



EQUAL TIMES

A Publication of the Federal N.D.P. Women's Organizer

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Parental leave

Over 50% of Canadian women are now working for wages and trends indicate that the rate of women's participation in the workforce will continue to increase.

Maternity leave benefits allowed under Unemployment Insurance (15 weeks at 60% of salary, to a maximum of \$210 per week) are inadequate and punitive. Present legislation is discriminatory regarding paternity leave and leave for adoptive parents.

Some recent gains regarding paid maternity leave have been made by unions, with the employer paying the difference between the 60% allowed under Unemployment Insurance and the negotiated percentage of salary. Unfortunately, non-unionized (and a number of unionized) women will probably never have access to fully paid maternity leave if it continues to be based on a benevolent employer paying the difference.

The NDP recognizes that the care and well-being of our children is a social as well as an individual responsibility.

In January 1982 the NDP Federal Council endorsed a very progressive parental leave policy which recognizes that parenting is a joint responsibility and provides for:

- Nine months paid leave-of-absence at no loss of pay which may be shared by both parents, adoptive as well as natural parents.
- Accumulation of seniority and all benefits during the period of parental leave; where benefits are employer/employee shared, the employer's share shall be maintained by the employer.

- The right to return to the same job or its equivalent with no loss of credits.
- Protection of reproductive capacities and the fetus from potential workplace hazards with provision for temporary transfer to another job during the pregnancy without loss of seniority, pay or benefits.
- Provision for minimum of 10 days per year paid leave-of-absence for parental responsibilities.
- The amendment of the UI Act and of all labour codes to eliminate restrictive provisions affecting parental leave and maternity benefits in order that persons with family responsibilities may exercise their right to employment without discrimination.

The Liberals have set up an ad hoc committee to study the issue of maternity benefits. Lloyd Axworthy, Monique Bégin, Judy Erola and Donald Johnston are the Cabinet Ministers who form this committee. It's still not clear when their study will be completed. There are fears that this committee will recommend only minimal changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act to marginally improve the eligibility requirements and level of benefits.

Collective action can push government legislation toward a fully paid parental leave. You can make your support known by writing to the members of the ad hoc committee, to your union, to women's lobby groups and to elected representatives on the provincial/territorial and federal levels.

Women in politics

Newfoundland and Labrador

Election Day is April 6th. As of March 26th, 5 women had been nominated as NDP candidates.

- Nancy Riche - St. John's East
- Barbara Roberts - St. John's South
- Helen Porter - Mount Pearl
- Cynthia Wishart - Humber East
- Jennie Fenwick - Port au Port

New Brunswick

The election is expected sometime during 1982. One NDP woman has been nominated to date:

- Elizabeth Weir - York North

Saskatchewan

Five NDP women have been nominated in Saskatchewan. Election day is April 26th.

- Pat Atkinson - Saskatoon Nutana
- Chris Banman - Rosthern
- Elaine Driver - Weyburn
- Margaret Fern - Regina South
- Pat Krug - Melville

Alberta

An election is expected in 1983. Nine NDP women have been nominated to date:

- Leslie Bella - Edmonton Whitemud
- Marilyn Burnett - Edmonton Highlands
- Paulette Hoeberg - St. Albert
- Dolly Martin - Rocky Mountain House
- Catherine Martini - Calgary Bow
- Cathie McCreary - Taber-Warner
- Agnes Middleton - Calgary Mountain View
- Eileen Nesbitt - Calgary McKnight
- Kathy Wright - Edmonton Avonmore

Myrna Jarboe was the NDP candidate in the recent Olds-Didsbury by-election.

"... feminism without any political engagement, any political clout, any socialist emphasis, becomes just an exercise. It doesn't challenge any institutions. We have our fate in our hands. All we have to do is seize it."

- Kate Millet -

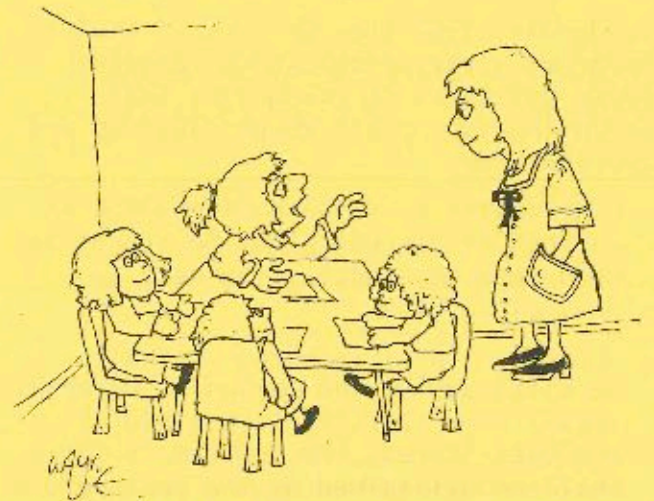
British Columbia

An election is anticipated sometime during 1982 and 8 NDP women have been nominated:

- Rosemary Brown, MLA - Burnaby Edmonds
- Carol Langford - Surrey-White Rock
- Patricia Marchak - Vancouver Point Grey
- Karen Sanford, MLA - Comox
- Jean Swanson - Vancouver Little Mountain
- Barbara Wallace, MLA - Cowichan-Malahat
- Joyce Whitman - Vancouver South
- Hilda Thomas - Vancouver Point Grey

Ontario

Federally, Lynn McDonald, Chairperson of the Ontario NDP Women's Committee, Ontario representative on the Participation of Women Committee and former President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, is one of the campaigners for the nomination in Broadview/Greenwood. The seat was left vacant when Bob Rae resigned upon his election as Leader of the Ontario NDP.



"It's not a tea party, it's a campaign meeting."

Borowski case

The NDP believes that abortion should be removed from the Criminal Code. A woman should have the freedom to choose, in consultation with her doctor, whether or not to continue an unplanned, unwanted or dangerous pregnancy.

At its meeting in January, the Participation of Women Committee moved to explore the possibility of intervention in the Borowski case in co-operation with other women's groups. The following editorial is from the Winter 1982 Newsletter of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL) of which POW is an affiliate member.

"The legal right to abortion is currently under its most serious attack since the inception of the current law in 1969. In a 7 to 2 decision, the Supreme Court of Canada has granted Joseph Borowski, an avowed opponent of a woman's right to choose abortion, legal standing to contest the law. This means that he has been given the right to argue his point of view on abortion in the courts.

Borowski contends Section 251 of the Criminal Code, which allows abortions to be performed under certain circumstances, should be declared invalid because it contravenes the Diefenbaker Bill of Rights. In his arguments, Borowski maintains that fetuses are entitled to the legal status of persons and are thus protected by the Bill of Rights.

The court also granted Borowski his legal costs, some \$70,000 to date, which were awarded against the federal government. The irony of this is that Canadian taxpayers (you and I) are paying to allow this man to challenge in the courts what is already a limited right to abortion.

This granting of standing represents a marked departure from previous decisions in the area. If Borowski wins his battle, abortion will become illegal again in Canada.

While it is unthinkable that one man could undermine legal access to safe abortion (however limited under the present law), the possibility that he might win is a very frightening one. His

recognition by the Supreme Court as a person with a right to be heard on this issue was a major victory in his fight to make abortion illegal once again.

The Board of Directors of CARAL has decided to take legal action to counter Borowski's case. At this writing there are several options open to us and we are in the process of deciding, in conjunction with legal counsel, which course will be the most viable.

Borowski is obviously determined to win. We are equally determined to stop him. This legal action could be long and will definitely be costly. But the cost in the lives and health of Canadian women will be even greater if he wins. We cannot afford to sit idly by and merely await the outcome of this blatant attack on our rights. If this battle is lost, even the small gains we made with the 1969 amendments will be gone."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Enclosed with this issue of Equal Times is a form letter directed to the Hon. Jean Chrétien, Minister of Justice. The letter urges the Justice department to vigorously defend the present legislation. No postage is required.

Equal Times is available
free of charge.

The editor invites comment on
matters raised in this news-
letter or other areas of con-
cern. Please write to:

Federal Women's Organizer
301 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 1R9

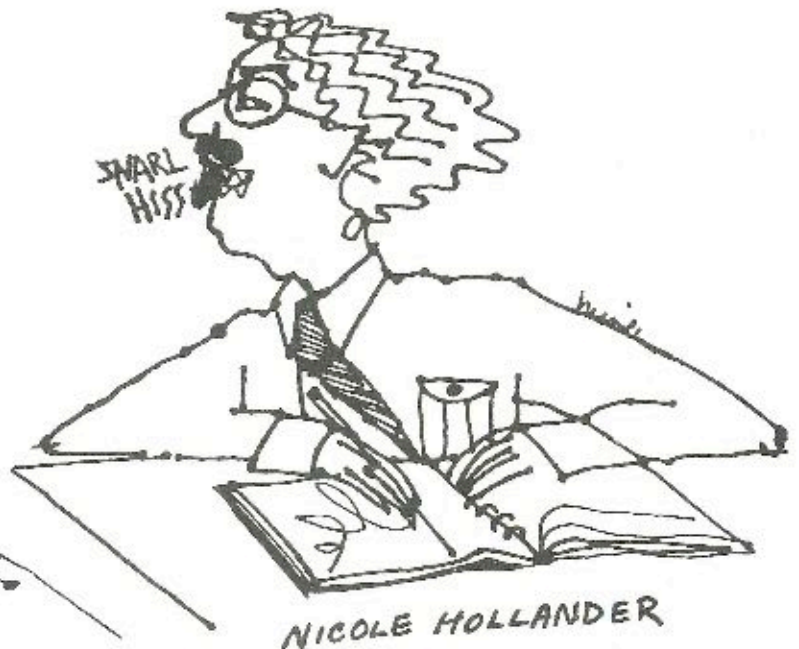
Voice on the hill

Affirmative Action

In Parliament on March 25th, MP Margaret Mitchell, NDP Status of Women critic, demanded that the government make affirmative action compulsory for the public service and all companies with Government contracts.

"It's just a bunch of platitudes," Mitchell said. "Until the Government itself enforces affirmative action, why should they (private companies)?"

Only 27 of the 750 private and public companies approached by the federal Affirmative Action Directorate in the past two years have agreed to sign contracts regarding changes in hiring policies to employ more women. Judy Erola, Minister in charge of the status of women, says she'll give the companies another year to get serious about affirmative action or face legislation; Lloyd Axworthy, Employment Minister, wants to avoid confrontation with employers.



NICOLE HOLLANDER

NDP CAUCUS COMMITTEE ON WOMEN

Acting upon a recommendation from the Participation of Women Committee, the NDP has formed a Federal Caucus Committee on Women. The Committee, chaired by NDP status of women critic Margaret Mitchell, is open to all NDP caucus members, specifically those with critic areas relating to women. The Committee meets once a month to discuss women's issues in the context of current parliamentary debate and to plan priorities and research for future action.

After an organizational meeting in early February, the Women's Committee met formally on February 17th and March 10th. Both meetings concentrated on critics reporting on the relationship between their areas and women's issues. Discussion ranged from pensions to concerns of rural women to employment and environmental safety.

Margaret Mitchell stated that "this committee will not only provide a focus for dialogue regarding women's issues but will also provide a valuable network for me as women's critic". She noted that "participation by male MPs has been consistent and enthusiastic" and that the topics raised at the first two meetings "indicate that our caucus has obviously not neglected the importance of women in Canadian society. With the Caucus Committee on Women, we now have a formal structure for exchange of ideas and encouragement."

The Women's Report

THE WOMEN'S REPORT: A Federal Perspective, is a new publication of the NDP Caucus. This newsletter will highlight NDP MPs' concerns about women's issues. The first edition was devoted to parental leave.

If you wish to receive the newsletter, drop a line to Margaret Mitchell, MP, or Pauline Jewett, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. They'd also appreciate receiving your comments, ideas and suggestions. No postage is required.

Daycare

Action Daycare, a Toronto based member group of the Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare, is presently looking at federal policy issues and legislation such as Canada Assistance Plan, Child Tax Deduction and Credit and Manpower and Employment practices. The group is interested in forming a national daycare coalition for action on the federal level. Interested persons and groups are invited to write: Action Daycare, 19 Carr Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2V7.

Moving?

If you'll be moving, please let us know so that we can keep your Equal Times coming. Please attach the address label from your Equal Times envelope to the change of address card, and note on the card that the change is for the Equal Times mailing list. Address change of address cards to:

Equal Times
NDP Federal Office
301 Metcalfe Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 1R9

No comment

Toronto Alderman Joseph Piccininni, commenting on why the City Council is not meeting its targets for hiring women:

"These women are lazy and they expect sympathy, and they want the jobs just because they're women..."

"They (women) don't even bother to make (job) applications, and yet they expect equal opportunity. Well, you're not going to get equal opportunity until you get out of bed, come down to City Hall and start applying."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Piccininni did publicly apologize a few days later for his statements.

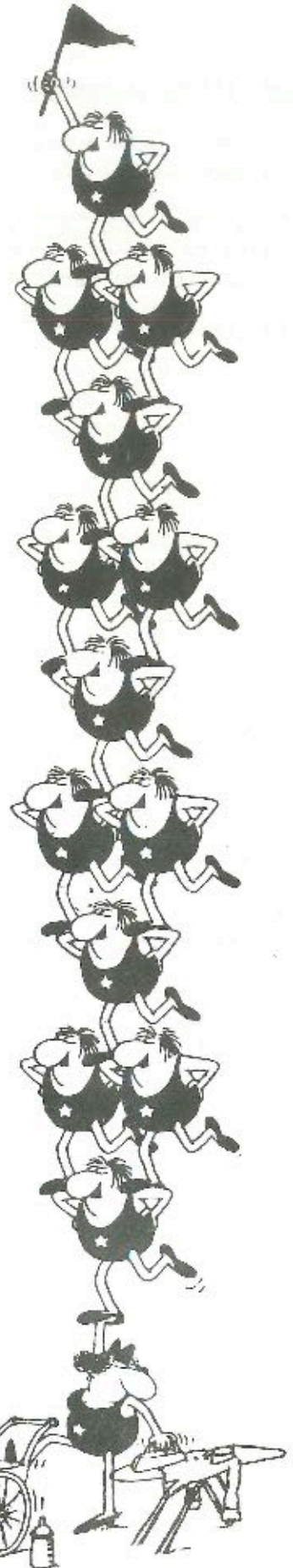
POW committee

At its meeting in January, the Participation of Women Committee elected a new executive:

Chairperson: Hilda Thomas
Vice-Chairperson: Chris Banman
Secretary: Barbara Levy

Below is an up-to-date list of POW members.

- British Columbia - Hilda Thomas
4158 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver V6R 2H3
- Alberta - Cynthia Gereluk
11112 - 38th Avenue
Edmonton T6J 0K9
- Saskatchewan - Chris Banman
Box 269
Aberdeen S0K 0A0
- Manitoba - Maxine Hamilton
866-H London Street
Winnipeg R2K 3P7
- Ontario - Lynn MacDonald
419 Carlton
Toronto M5A 2M3
- Quebec - Shernaz Choksi
151 Percival Avenue
Montreal H4X 1T7
- Nova Scotia - Barbara Levy
R.R. #3
Wolfville, Kings Co.
BOP 1X0
- New Brunswick - Allayne Armstrong
266 Winslow Street
Fredericton E3B 2A1
- Prince Edward Island - Ann Thurlow
Box 4
Souris COB 2B0
- Newfoundland - Frances Ennis
Box 37
Tors Cove AOA 4A0
- Yukon - Margaret Thomson
General Delivery
Ross River YOB 1S0
- Northwest Territories - Lois Dodman
Box 1334
Hay River XOE 0R0



NDP task force on older women

The Task Force on Older Women is a Canada-wide enquiry, sponsored by the New Democratic Party and the NDP Participation of Women Committee, into the problems faced by women in the latter half of their lives.

Society has given little attention to women 40 years of age and over. Employment, health, income and pensions, transportation, housing, etc., are issues which affect older women. Government policies do not take into account the needs of older women. The Task Force is seeking information and solutions and is anxious to have input from interested individuals and groups.

As Margaret Thomson, Chairperson of the Task Force, has stated, "the Task Force on Older Women will provide a forum for older women and women in their middle ages, like myself, to articulate their cares and concerns."

The Participation of Women Committee is responsible for organizing the Task Force. The POW representative from each province/territory will act as the organizer for the Task Force, working closely with the provincial/territorial party, caucus and women's Committee.

The Task Force's activities will include three main aspects: gathering research data and information through a questionnaire; holding a hearing and workshop in each province/territory for input; assessing the information from these activities and developing guidelines and solutions to common problems.

The hearings and workshops will be conducted between June and December 1982. The final report of the Task Force will be presented to the 1983 NDP Convention in Regina and will form the basis for policy resolutions to be presented at that Convention.

FIRST HEARING IN P.E.I.

The first hearing will be held at the Council of the Disabled (94 Great George Street), Charlottetown, P.E.I., on June 4th and 5th.

The afternoon of Friday, June 4th, from 1:30 to 4:30, has been set for public hearings at which organizations or individuals concerned with the problems of women in their middle and later years are invited to present briefs. Panel members will include Margaret Mitchell, NDP status of women critic, and Neil Young, NDP pensions critic.

On Saturday, June 5th, workshops will be held for any women who wish to attend. The workshops will give women the opportunity to share their experiences of aging, identify common problems and propose solutions to those problems.

Ann Thurlow of Souris, P.E.I., is organizing the P.E.I. Task Force. Groups and individuals interested in presenting briefs and participating in the workshops should contact Ann (Box 4, Souris, P.E.I.).



"Herbert says he loves me because I'm soft, vulnerable and flexible.
I just realized how easily I could be replaced by an earthworm!"

NAC Lobby

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women held its annual lobby of all three federal parties on March 15th. NDP Caucus members appearing before the Lobby knowledgeable and articulately answered questions regarding party policies and action on issues such as native women's rights, sex-role stereotyping in the media, equal pay for work of equal value, disarmament, reproductive rights, prostitution and pornography, family violence, federal/provincial fiscal arrangements and pensions.

Margaret Mitchell, in her opening remarks, noted that the NDP Caucus had established a Caucus Committee on Women and that the Participation of Women Committee of the Party plays an important role in policy development.

Leader Ed Broadbent, responding to a further question concerning the role of women within the NDP, outlined the affirmative action policy with its emphasis on women candidates. "And," he stated, "the NDP is the only party which has a woman (Federal Secretary Mary Ellen McQuay) as its chief administrator and which has a full-time women's organizer on staff."

The Conservatives admitted that they had no party policy on abortion and that they were only now working on a pensions policy. The only definite party policy mentioned was that of continued participation in NATO, which drew a negative response from the NAC members concerned about disarmament.

The Liberals were questioned at length regarding the proposed inclusion of prostitution in Justice Committee discussions concerning Bill C-53 (Sexual Assault). Robert Kaplan, Solicitor General, felt it would be reasonable to include prostitution but Judy Erola, Minister in charge of status of women, felt it shouldn't be discussed if it would delay passage of C-53. Both the NDP and the Conservatives had agreed that an examination of prostitution in conjunction with Bill C-53 would delay action on the Bill.

It is interesting to note the attendance of each party: New Democrats 38% of caucus, Tories 29% of caucus and Liberals 5% of caucus.

Kudos

EQUAL TIMES could not be produced without the work of the federal office staff. Special thanks go to Joan Neal, Derek Amyot, Pat Donahue and Dick Miles.

Thanks are also in order for Karen Stotsky of NDP Caucus Research for the support and assistance she gives to the Federal Women's Organizer and for her research on issues of concern to women.

Starting with the next issue, EQUAL TIMES will be printed in both English and French. If you would prefer to receive the French version, please indicate on the form below and return the form to: EQUAL TIMES, 301 Metcalfe, Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1R9

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