

FEMINIST
PARTY of
CANADA

NEWS NOUVELLES

JULY 1979
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FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA PARTI FEMINISTE DU CANADA BOX 5717 STATION A TORONTO ONTARIO M5W 1A0

The Toronto Sun, Monday June 11, 1979

Feminist Party is born

Standing Room Only.

No, not at a bar. At a political meeting — for women.

Yesterday, 600 women, and a smattering of men, gathered at 252 Bloor St. W. to discuss the formation of a Feminist Party Of Canada. It looks as if it's on its way.

The first public meeting of the FPC started out different from most political meetings. Members of the University Alumnae Dramatic Club read feminist works; Leo Hoicka sang feminist songs. This political party means to be different.

Speakers discussed the issues that provided the catalyst for a Feminist Party: women are poorly represented in the provincial and federal legislatures (six of 125, 11 of 282, one federal cabinet minister).

Margaret Evans, vice-principal for the Toronto Board of Education, recounted the record of women who have made it in the existing political parties, and lamented the fact that the voice for feminism trails off as their credibility is threatened.

Laura Sabia, feminist and Sun columnist, was there — playing devil's advocate. She is not against the party, but she is not convinced it will work. "What makes us think we can unite women under a feminist banner?" she asked. She cautioned that women in politics need energy and money, and that maybe women could take refuge under an existing umbrella, in an already-established political party.

Angela Miles, a lecturer in the social sciences

department at Atkinson College, saw it — and said it — a little differently. In the early phases women formed rape crisis centre, alternate health care, pressure groups.

"We changed ourselves and we're changing the women in Canada. Now, it's a new question: How do we translate that new consciousness into action?"

Mary O'Brien put the icing on the cake. Applause grew into cheers as she riddled the male umbrella with holes. A professor of the sociology of education at OISE, Ms. O'Brien mentioned another Sunday for women — Mother's Day.

"We're allowed one day

to celebrate being a woman — one in every 365." That's not enough for Mary O'Brien.

"Feminism is growing, not because it's a good theory, but because if we don't do it, we won't be around.

We aren't going to build a new world on vision alone — but we're not going to build one without it," she concluded.

Judging by the cheers, a lot of women share that vision.

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A 90 minute tape cassette of the first public meeting of the Feminist Party of Canada is available at the cost of \$5.00. It includes the two poems: IT HAS BEEN SAID by Sheila MacIntyre and SEPARATION by Gail Fox read by Jane Carnwarth and Sally Jay of the University Alumnae Dramatic Club, and songs ANGRY WOMEN IN THE STREETS by Rita MacNeil and BREAD AND ROSES performed by Leo Hoicka. The introduction by Margaret Evans, the statement by Fiona Nelson and talks by Laura Sabia, Angela Miles and Mary O'Brien follow and the tape concludes with part of the discussion with the audience.

The tape, membership forms, Feminist Party of Canada NEWS/NOUVELLES, publications and press clippings are available from: The Feminist Party of Canada, Box 5717, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1A0.

TOWARDS A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN POLITICS

On June 10, 1979, in Toronto, approximately 600 women and a small number of men attended the first public meeting of the Feminist Party of Canada. The success of this meeting lies, in part, in the realization of increasing numbers of women, and men, that the lack of a feminist perspective in politics can no longer be tolerated. Although women have increased their attempts to become elected federal representatives - the number of women seeking office rose from four in 1921 to 142 in 1979, the number of women who won seats in those 58 years rose only from one to ten. The dismal prognosis is that, at that rate, we will need another 842 years to achieve equal representation at the federal level. We cannot and will not wait that long.

Marg Evans

It is crippling for feminists to have to carry on their political work as if the established parties provided a suitable element for it. We cannot consider ourselves well served by a system which treats our perspective as removed and minor, associated with a small sphere of issues. The parties have not proven that they have the philosophical room for women. There is no promise in their histories of any satisfactory future growth. The few women who are in office find very little scope for feminist-informed action. The problem stretches to a serious difference in the conception of process. The very journey from a different base, the environment of autonomy, must accommodate the feminist spirit better than could any exertion on behalf of the established parties. Feminism is a level of cognition and a manifold politics which has an application to all matters of importance. This means it is a vision more than sufficient to inform a political party. It means that as regards public politics, its best effect will come when it has a stream of power wholly its

own, associated with a method of its own creation. We believe that the provision of a public political body is an essential service to feminism in its role of changer. In some material areas, the lack of such a body keeps feminist activity at the 'maintenance level of only not dying.'

As the most momentous politics existing, feminism can provide all the elements for an imaginative and comprehensive platform. There are the threads of thought in countless areas woven into it. We do not feel that the fabric is too loosely-knit to support our plan. There is the strong dynamic toward concerted struggle. The Party will move in the context of a feminist network which can sustain it with counsel; this is what makes it capable of the breadth required. It must by its nature relate deeply to the wide women's movement. It supposes the same humanitarian vision which has been the great cause of action in that movement for years. The June 10 meeting answered our own questions about the potential of this party. It now depends for its expansion on the self-organization of feminists across the country, and on the dialogue among them. The committees are greatly augmented since the public meeting. They were modelled with the special intention that they be flexible and inclined to grow. In their plan they highlight the areas of policy development and communications, both of which rely on response and initiative within the movement. We hope that the feminists of that movement will, at this particular time, help us encompass the rise of a Feminist Party of Canada.

Caoran Sowton

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Le 10 juin 1979, près de 600 femmes et quelques hommes ont assisté à la première

réunion publique du parti féministe du Canada à Toronto. Le succès de cette rencontre vient en parti de ce que de plus en plus de femmes, et d'hommes, réalisent qu'il n'est plus possible de tolérer le manque de perspective féministe en politique. Bien qu'un nombre croissant de femmes aient manifesté leur désir de devenir des députés fédéraux (le nombre de candidates a passé de 4 en 1921 à 142 en 1979), le nombre de femmes qui ont été élues au parlement fédéral a passé de seulement une à dix au cours de ces 58 ans. Le sombre pronostic qui en découle est qu'il faudra 842 ans, à ce rythme, pour que les femmes obtiennent une représentativité égale au niveau fédéral. Nous ne pouvons et ne devons attendre si longtemps.

C'est une situation débilatante pour les féministes de devoir faire leur travail politique comme si les partis politiques traditionnels leur offraient les éléments nécessaires. Nous ne pouvons prétendre être bien servies par un système qui considère que notre perspective est lointaine et mineure, associée à un champ restreint de problèmes. Les parties n'ont pas prouvé qu'ils avaient philosophiquement de la place pour les femmes. Et leur histoire ne contient rien qui laisse prévoir une évolution satisfaisante dans le futur. Les quelques femmes qui sont élues ont très peu de champ pour l'action féministe. Le problème s'étend jusqu'à une sérieuse différence dans la conceptualisation du développement. Un cheminement à partir d'une base différente, un environnement autonome, devraient mieux accommoder l'esprit féministe que tout effort éventuel de la part des parties traditionnels. Le féminisme comprend un niveau de connaissance, un éventail de politiques qui englobent de nombreuses sphères d'intérêts. Ce qui signifie que le féminisme représente une vision suffisamment étendue pour bien informer un parti politique. Ce que signifie que, en ce qui a trait à la politique

publique, ses meilleurs résultats découleront d'un courant de pouvoir et d'une méthode de travail qui lui sont totalement propre. Nous croyons que la création d'un corps politique public est essentielle au féminisme dans son rôle d'innovateur. Dans certains secteurs essentiels, l'absence d'un tel corps politique maintient l'activité féministe à un niveau qui l'empêche tout juste de mourir.

Le féminisme peut offrir tous les éléments pour une plate-forme électorale immaninative et compréhensive, étant donné qu'il représente les politiques les plus dynamiques qui existent présentement. On y retrouve, étroitement tissées, les lignes de pensées d'un nombre incalculable de sphères. Elles sont tissées assez étroitement pour supporter notre plan. C'est là que réside notre force dynamique pour une lutte concertée. Le parti progressera dans le contexte d'un réseau féministe qui pourra la supporter avec des conseillers adéquats; voilà ce qui donnera au parti la dimension nécessaire. Il devra par sa nature même se rattacher profondément au grand mouvement des femmes. Il devra contenir la même vision humanitaire qui a été la principale cause de toutes les actions de mouvement depuis des années. La réunion du 10 juin a répondu à nos propres questions concernant le potentiel de ce parti. Son expansion dépend maintenant de la capacité des féministes du pays de s'organiser et de dialoguer entre elles. Les comités se sont considérablement agrandis depuis la réunion publique. Ils avaient été conçus pour permettre la flexibilité et l'expansion surtout dans les secteurs de développement de politiques et de communication, qui dépendent tous deux de la réponse et de l'initiative à l'intérieur du mouvement. Nous espérons que les féministes de ce mouvement pourront aider, à ce moment précis, à maintenir l'ascension du parti féministe du Canada.

EDUCATION & ORIENTATIONALL-DAY EDUCATIONAL

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1979
11:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

An all-day educational on contemporary feminism and its relationship to the Feminist Party of Canada will be held on Saturday, September 29, 1979, at St. Paul's Church, 121 Avenue Road, Toronto, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be speakers and small group discussions, allowing us all to share our visions and versions of feminism. We will also be presenting reports from the committees which have been meeting through the summer, and expect discussion on direction and content. We have reprinted several selections of basic feminist material; if you would like to receive these before the September meeting, please write to the Education Committee at the Feminist Party's address.

ORIENTATION

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1979
10:00 - 11:00 A.M.

10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on the same day at the same place, the first orientation meeting for new and prospective members of the Party will be held (see Outreach Committee report). Everyone welcome.

* * *

STUDY GROUPS: There has been interest expressed in forming feminist study groups, consciousness-raising groups, or small groups with a particular focus. We would like to get some groups started as soon as possible. If you are interested, please contact: Barbara Pulling, 596-5340 (daytime), 534-4555 (evening).

***** DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR *****

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1979: *Strategy Meeting, St. Paul's Church, 121 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario, 2:00 p.m.*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1979: *Orientation to the Feminist Party of Canada, St. Paul's Church, 121 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1979: *All-day Educational, St. Paul's Church, 121 Avenue Road, Toronto, Ontario, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1979: *50th Anniversary of the Person's Case*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1979: *Commemorative Celebration of the Person's Case*

MEMBERSHIP

The Feminist Party of Canada would like to welcome its new members from

Vancouver	Amherstburg
Sudbury	Cayuga
Milverton	Guelph
Waterloo	Don Mills
Downsview	Etobicoke
Islington	Scarborough
Weston	Willowdale
Burlington	Cherrywood
King City	Hamilton
Midland	Mississauga
Oakville	Port Credit
Thornhill	Tottenham
Belleville	Deep River
Kingston	Ottawa
Peterborough	Toronto

Perhaps you would like to start a chapter of the Feminist Party of Canada in your area. We would be pleased to help you start - with ideas, advice, materials and, if possible, personnel.

Or, perhaps you would just like to get in touch with other members. What about forming a group to come down to our all-day educational and orientation, or our commemorative celebration of the Person's Case?

Let us know how we can help you.

OCTOBER EIGHTEENTH

The dictionary definition of 'person' is - a human being. While Webster's makes it clear what a person is, our male oriented society at one time would not recognize women as persons. A human being is a non-animal. By not recognizing woman as a human being was woman to remain a working animal without legal rights?

Historical cases of women struggling for legal recognition go back many years. Women were refused the vote. Elections were considered invalid when women voted and women were found incapable of holding elected office.

Five Canadians, in August 1927, petitioned the cabinet to direct the Supreme Court of Canada to decide if women could be called to the Senate. These women: Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Edwards, Louise McKinney and Irene Parlby, began an issue that culminated in a victory for women.

According to Mary Eberts, "those who resisted women's claim to personhood did so on the ground that legally, they were incapable of taking on the function of personhood." Under the British North America Act of 1867, women were not persons, and without legal amendment to the Act, the Government of Canada had no legal power to appoint women to the Senate.

What was begun in 1927 as a petition found its end in the Privy Council at Westminster in London, England - the only recourse for amendments to the B.N.A. Act to this day.

On October 18, 1929, the judgement was handed down, that women were in fact persons. Therefore, October 18 is a day of celebration. Even though we knew it all along, it was now made official for men. We had legally become persons. It is a bittersweet occasion. Bitter, that such a case had to be brought before the court; sweet, that there was legal action and legal victory.

It is an occasion to commemorate. Your group can participate by planning an hour, an afternoon or a day to draw attention to 'The Person Case', in your town or neighbourhood. Let the fact be known that such a case exists, that such a victory was recorded.

The Feminist Party of Canada plans a commemorative get together on Saturday, October 20, 1979. Details will be forthcoming. Hopefully, you will be able to attend and join other equally enthusiastic 'persons' to make the event a spectacular success.

Barb Smatlaneka

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA PARTI FEMINISTE DU CANADA
P.O. BOX 5717, STATION 'A', TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5W 1A0

NOM _____

ADRESSE _____

TELEPHONE _____

1. Je désire que l'on continue à m'envoyer NEWS/NOUVELLES _____
2. Mon nom peut être employé dans NEWS/NOUVELLES comme contact pour le parti féministe du Canada, dans ma région _____
3. J'aimerais devenir membre du parti féministe du Canada pour \$5.00 _____
personnes âgées, étudiants, parents seuls, personnes à l'assistance sociale pour \$1.00 _____
4. Ci-inclus ma contribution _____

Un parti féministe est créé à Toronto

TORONTO - Près de 700 femmes et quelques hommes viennent de lancer, à Toronto, le premier parti féministe du Canada.

Le besoin de mettre sur pied un tel parti vient de discussions qui ont eu lieu depuis le mois de février entre plusieurs féministes de Toronto qui en avaient assez du peu de représentativité des femmes dans la politique canadienne.

...Seulement 11 femmes siégeront à Ottawa, et seulement une fait parti du cabinet, soit Mme Flora MacDonald.

Le comité a établi qu'au rythme actuel, il faudra attendre 842 ans avant d'atteindre une représentativité égale au niveau fédéral puisque, entre 1921 et 1974, le nombre de candidates est passé de un à neuf.

...Malgré tous les handicaps inhérents à un parti féministe, la décision fut prise de lancer l'idée et de tenter d'avoir un congrès de fondation d'ici l'automne ou le printemps prochain. Déjà des contacts s'effectuent à travers le Canada. En moins d'une semaine, grâce à l'intérêt suscité dans les médias d'information, des groupes féministes à travers la province et le pays manifestent leur intérêt pour cette idée.

...Le parti embryonnaire a récolté environ 125 cartes de membres. Les médias écrits et électroniques ont largement parlé de ce moment dit "historique", tant aux bulletins de nouvelles qu'aux émissions d'affaires publiques et dans les éditoriaux. Huit comités à l'intérieur du parti préparent maintenant les bases d'une constitution pour le premier congrès. Hommes et femmes, anglo et français, intéressés au parti sont invités à participer à son élaboration.

La perspective féministe a été rendue synonyme "d'humaniste" au cours de cette réunion de Toronto. En terminant, Mme O'Brien a déclaré qu'il fallait un tel parti humaniste parce que "les conditions sont telles dans le monde que si nous ne le créons pas maintenant, nous ne serons plus là dans quelque temps".

EXTRAITS de l'article par
PATRICIA DUMAS
correspondance particulière,
LE DEVOIR, 13 juin 1979.

FEMINIST PARTY OF CANADA PARTI FEMINISTE DU CANADA
P.O. BOX 5717, STATION 'A', TORONTO, ONTARIO, M5W 1A0

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ TELEPHONE _____

1. I am interested in continuing to receive NEWS/NOUVELLES _____
2. My name may be printed in NEWS/NOUVELLES as a contact for the Feminist Party of Canada organization in my area _____
3. I would like to purchase membership in the Feminist Party of Canada at \$5.00 _____ seniors, students, single parents, welfare at \$1.00 _____
4. I enclose a donation _____

COMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA COMMITTEE

The Communications & Media Committee of the Feminist Party of Canada has two primary goals: communicating with party members to keep them informed of party activities and directions, and presenting a public face via press releases, press conferences, meetings with journalists, etc.

The Communications & Media Committee has explored the following methods to accomplish these goals. Any additional suggestions or any volunteers would be most welcome.

1. Meetings with journalists, individually or in groups, to educate and explain party policies and functions.
2. Publication of a major magazine article on Why The Feminist Party Now.
3. Regular press releases.
4. Continued media exposure for the party via newspapers, magazines, radio and television interviews.
5. Speakers for various social and educational functions.

Contact person: Ann Pappert, 921-5318

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CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

The constitution of a political party is a written and explicit document setting forth the laws governing the operation of the party. It outlines the structure of the party and the functions of the components comprising the structure.

Since a constitution reflects the philosophy of a political party, our philosophy of feminism, or humanitarianism, will govern the preparation of our constitution.

In order to be flexible, a constitution must allow for change in society; thus, an amending provision is usually written into the constitution to permit additions, or deletions, to the existing rules.

Once the constitution is drafted, each article or provision is voted on by party members at the founding convention for the party. Majority agreement must be reached before the acceptance of each article as law.

Examples of some of the areas covered by a constitution are: name of party, purpose and aims; location of head office; membership (full, associate, honorary); membership fees; who may join; voting rights; executive (number of members, duties, etc.); rules governing the cessation of a term of office, etc.; committees (structure and function); rules of procedures; amendment clause and rules governing the effecting of an amendment; and many more.

Since the preparation of a constitution for the Feminist Party of Canada will involve a great deal of research and legal expertise, we welcome persons who are lawyers, or persons who have the time and inclination for this type of undertaking.

Prior to June 10, 1979, (our 'going-public' date), a few members of the Constitution Committee met to discuss the approach to take for the drafting of our constitution. New members of this committee will be contacted shortly for a meeting.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Coordinating Committee of the Feminist Party of Canada is anxious to hear of the formation of Feminist Party of Canada groups wherever they occur across the country. A group may consist of two or three or more women discussing, for example, the fact that only ten women were elected (out of 282) as Members of Parliament in the May Federal election.

No matter the size or location of your group, please communicate with us in order that you may participate in the founding convention of the Feminist Party of Canada. This will probably take place in the fall of 1980.

In addition to your support, we need to hear your suggestions regarding policy, constitution, fund raising, etc. for this new political party.

For further information, printed materials, buttons, and tape cassettes, please write to us at Feminist Party of Canada, P.O. Box 5717, Station 'A', Toronto, Ontario, M5W 1A0.

* * *

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Contact: Pat Hainey, 791-7414 or Barbara Pulling, 534-4555.

Recognizing the vital importance of education in the feminist struggle and in the development of the Feminist Party of Canada, the Education Committee has identified as its priorities work in the following three areas:

1. Resource Materials

Initially, the Education Committee is concerned with finding and reproducing a selection of materials which reflects the existing body of work dealing with contemporary feminism. We are in the process of reading, discussing, and choosing important articles on fundamental feminist issues, so that a bank of resource materials can be developed. As well as making these articles available to the larger membership, the Education Committee expects to act as a resource for other committees in need of special kinds of information. Eventually, we hope to produce some of our own materials, perhaps in the form of a feminist reader.

The possibility of setting up a library, with emphasis on maintaining a comprehensive journal collection, will be considered when the Party obtains permanent office space.

2. Study Groups

It is essential that interested women have the opportunity to participate in study groups, consciousness raising groups, or small groups focussed around particular issues. The Education Committee will be responsible for setting up these groups as well as providing them with materials for discussion. Assistance will also be provided to women wishing to start groups outside of Toronto (see Membership section, P.4).

3. Educationals

Educationals will play an important role in the evolution of the Party's feminist vision, and in allowing members to develop and share their own ideas. These events can take a variety of forms: workshops, lectures, public meetings, film screenings, etc. The first educational, a day-long forum on contemporary feminism and its relationship to the Feminist Party of Canada, will be held on September 29, 1979, at St. Paul's United Church (see Education & Orientation section, P.4).

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NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Contact: Kitty Bourne, 368-8488

The two major aspects of NEWS/NOUVELLES are:

1. to provide you with information about the Feminist Party of Canada;
2. to provide a vehicle for the exchange of news and ideas.

NEWS/NOUVELLES is the tool whereby we can keep you informed about the Feminist Party of Canada, its activities, the committees, meetings, etc. We also hope that it will develop into a forum, a place of exchange of ideas, views and questions. And also news of Feminist Party of Canada groups as they develop across the country.

Would you like to write an article? Do you have ideas or suggestions of what you would like to see in NEWS/NOUVELLES? Would you like to have your name published as the Feminist Party of Canada contact in your area? The committee welcomes all submissions - whether they be news or views.

NEWS/NOUVELLES can also be a way of letting other people know about the Feminist Party of Canada. So why not post it in your group's office or pass it along to a friend.

* * *

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Contact: Gill Lloyd-Jones, 826-6098 (home)
924-4141 ext. 5452 (office)

The Outreach Committee has met several times and we have developed a general sense of our function in the Party.

1. We will provide regular orientation meetings for women who have just joined, or are thinking of joining the Party. These meetings will provide an informal context where the decisions already taken by the Party, about structure and general political perspectives and so on, can be discussed. We hope, this way, to help women find their way easily into the kind of relationship with ongoing activity that best suits their interests, skills and time. See Education & Orientation (P.4) for information about the first orientation meeting which will be held on September 29.

2. We see ourselves also as a back up resource for women in neighbourhoods, work places and interest areas (i.e. nurses, single parents, senior citizens, students) who are organizing groups. We can put these women in touch with women in the same area or women with experience in similar kinds of organizing. And we can advise them on what resources are available in terms of written materials, films, speakers, etc. Women interested in starting a group of any kind might like to come to a few Outreach Committee meetings to begin with. We would also very much appreciate these women sharing with our committee, and, through us, other women, their experience as they begin organizing.
3. We are also in the process of developing a programme of outreach in which we initiate speaking engagements (in neighbourhood libraries, housing projects, work places, classrooms, clubs, etc.) about the Feminist Party and specific issues of concern to the Party.
4. Eventually we will also be able to facilitate links between the groups which are established and contribute to the development of a structure of party built on the activity and concerns of women active where they live and work.

* * *

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Policy Development Committee expects to provide the Feminist Party with the informed analysis it requires to discuss, in a meaningful and thorough fashion, those issues with which the Party will be concerned.

In the course of the first meeting of the Policy Development Committee, held July 11, it was generally acknowledged that we have, in fact, several tasks before us. Major policy areas must be identified and explored, of course, but just as important is that we, in the committee and in the Party as a whole, continually develop our understanding of politics and of those areas our policy statements will cover. To that end, an on-going concern of the committee will be to explore the vast body of material that has already been produced by feminists and other progressive groups, and to strengthen our links with those groups.

The members of the Policy Development Committee itself represent a wide variety of interests, expertise and experience, and these will doubtless be shared at subsequent meetings, and supplemented by more formal study of those fields with which we may not be sufficiently familiar. Areas chosen for preliminary examination include: legal and social concerns, economics, education, human rights, energy, the environment, conservation, employment and nutrition.

It was felt that another function of the Policy Development Committee must be to be aware of feminist issues as they arise in the media and elsewhere, and to provide the background necessary for the Feminist Party of Canada to respond or lend its support in an appropriate manner. It was brought to our attention at this first meeting that the Association of Women Executives will be presenting its brief on Equal Pay For Work Of Equal Value to the Ontario Government in September, and between now and that time some members of the Policy Development Committee will be examining this brief and related material with an eye towards supporting A.W.E. in its cause.

The next meeting of the Policy Development Committee will be July 25, 7:30 p.m., in the South Sitting Room of Hart House at the University of Toronto.

For information about this committee, contact Janka Seydegart, 921-1849