



Suite 306,  
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Toronto, Ontario  
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Fall 1984

Dear Friend,

What did August 15th mean to Margaret B.?

Margaret is 72. She's a widow living in a one bedroom apartment with a hotplate and a shared bathroom. Like a million other Canadian women over 65, she is living below the poverty line. Margaret worked hard all her life. She raised three children and still held down a paying job for long periods. Now, in her "Golden Years", she is lonely and poor.

On the evening of August 15th, Margaret turned her little TV set into the historic debate on women's issues by Canada's political leaders.

That night she heard the promise of a better life for Canadian women.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has worked for years to make the political parties confront the facts of life for Canadian women.

- . 36% of female single parents live below the poverty line
- . 3 out of 4 women over 65 who live alone -- widows, divorced and single -- are poor
- . for every \$1 a man earns, a woman earns only 59¢
- . a woman university graduate earns on average the same as a man with a high school diploma.

In the election campaign, we heard promises about the enforcement of equal pay for work of equal value. We were promised pensions for homemakers. We were promised equal rights for Indian women.

Now we have a new government. Will the promises be remembered?

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women is working to change the bleak picture that is real life for Margaret B.

We are a non-partisan women's lobby group, and we are successful.

We develop fair, realistic alternatives to legislation that is unfair to women. We present briefs to government and government commissions and we rally women Canada-wide.

We've accomplished a lot with this approach and on August 15th -- in fact, throughout the campaign -- we put women's issues at the top of Canada's political agenda.

We need to keep them there. But to do that we need your help. We need to raise \$160,000 to carry on NAC's lobbying work.

Your donation to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women will ensure that women are heard. Because NAC is a political lobby group, the government doesn't allow us to give you a tax receipt. I know you understand how important this lobbying is and will give to NAC.

Donations to NAC Charitable and Educational Trust, through which we fund our research and education projects, are tax deductible. In the past we have used the Trust Fund to underwrite such activity as research on federal-provincial funding and the leaders' televised debate on women's issues.

You can donate directly to NAC (use blue reply coupon) or to the Trust (use white reply coupon). Many of our supporters split their donations.

However you can do it, please contribute today so we can build on that historic August 15th breakthrough.

Sincerely,



Doris Anderson  
Past President

P.S. Margaret B. was eight years old when Canadian women won the right to vote in federal elections. Let's not wait another lifetime for equality. Send your donation to NAC or the NAC Trust right now.

## Debate historic benchmark for women

By John Ferguson  
*Southam News*

TORONTO — There were no knock-out punches landed by any of the leaders Wednesday night — few were even thrown — and it's doubtful the debate changed the course of the election.

But as a formal acknowledgement that so-called "women's issues" are now hot stuff politically, the evening was clearly historic.

"It is a large step forward in political terms for the women of Canada," said Chaviva Hosek, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the sponsor. "I have never seen political leaders so well briefed on women's issues."

The numbers showing how important these issues are to men and women voters have been in the pollsters' data banks for some time. But that three federal party leaders would appear on one stage for two hours, debating these issues in both languages in a live broadcast, is a new benchmark.

From now on, it is going to be hard for politicians to ignore the blatant discrimination women face in the market-place or the abuse they endure from pornographers, rapists or wife beaters.

For Ed Broadbent, it was familiar territory because his New Democratic Party has been long out front of the other two party leaders in putting together policies that address these issues.

Unlike Turner and Mulroney, Broadbent didn't find it necessary to closet himself for many hours with specialists on women's issues to prepare.

He acted as an effective foil throughout the evening, challenging Brian Mulroney and John Turner whenever they lapsed into generalities.

When Turner waffled on the question of day care, offering the familiar excuse of federal politicians that it is an area of provincial

jurisdiction, Broadbent scoffed. That was exactly what the Liberals had said 20 years ago about medicare, he said.

Adequate child care in state-run facilities should be as fundamental a right as health care and the federal government should spend \$300 million immediately to get such a system underway, Broadbent said.

When Turner countered that such a system would cost \$600 million and a federal-provincial agreement would have to be worked out, Broadbent said he should go ahead anyway and offer the money to provinces ready to take action.

When Mulroney said women didn't have equal access to credit from the banks, Broadbent asked whether he would make banks lend a set proportion of their funds to companies run by women.

Mulroney ducked the question.

But as Turner reminded everyone in his closing remarks, Broadbent won't become PM. That makes panelist Kaye Sigurjonsen's final question the most important of the evening.

She pointed out that so far there has been too much talk and only a little action.

"Why should we trust you now?" she asked.

Turner gave his stock reply about his commitment to women's equality and cited the record number of women candidates running for the Liberals in this election. Mulroney said he would appear before them again to be judged after he had a chance to act.

Both clearly will be held to account, either as prime minister or as opposition leader.

"They sounded sincere to me," said Hosek. "We'll see after Sept. 4 if they are sincere."

Fifty-two per cent of the electorate will be watching.