ignorant about the laws governing abortion. My belief was that getting an abortion today was like having a tooth pulled. As you know, not quite that simple.

I read, with interest, about Joe Borowski's challenge. There are no words that I can place on this paper to describe the overwhelming anger I feel towards this man and others whose opinions are the same! ....

I wanted to relate to you my own experiences with an unwanted pregnancy and birth and years later my experiences in having a therapeutic abortion.

My first pregnancy was when I was 15 years old and if ever there was a nightmare, it's being pregnant at 15, still a child really, and not knowing where to turn. The terror one feels is impossible to describe. That period of my life truly was a nightmare. The scars will never heal, the thoughts to this day are very real - sitting in a dark, dreary, unfamiliar doctor's office hoping and praying he'd be the answer to my nightmare, hearing him say he wouldn't abort the pregnancy, the crisis at home when the truth was finally known, the interrupted schooling, the whispering schoolmates upon returning to school - it's hell! Sound a little melodramatic maybe, but not to me, or to anyone else that has gone through it.

I am 31 years old now. I still have no desire to have children. I wonder if maybe I would feel differently

today if I'd been able to terminate my pregnancy back then. Today I still associate pregnancy with a multitude of depressing and fearful emotions. Although I am happy for friends who are having children, for me it only reminds me of unhappiness.

Fifteen years later, in May 1981 I finally decided that I would have my tubes tied. I had been through a marriage which ended 4 years later in separation, I had a good job, no serious boyfriend and still no desire to have children. I had the operation and then 9 months later I was told by my family doctor that I was pregnant. The operation had failed. Just as, I am sure, a woman who desperately wants a child and cannot conceive, asks in desperation "Why!", I also asked, "Why!" and "How", etc. All those thoughts and feelings of 15 years ago came rushing back, and then almost immediately, relief, because this was 1982 and I could get an abortion. My doctor made the appointment for me with a gynaecologist and for a week my mind was at rest. But then came the call from my doctor asking my permission to send a letter to the Committee, saying I was distraught, depressed (would suicidal have helped!?). It was only during that call that I learned about the 3 doctors' signatures and the approval of the Committee. I was told not to worry, I would be approved as by this time I was in tears. In my mind I was 15 again and back in that dreary doctor's office, waiting for an answer. As it was, my abortion

was delayed 3 weeks because they would only do so many a week. I missed time from work because I was emotionally upset and desperately ill from morning sickness.

Need I go on?! YES! YOU HAVE MY SUPPORT! 100% ALL THE WAY!

No one has the right to prevent me from controlling circumstances in my life such as I have described.

My choosing to terminate my pregnancy affects me only. It has nothing to do with the Joe Borowski's of the world! However, the effects of unwanted children coming into the world do have a bearing on the rest of society. I'm sure I don't have to go into them.

I'm sorry for rambling on but for the first time in my life I have been able to let someone know my feelings in this matter and how terribly important it is that we win our fight for freedom of choice!

I will carry your "Ten Reasons" with me. I want to do all I can for CARAL. Please let me know what that might be and please keep me informed of all events and happenings.

Yours sincerely,  
A supporter.

P.S. Incidentally, my mood after my abortion was cheerful and healthy. When a woman has to choose between abortion or childbirth, she'll know what right for her and either way she'll have no regrets. I didn't!

Dear CARAL:

After much soul-searching, I am finally responding to the "Stand Up and Be Counted" petition. I have reached the unhappy conclusion that I cannot stand up and be counted. This is an awful decision. For years I have been a feminist and pro-choice. I have even defended the pro-choice position at public meetings and have not even been terribly alarmed by the resulting hisses, hoos and cries of "murderer" (alarmed personally, I mean, of course - the ramifications are something else!) All this makes me wonder just where I think I get the right not to stand up and be counted. I'm certainly in a better position to do so than a lot of women I know.

There is certainly no trauma concerning the abortion itself. There is no guilt, regret, sense of loss or anything else "they" would have us believe. There is only concern and worry in a small community, for the feeling of family, etc. Sounds like a pretty paltry excuse, but it's a reality.

I've always wondered why all the women who've used the referral services of the Planned Parenthood organization won't come forward and publicly support the movement. Believe me, I now have a much greater understanding of their motivations.

You've probably heard all the excuses before. It's a similar

situation to that of women who approach referral agencies and say, "I've never been in favour of abortion, but this is me, this time." Not to go on too long, in short - no, I can't stand up and be counted at this time. Even this statement says a lot about society's attitudes to women who believe in controlling their own lives!

I can, however, lift my hand as one of the nameless millions. If you can perhaps add an appendix of nameless hands to the petition, please add mine.

As well, I'm lifting my hand to my cheque book to make a sadly small donation. And, for what it's worth, please remember that those like you who have the courage, are admired, respected, yes even loved, by those of us who can't do it yet.

In Sisterhood

#### CHILDBIRTH BY CHOICE TRUST GETS CHARITABLE STATUS

The Childbirth by Choice Trust, established by CARAL to carry on educational activities, has been granted charitable status. This means that donations made to the Trust will be tax deductible. While Trust funds cannot be used to support many of CARAL'S day-to-day activities, they will permit wider distribution of pro-choice information. Donations will be gratefully received.

AGM  
APRIL 30 TORONTO

This year's AGM is taking place in the midst of the continuing challenge to our abortion law by Joe Borowski (see Borowski update) and the establishment of free-standing clinics by Dr. Morgentaler across Canada. The theme of this year's program is: "1983 - Strengthening our skills to challenge the law." The format has been changed to reflect this theme in the form of workshops. The workshop will encourage our members working at the grass roots and provide a forum for communicating skills and ideas. We hope that many of you will be able to attend to share your experiences and learn new skills to use in your region of the country.

Hope to see you on April 30th. See the enclosed brochure for program and registration details.

#### WORLD ABORTION TRENDS INFORMATION AVAILABLE

The September 1982 issue of Population is devoted completely to information on world abortion trends. The publication deals with topics of current abortion law, abortion prevalence patterns, characteristics of abortion clients abortion and health, and abortion and population growth rates. Copies of the issue can be obtained free from the Population Crisis Committee, 1120 19th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036 or for 25 cents from the CARAL office.

## LETTERS TO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATORS

Ontario members will find enclosed a letter than can be sent to your MPP or used as a sample for composing a letter. Get your friends to do the same.

The letter is reproduced below so members in other provinces can adapt it and send it to their own MLA's

Remember CARAL is you. Individual letters can make a difference. Politicians do pay attention. Don't leave the field to the opponents of legal abortion. We are the majority.

MPP

Queen's Park  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 1A2

Dear

This letter is in support of the establishment and legalization of free-standing abortion clinics in the province of Ontario.

The federal Minister of Justice stated on December 6, 1982 in the House of Commons, "It is in the hands of the provinces ... to determine what is an accredited hospital. A province may even decide that a free-standing clinic of this kind should be classed as a hospital ..."

The Minister of Health, the Honourable Larry Grossman, has the jurisdiction to approve such clinics as hospitals.

The current system which requires (1) that all abortions be performed in a hospital and (2) that the abortion be granted by a Therapeutic Abortion Committee has been shown to cause delays which are a risk to a woman's health.

In many parts of the province there are no hospitals with Therapeutic Abortion Committees. This forces women to travel often hundreds of miles to receive a simple medical procedure.

In many cities there are so few gynecologists who will perform abortions for the OHIP fee scale that women with few or no financial resources are unjustly penalized in their search for a safe legal abortion.

A federal government report on the operation of the abortion law recommended the establishment of regional centres where abortions could be performed.

I urge you as my MPP to speak up in support of the approval of free-standing abortion clinics covered by OHIP in this province. The majority of the people of Ontario (Gallup Poll, 1982) believe that a woman has the right to make her own abortion decision and that she has the right to good medical care once she has made it.

Yours sincerely

## Across Canada

SASKATCHEWAN

## Moose Jaw

The situation regarding the Moose Jaw Union Hospital remains the same. No abortions have been performed there since November, 1981, when a group calling itself the Hospital Concerns Committee told the Board of the Hospital that they were in contravention of Section 251. The Union Hospital has no obstetrical ward; that is at the Catholic Hospital. Section 251 says a hospital must have diagnostic and obstetrical services in order to have a T.A.C. and perform abortions.

The Minister of Health of Saskatchewan could approve Moose Jaw Union Hospital to perform abortions, but both he (Graham Taylor) and his predecessor N.D.P. Minister Herman Rolfe refused to do so.

Taylor said he would let the hospital know his decision on the matter by January 15. January 15 has come and gone and still no decision.

Meanwhile, CARAL has learned that two federal Ministers of Justice, Jean Chretien and Mark MacQuigan, have advised the Minister of Health that they do not think the hospital is in contravention of the law.

And the women of Moose Jaw continue to travel to Regina and to the United States to obtain abortions.

A group of concerned people have

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Prince George

The Prince George Hospital Board remained pro-choice in a closely fought election this fall. The Anti-Choice candidate came within 37 votes of defeating the Pro-Choice incumbent. Pro-Choice organizers are concerned that citizens of Prince George are not sufficiently aware that their continued support is needed during hospital board elections.

## ALBERTA

## Fetus Not A Person Judge Rules

A woman who was one-month pregnant when the man she was living with died in a traffic accident had her claim against the Royal Insurance Company dismissed in the Court of Queen's Bench in Edmonton recently.

The woman had tried to collect death benefits on behalf of her daughter, born eight months after the accident.

The judge chose to go along with the dictionary meaning of the word alive, defined as "marked by a state in which the organs perform their vital functions." In his view, the mother performs the vital functions until the child is born.

formed Citizens for Reproductive Rights in Moose Jaw and are gratified that public awareness of the issue and support for the pro-choice position is growing.

### Prince Albert

Prince Albert is facing the same situation as Moose Jaw and has been without abortion facilities since August. A pro-choice group has been formed there and is determined to see abortion services reinstated.

### Edmonton - Abortion Introduced as Evidence in Court

In 1980, when Heather Dobson returned to work at Eatons in Edmonton, after having had an abortion made necessary by contraceptive failure, she learned that she had been fired. Three young employees, caught stealing, had implicated her.

Believing that the phrase "failure to comply with company policy" as the reason for dismissal on her Eatons record would be taken to mean "theft" by many people in the business, she decided to sue for wrongful dismissal. In her claim for damages, she included damages for stress.

Eatons admitted wrongful dismissal, but fought any award for stress. Eatons' lawyer questioned Heather about her abortion and took the position that her stress was due to the abortion and not to having been implicated in a crime she had not committed and to being wrongfully dismissed from her job.

It is appalling that Eatons descended to the level of introducing what, the company apparently hoped, would be prejudicial information about Heather - namely, that she had had an abortion. That the information had its desired effect would seem to be demonstrated by the judge's choice of words when he stated that "she[i.e.Heather Dobson] told me the measure of her distress [over the dismissal] was much greater than the distress she felt four months before when she had her unborn child destroyed" (underlining ours).

Since then, Heather Dobson, who had never concerned herself with the abortion issue, has joined CARAL and wants people to know her story.

If you wish to help Heather with her appeal of the decision, address contributions to: The Heather Dobson Appeal Committee, #301, 10328 81 Ave., Edmonton Alta. T6E 1X2

### WINNIPEG

A coalition of pro-choice groups, with founding members CARAL, Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, Women's Health Clinic and Manitoba Women and the Law, was recently formed.

The coalition will be organizing around support of free-standing abortion clinics and opposition to Joe Borowski's challenge to legal abortion. Dr. Henry Morgentaler

is proceeding with plans for his clinic. A house has been purchased and staff has been hired. The targeted opening is sometime in March

Meanwhile, despite opposition and protests from citizens and groups in the city, Mayor Bill Norrie proclaimed "Respect for Life" week again this year. The pro-choice coalition has issued a statement of protest as has National CARAL. We reminded Mayor Norrie that true respect for life does not include forcing women to bear children against their will.

### Guelph

A small, but active, group of pro-choice supporters from several local feminist groups continues to battle anti-choice organizations in this conservative Ontario city.

A CARAL member recently presented a pro-choice petition to a local hospital board and distributed information to the board members. Last spring, the board had heard from the Guelph "Right to Life" group, which also maintains a "Birthright" office in town.

Guelph is a good example of a city where a situation similar to that in Moncton might arise. It is important that pro-choice persons support local doctors who are maintaining abortion services despite pressure to the contrary.

### Toronto

The free-standing abortion clinic planned for Toronto is still

stalled as the organizing committee (CEAC) continues to search for a facility. Undaunted workers explain that the clinic facility must meet zoning bylaws as well as their own high standards; finding an appropriate property that is also zoned correctly has proven difficult.

In the meantime, the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) continues to educate communities and legislators to the need for free-standing clinics. A number of committees are organized to reach different types of groups all over the province and some major successes have already been noted. For example, the Ontario Federation of Labour has endorsed free-standing clinics and discussion on the issue is being carried into union locals around Ontario.

We can't emphasize enough the importance in this campaign of communicating with legislators. Elected officials are affected by how their constituents feel about issues and the anti-choice faction is well organized in letting them know their opinions on abortion.

International Women's Day  
March 5, 1983

All over the world women will be marking International Women's Day by marching together to celebrate advances in women's rights and to press our demands for full liberation. This year, in Toronto, the focus will be on (1) a woman's

right to a job, (2) a woman's right to choose and (3) a woman's right to peace.

CARAL will be marching under our banner on that day. Come join us. Phone 961-1507 for more information.

### Planned Parenthood Funding Cut

The Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada saw its federal grant cut from \$296,000 last year to \$130,000 next year.

This cut will force Planned Parenthood to forego a media campaign aimed at young people.

The Federal Government has consistently turned its back on its responsibilities in the promotion of birth control information and programs and its timidity in the face of anti-choice pressure groups is well known.

CARAL has sent a telegram protesting the funding cut to the Minister of Health, the Hon. Monique Begin.

### CORNWALL

A pregnant 15-year-old became a focus for the abortion controversy last month when she refused to accept the Children's Aid Society's dictate that she could not have an abortion.

A ward of the CAS since last spring, the girl became pregnant when she was raped in October. Her decision

to have an abortion was supported by her natural parents, her foster parents, a psychiatrist and the Therapeutic Abortion Committee at Cornwall General Hospital.

But the Cornwall CAS refused its permission, justifying the action by saying that it can only approve an abortion if two independent doctors state clearly that the mother's life would be endangered by continuing the pregnancy.

People close to the girl then turned to Dr. Henry Morgentaler and to CARAL for assistance. The abortion was obtained and Morris Manning, CARAL's lawyer, is now representing the girl in dealings with the CAS. Frank Drea, Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services (COMSOC) has called for an investigation and a guardian ad litem has been appointed to protect the girl's interests.

In the meantime the girl and her foster family have been subjected to harassment, and debate as to whether she was raped or not has reached the Ontario legislature. Her character and mental competence have been attacked in the press and pro-choice supporters have been accused of using her as a pawn. Columnist Michelle Landsberg has been noteworthy in her focus on, and defence of, the girl's interests.

CARAL sent a telegram to Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services demanding that the policies of individual CAS regarding abortion be investigated. Questions have been asked in the legislature and the Ministry is said to be reviewing the situation.

The publicity surrounding this case has brought to light the intolerable situation where CAS can hold young girls prisoners in order to force them to comply with the moral beliefs of particular Society Boards.

Catholic Children's Aid Societies do this routinely. It is even more shocking that the Cornwall Children's Aid Society - responsible for all religions, is allowed to act in this arbitrary fashion.

### MONCTON DOCTORS DEFY ANTI-ABORTION TIDES

A six-month moratorium on abortions at the Moncton hospital ended in late December. Dr. Robert Caddick, spokesman for the hospital's gynecologists, said, "By not doing abortions, we are not stopping unwanted pregnancies and we're not stopping women who desire abortions. We are merely driving them underground."

The doctors had suspended abortion services last June (see September 1982 Newsletter) because of pressure from anti-abortionists. Through the summer and fall, pro- and anti-choice groups fought to gain public support.

A committee for the retention of abortion services was formed, and the pro-choice side won the support of the New Brunswick Council on the Status of Women.

Just before the announced resumption

of services at the hospital, the Right to Life Association published an 18-page newspaper supplement containing the names of 33,000 people who had signed an anti-abortion petition.

Caddick reported at the news conference that there was almost a 98% recommendation among the medical staff that the hospital carry on with abortion services as it had in the past. But the anti-choicers have not given up the fight and pro-choice forces have a continuing struggle - fortunately with the hospital on their side.

### Tell Us Your News

Is something happening in your community that we should know about? You are our eyes and ears. Let us hear from you. Send clippings, letters, news, and articles for the newsletter.

When sending news clippings, please write the name of the paper and the date right on the clipping and make sure that all parts of the article are included.

### Are you moving?

Don't forget to send us your new address. Just attach your newsletter label to one of the free post office cards and write your new address too. We don't want to lose you.



Ministre de la Justice et  
procureur général du Canada

Minister of Justice and  
Attorney General of Canada

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0H8

October 22, 1982

Here's  
Mark MacGuigan's  
reply to  
the letter  
we published  
last issue.

Ms. Norma Scarborough  
President  
Canadian Abortion Rights  
Action League  
P.O. Box 935, Station Q  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4T 2P1

Dear Ms. Scarborough:

Your letter of August 15, 1982, addressed to my predecessor, has been brought to my attention. I also wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of September 22, 1982.

Under section 251 of the Criminal Code, the only facility which a provincial Minister of Health can approve for the purpose of the abortion law is a hospital in his province. The Honourable Graham Taylor was informed that where accredited acute care general hospitals have the ability to provide obstetrical treatment, they would appear to meet the requirements of section 251. The Code does not require the provision of obstetrical treatment by a formally organized obstetrical service.

As you know, access to therapeutic abortion facilities is a provincial matter. In that respect you will recall that the 1977 Report of the Committee on the Operation of the Abortion Law (the Badgley Report) found that an important element in the distribution of hospitals with therapeutic abortion committees was the relative distribution and direct accessibility to all eligible hospitals which served the population. Where the direct accessibility to all eligible hospitals was high, there was also a greater accessibility to hospitals with therapeutic abortion committees.

Eligibility was defined in terms of hospitals' major treatment functions, the size of their medical staff, and their type of facility. Of those institutions found ineligible, 317 public general hospitals were excluded by reason of

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provincial requirements (35% of all public general hospitals in Canada); 40 public general hospitals were excluded because of hospital requirements related to the size of the medical staff; 259 were identified as specialty treatment hospitals; and 78 private specialty hospitals and private general hospitals were excluded by provincial requirements. This would indicate that many women are denied access to medically supervised abortions in their own communities for reasons which are not directly related to the abortion law itself.

As to the element of safety, the Report found that the group of hospitals which accounted for 70.7% of therapeutic abortions done in Canada in 1974, consisted of the larger, well-equipped and more extensively staffed institutions whose number included many university-affiliated teaching hospitals. This group of hospitals had the lowest rate of complications at 2.9 per 100 abortions. Hospitals which did the fewest abortion procedures had a rate which was almost double at 5.6 per 100 abortions. This would indicate that, in many cases, small community hospitals doing few abortions may have a higher rate of complications than a larger hospital in another community. In such instances, it would be safer for a woman to apply for an abortion outside her own community. The Report also found that, as in the case of any other medical and surgical care which requires hospital-based treatment, the place women seek and obtain an induced abortion can vary for personal reasons.

It is not clear whether the recent poll conducted for your organization provided a statement of the present abortion law which permits therapeutic abortions under certain circumstances. The Badgley Committee Report found that two out of three persons in the Committee's 1976 national population survey did not know it was legal under any circumstances to obtain a therapeutic abortion. The Report also found that there was no consensus for major changes in the abortion law and that the concern of Canadians was with the equitable application of the law rather than the law itself. There is no indication that there has been a major shift in public opinion in this regard. The government therefore does not intend to introduce any changes to the abortion law at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Mark MacGuigan



SPAIN

A young woman, 18, was raped and became pregnant last summer. Because of Spain's current law she was forced to a back-street abortionist. The abortion was successful but it nearly cost her life. Now she faces criminal charges.

It is estimated that close to 300,000 women defy the law every year and Feminist groups say as many as 3,000 die at the hands of back-street abortionists. One reason for Spain's high abortion rate is the lack of knowledge about contraceptives. The pill was not legally available until 1978 and doctors still refuse to prescribe it to unmarried women.

The new Socialist government, however, wants to legalize abortion under the following circumstances: rape, when the mother's life is at stake, or when there is the risk of the child being deformed. The proposal is dividing Catholic Spain and prompting massive lobbying by opponents. A low-key campaign has begun to take shape to sway public opinion behind the government. The Deputy Prime Minister believes the Socialists can win.

The proposal is now before parliament and, if approved, could be in place as early as June.

UNITED STATES

Justice is Blind

Last year in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a judge who was publicly identified with anti-choice organizations refused to let an 11-year-old rape victim have an abortion.

Subsequently, this child-mother, herself a victim of neglect, has been charged with emotional neglect of her 5-month-old baby.

Anti-Abortion Worker Given Control of Family Planning Programs

In a move that appears to many observers as part of a campaign to destroy birth control programs, the Reagan administration has recently transferred control of government family planning programs to a political appointee who formerly headed an anti-abortion group.

Marjorie Mecklenburg, who as deputy assistant secretary for population affairs will now be responsible for family planning programs, has a history of work with anti-abortion groups. Health and Human Services officials defended the transfer of the programs from the Bureau of Community Health Services, run by career health employees, by citing a 1970 family planning law that gives the deputy assistant secretary jurisdiction over family planning.

Reagan Vows to Renew Efforts to Ban Abortion

In a recent address to Christian broadcast preachers, U.S. president Ronald Reagan was quoted as condemning "the excruciating pain the unborn must feel as their lives are snuffed away." Reagan promised the National Religious Broadcasters that he would revive in Congress the issues of abortion, classroom prayer and tax credits for parochial school tuition. He told the convention that people who believe that Government intervention violates a woman's rights would be right "if there were any proof that the unborn are not living human beings."

Membership Renewal

This year we have sent a separate membership renewal appeal. You should have received yours by now, and we hope you have renewed. We are dependant on your generous and continued support. And don't forget the new Childbirth by Choice Trust, which has charitable status and can issue receipts for income tax purposes.

SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD DISTRIBUTES RIGHT-TO-LIFE STAMPS

A CARAL member from Oshawa, Ont. explains in the article below how she felt and reacted to a recent decision by her separate school board to purchase anti-abortion

stamps from the Right to Life organization and distribute them to staff and students.

It took me a while before I could publicly stand up and pronounce my strong beliefs on abortion; but all it took was one newspaper article about an action by the Durham Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board.

Their plans involved sending home stamps with students aged ten and up for their parents to use, whether on an envelope or just stuck up around the house as a constant reminder that "abortion is wrong". There are two stamps - one is headed THE SEEDS OF LIFE - CHILDREN and on the bottom AVOD ABORTION. In the middle there is a picture of much happiness - parents hugging children and vice versa. The second one is even more disgusting - it is headed WHERE HAVE ALL OUR CHILDREN GONE...? and on the bottom ABORTION KILLS. The picture shows a woman in the forefront bent over, weeping and in her background fourteen crosses symbolizing deaths she had caused. This woman is obviously supposed to be feeling very guilty after what she had done.

My initial reaction to these stamps was total outrage; so much so that I immediately wrote a letter to the editor. As I suspected would be the case, the letter was published. I received many positive comments verbally but none so far in writing. My next bit of good news came when I read the editorial in the

same newspaper and found they, too, shared my views and had written a strong pro-choice editorial. However, the letters from the anti-abortionists have started pouring in, and myself and the editorialist are being strongly condemned.

My main concern against these stamps is obviously the strong anti-abortion overtone; but even more so I was appalled at them issuing stamps to young children with the hopes of indoctrinating their young minds against abortion and even possibly to stimulate hatred against the pro-choice alternative. We all know how impressionable young children are; how are they to even have a chance at forming their own opinions when only one side is presented?

I think it is important to inform you that I am and always have been a Catholic. My parents are very prominent in the church, have attended the same church for thirty years; and are very involved in running the church groups such as the Knights of Columbus, C.W.L. and St. Vincent de Paul. Because of this I knew the letter would not go unnoticed.

I feel there comes a time in everyone's life when they must put their beliefs and values ahead of their families and friends. By that I mean that you risk losing a friend or two, but if you feel strongly enough towards something that is all that matters. Another point I would like to make is that if any of you are planning on writing let-

ters, take advice from one who learned from her mistake. I wrote my letter directly after reading the article when I was absolutely livid and mailed it right away. What I should have done was waited until I cooled down so I could present my case without so much emotion.

In speaking on the abortion issue, one thing I always keep in mind is that there will never be equality between the sexes while women do not have control over their own bodies.

A Member from Oshawa

The following press release was issued on February 5, 1983:

#### INTERVENORS NOT ALLOWED IN BOROWSKI CHALLENGE OF THE ABORTION LAW

The interests of millions of Canadian women were denied a hearing last week when an attempt by the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League to intervene in the case of Joe Borowski vs. the federal government failed.

CARAL determined to fight Joe Borowski when he was granted standing in the Supreme Court of Canada in December 1981 to challenge the Criminal Code provision that allows abortions under certain circumstances. On Tuesday, January 25, 1983, however, the Hon. Mr. Justice

Matheson of the Saskatchewan Queen's Bench denied an application by CARAL to intervene in the case of Joe Borowski vs. the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Finance of Canada. The onus now falls on the federal government to ensure that women do not lose their already limited access to abortion.

Morris Manning, CARAL'S lawyer, has written to Mark MacGuigan, federal Minister of Justice, demanding assurances that the government will conduct a high-profile case by means of cross-examination of Borowski's witnesses and presentation of its own evidence. CARAL has further stated that it will take legal proceedings of its own if the government fails to mount a proper defence.

#### ANGLICAN CHURCH REPORT SUPPORTS RIGHT TO ABORTION

The Anglican Church of Canada will reportedly publish a report this month saying that abortion may be morally permissible if, for economic or social reasons, a pregnant woman's physical health or sanity is threatened.

Although the 1980 general synod of the church rejected abortion "for reasons of convenience or economic or social hardship", the Globe and Mail (Jan. 24, 1983) quotes the report by a subcommittee of the Primate's task force on human life as saying:

"It is not reasonable to maintain that the mother must be the only one prepared to sacrifice her life or health or sanity for her unborn child. The fetal 'right to life' is a diminished right if ... it stands in the way of the woman's health or sanity."

The committee recognized such factors as real economic hardship, lack of a stable partner, too many family responsibilities or unresolved marital conflict as circumstances in which abortion may be a moral decision which should not be denied the woman.

The report, which has been approved as a pastoral resource by the church's National Executive Council also advocates equal access to legal abortion and calls on the medical profession to develop guidelines for its members and hospital abortion committees.

#### CARAL SLIDE-TAPE SHOW AVAILABLE FOR RENTAL

Cost: \$10.00 plus postage and insurance

Tapes may be rented for two week periods or by special arrangement

Please write to the National Office or call 1-416-961-1507

## THANKS TO YOU ITS WORKING

Media Fund Update - To date we have received over \$12,000 in donations. A very good response from our membership and we thank all of you who have given so generously.

We also appreciate the suggestions that many of you included with your donation. Many of the suggestions have been undertaken - most notable are: release of the Gallup Poll to the media (it made the front page of the Globe and Mail);

letter with the results to federal and provincial MPs; TV and Radio phone-in shows across the country - most recently Hamilton, Winnipeg, and Regina. The results have been extensively used at the local level by all our chapters and the response to the results have been extremely favourable.

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## what was said

HANSARD

December 6, 1982

### CRIMINAL CODE

#### PROPOSED OPENING OF ABORTION CLINIC IN MANITOBA

##### QUERY RESPECTING AMENDMENT OF CODE

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, in view of the situation in which we find ourselves, namely, that the Criminal Code has some very specific requirements concerning the setting up of therapeutic abortion committees in hospitals before the process can be undertaken, is the Minister now considering amendments to the Criminal Code which would prevent, or at least put a prohibition on the opening of such abortion clinics, rather than leaving the law as it is?

see Toronto  
article in  
Across Canada

**Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Madam Speaker, there really is no need for additional law. It is in the hands of the Provinces. In this case, the Province of Manitoba, to determine what is an accredited hospital. A Province may even decide that a free-standing clinic of this kind should be classed as a hospital, although I am not aware that any Province has yet done that. Therefore all aspects of the problem as they affect the situation in Manitoba are in the hands of the provincial Government and in particular, in the hands of the Attorney General. I see no role for the federal authorities. Madam Speaker, and no, we are not contemplating changes to the abortion law at this time.