

WOMEN'S CAUCUS,
Room 6,
307 West Broadway,
VANCOUVER, B. C.

March 10th 1970.

Hon. Leslie Peterson,
Attorney General,
and
Hon. Ralph Loffmark,
Minister of Health Services & Hospital Insurance,
Parliament Bldgs.,
VICTORIA, B. C.

RE: WOMEN'S RIGHTS - A B O R T I O N
Facilities for Birth Control Information,
Pregnancy Testing, Maternity Care,
Therapeutic Abortion, Sterilization and
Vasectomy in BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dear Sirs:

We are writing regarding the lack of the above-noted facilities and to request an open meeting with you, during the next three weeks, regarding same. We are asking for a "meeting" rather than a hearing as when we approached Deputy Labor Minister Sands regarding Human Rights for Women at the Hearing, held Dec. 3rd 1969, at Hotel Georgia, Vancouver, B. C., we were told that we could ask questions but that would not necessarily mean that we would receive answers - and we have not heard from him since (we also asked for evening meetings in order that working women could attend) therefore, as we are interested in communicating our ideas regarding facilities and hearing yours - we request a meeting.

The Women's Caucus have asked that the Provincial Government become more involved in being active where the Rights of Women are concerned, and that the women of British Columbia have the medical rights which they are entitled to under Federal law and under the British North America Act which states that the health and welfare of people within a province are under the jurisdiction of that province, therefore, we request for the women of British Columbia the following:

TIME LIMIT

1. That in cases where therapeutic abortion has been requested by a woman and when pregnancy has been proved positive, usually by the 42nd day after conception, that therapeutic abortion - as allowed by Section 237 of the Criminal Code of Canada - be carried out within 7 days, thus relieving the woman of additional and unnecessary mental and physical stress.

FACILITIES

2. That additional facilities for birth control information, pregnancy testing, therapeutic abortion, maternity care, sterilization and vasectomy be set up in the same physical structure as extensions of hospitals and/or clinics and that these facilities be publicly funded and community controlled.

CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

3. That Catholic Hospitals receiving public funds no longer be allowed to refuse medical doctors the right to carry out therapeutic abortions, sterilizations and vasectomies.

RED TAPE - ABORTION COMMITTEES

4. That the Provincial Government investigate, immediately, why the red tape surrounding the medical profession and hospital abortion committees is a cause of death by illegal abortion. It is well known that many doctors send patients to other countries rather than hassle with the red tape involved in therapeutic abortion. Women's Caucus plans to have ABORTION REMOVED FROM THE CRIMINAL CODE DURING 1970, however, we realize that removing abortion from the Code is only one step and obtaining facilities for medical abortions in order that women can obtain the medical care that is their right is a provincial matter.

REPRESENT WOMEN TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

5. That because the Provincial Government under the British North America Act is responsible for the health and welfare of women within the province and due to the fact that the Criminal Code of Canada Section 237 is not conducive to the health of women and in fact this law causes a number of British Columbia women to die each year, we ask that the Government of British Columbia appeal to Ottawa to remove abortion from the Criminal Code.

MEDICAL PROFESSION

6. That the Provincial Government advise the B. C. Medical Profession that they are neglecting the women of British Columbia when they refuse - because of the time factor involved and red tape - to present women's cases for therapeutic abortions to the hospital Abortion Committees, causing such cases to seek illegal or self-induced abortions - which bring silent death to approximately 2,000 Canadian women each year and cause women to spend burdening sums of money to seek abortions in countries with more humane abortion laws and cause women undue mental and physical stress.

Abortion we realize is a problem in many countries, in Italy it is estimated that over 40,000 women die from illegal abortions each year, in the United States over 10,000 women die each year - more than the troops in Vietnam, and 100,000 are mutilated, in Canada approximately 2,000 women die each year. These are ugly figures, not ones that many countries would be proud of.

The Vancouver Women's Caucus ask to meet with you during the next three weeks in order that British Columbia eliminate such ugly statistics on death from abortion.

Trusting to meet with you, we remain,

Sincerely,

Betsy Meadley

WOMEN'S CAUCUS

ABORTION CAMPAIGN