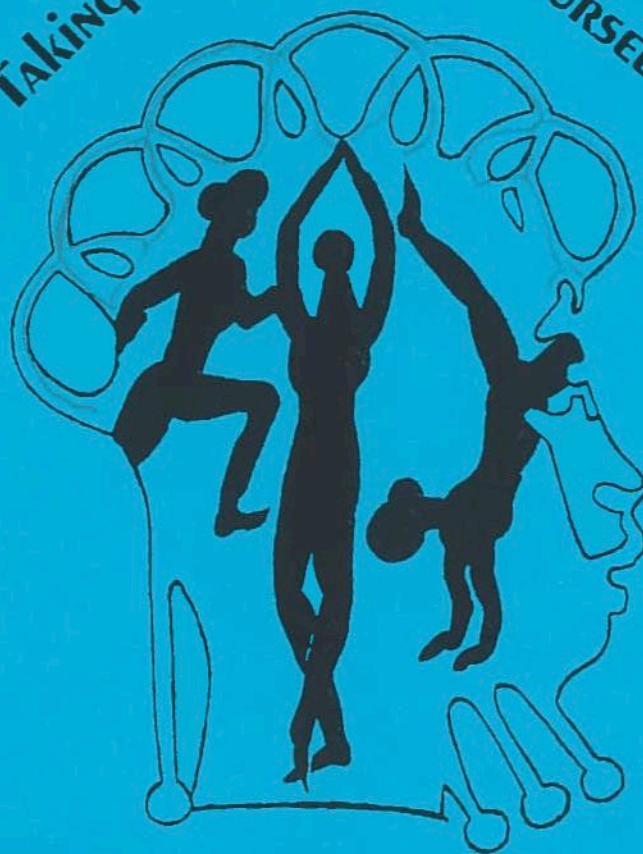


Taking CARE of OURSELVES



THE CONGRESS OF BLACK WOMEN
OF CANADA

11th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
and GENERAL MEETING

MAY 13 - 15, 1994

INTERNATIONAL INN,
Wellington at Berry (near Airport)
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

April 1994

Dear Sisters:

Welcome to the 11th Biennial General Meeting of the Congress of Black Women of Canada. The B.G.M. is an occasion for us to get together to discuss our issues and concerns, to see old friends, network and widen our circle of friendships by networking and reaching out to one another.

The theme for this B.G.M. is "Black Women" Taking Care of Ourselves". Not only are we always taking care of others, often to the sacrifice of ourselves, but a growing number of us are suffering from many physical and emotional and mental illnesses, and very often in silence.

We hope that the 11th B.G.M. will provide the space where we can all share common experiences, exchange ideas and information and suggest ways in which we can support and care for each other as well as other sisters who are not part of the organization but who nevertheless need support and an embrace.

Thanks to all the members of the Winnipeg Local Planning Committee, all volunteers and everyone who contributed their time, energies and expert knowledge.

In Sisterhood,

Fleurette Y. Osborne
Conference Chair



**The Congress of Black Women of Canada
Le Congrès des Femmes Noires du Canada**



**PROCEDURES FOR BUSINESS MEETING
AND THE CONGRESS BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING**

Dear Delegate:

We are enclosing Robert's Rules of Order at a glance so that you can familiarize yourself with the procedures that will be used during the business meetings at the B.G.M.

Many of us are unfamiliar with the formal rules in a large group unfamiliar and cumbersome, but the rules and procedures allow every voice to be heard. We want whoever wants to speak to do so. For these reasons we encourage you as a delegate to become familiar with the rules that will be used at the B.G.M.

You can always ask for clarification of the rules and procedures during the meeting. Just ask the Parliamentarians to clarify any questions about procedures.

We look forward to your full participation in the business of the Biennial General Meeting.

THE BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE

ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER AT A GLANCE

	Debatable	Amendable	Requires A Second	Vote Required	In Order When Another Is Speaking	Can Be Reconsidered
Time of Next Meeting	NO	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	NO
Adjourn	NO	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO	NO
Recess	NO	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	NO
Question of Privilege	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	YES	YES
Appeal	NO	NO	YES	MAJORITY	YES	YES
Point of Order	NO	NO	NO		YES	NO
Objection to Consideration of Question	NO	NO	NO	2/3	YES	YES
Withdrawal of Motion	NO	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Suspension of Rules	NO	NO	YES	2/3	NO	NO
Lay on the Table	NO	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO	NO
Call the Question	NO	NO	YES	2/3	NO	YES
Limit / Extend Limits on Debate	NO	YES	YES	2/3	NO	YES
Postpone to a Definite Time	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Refer	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Postpone Indefinitely	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Amend Amendment	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Amend	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Main Motion	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES
Reconsideration	YES	NO	YES	MAJORITY	YES	NO
Rescind	YES	YES	YES	MAJORITY	NO	YES

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

1991 - 1993

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

November 1991 will always be a memory I will cherish. It was the moment in time that the members of Congress supported a real "grass roots" person. You gave me the chance to serve you and it is up to you now to judge. During my time as President of the Organization it became very difficult to work without sufficient funds to help meet the changes and challenges, and to educate one another, but we have managed. We have not done all that we wanted to do, but we were able to do some things.

My first public event was with the consultation around the "NO MEANS NO" Law, and our voice was heard. Along with other Women's Groups from across Canada, and the Congress was part of the successful outcome of that round. I was able to point out to the then Minister of Justice, Kim Campbell, that minority women do not understand all the workings of the justice system; that they do not trust judges and because of the personal questioning they will have to face, on the stand, they often refuse to report.

The Organization did not get to play any great part in the Constitutional debate, which was going on at the beginning of my term of office. We tried to be involved in the consultations but could only reach Joe Clarke's Round Table, which was held in Ottawa, for women from organizations across Canada.

Wherever we could, we made our voice and our views known. Thanks to Akua Benjamin, Lorna Murray, Adonika Huggins and others who helped to prepare briefs or papers or represented the organization on committees and advisory boards.

You know that we had to withdraw our support from the panel of Violence Against Women. We learned about the problems minority women were having when they tried to present their views before the panel, because of the lack of sensitivity to the women. When they appeared before the panel. The panel had no broad representation. Supported by the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority of Women of Canada (NOIVMWC) and supported by Aboriginal Women, we requested representation on the panel. We were refused, and so we decided to withdraw our support from the panel. So did NAC, DAWN and NOIVMWC. Like the others, the Congress did have a member appointed to the Advisory Committee which was to advise the panel. We were told that the representative did not attend meetings.

The review of the Organization has been carried out. There will be discussion of the results during the weekend of the Conference and the Biennial General Meeting.

I have been representing the Organization on the Visible Minority Council on Labour Force Development.

I promised to be accountable to you. There were many problems to be faced, and I wanted your support, and often asked for it and your help. I feel I did not always get that support.

To help us become more self-sufficient, we managed to put the foundation in place. Your support was requested, the response has not been great either for contributions to pay off the lawyers or for nominations for Board Members, to make it function.

We must commit ourselves to fundraising. All the push to deal with the deficit, is making funding very tight. It will become tighter for organizations like ours. We have lived it over the past two years. We must think about our priorities, and set new ones. We must commit ourselves to go forward together, to help each other and the National, to trust each other rather than tear each other down.

In 1985 some members of the organization attended the End of the Decade Non-Governmental Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. Next year from September 4 - 15, 1995, the "UN Fourth World Conference on Women" will be held in Beijing, China. There will be a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) forum also in Beijing from August 30 - September 8, 1995. The Congress was represented on the Canadian Interim Beijing Steering Committee which was to select a Co-ordinating Committee to co-ordinate NGO activities for Beijing, circulate information to all organizations and especially reach out to grass roots organizations. There will be a report on the progress of women from the Status of Women of Canada on how well the country has done in implementing the recommendations that come out of Nairobi.

There will be provincial representatives on the Co-ordinating Committee. We must all find out who they are and make sure that our issues and concerns are presented and our perspectives considered. I hope some of us will be able to attend the forum.

You will be choosing a new executive. It will have many challenges. I wish the members good luck. I would like to pay tribute to the work done by the Presidents of the Chapters. They have played a major role in keeping our organization going.

Jestina Blake-Hill

President

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP
1991 - 1993

The cutbacks in funding, the promise of further cut backs and eventually no funding led to drive to establish a foundation in order to obtain a charitable number to allow the organization to raise funds. The foundation was finally established in 1993.

Following on the recommendation from the 1991 Biennial General Meeting, the Executive applied for and received a grant to complete the organizational review which was started at the Biennial Meeting. The review involved all chapters across the country.

Early in 1992 (February), a Federal Brief on the Employment Equity Act was presented to the Special Committee on the Review of the Federal Employment Equity Act.

Congress Representatives attended the Federal Justice Department's consultation on Amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Telegrams were sent to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, the appropriate Minister(s) and Leaders of Liberal and NDP parties, deploring the cut in funding for the Court Challenges program and requesting reinstatement of funding for the program. Congress Representatives participated in the Press Conference in Ottawa, around the same issue.

A brief was submitted to the Federal Sub-Committee on Immigration on the changes to criteria for foreign domestics coming to Canada. Congress deplored the initiative as discriminatory and racist, since the impact would be felt more by domestics coming from non-white countries.

Submission was made in response to the Federal Policy Committee, Justice Department on the issue of shifting some criminal cases to summary convictions. The impact on cases of violence or assault, and the implications for bias were the focus of the submission.

The President and Vice President met with the Federal Minister in charge of the Status of Women to discuss the issue of funding.

The Congress did not obtain standing to attend the constitutional conferences, despite our efforts to do so, however, we participated in the round table held in Ottawa by Joe Clarke, along with representatives from a number of National Women's organizations. The Vice President attended the consultation in Toronto as an observer.

The Congress, with Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOIVMWC), and supported by the Native Women's Association, held a press conference in Ottawa to announce withdrawal of support for the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, when representation on the panel was denied.

Akua Benjamin and Lorna Murray made a presentation on behalf of the Congress to the Canadian Bar Association Task Force on gender equality in the legal profession, when the Task Force met in Toronto.

The Vice President, while acting as President, participated in the meeting of National Women's Organizations in Winnipeg to discuss the participation of Canada's Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's) at the UN Women's Conference to be held in Beijing in September 1995. The congress is represented on the Interim Beijing Steering Committee, which was to recommend the structure for, and select the Beijing co-ordinating committee, and as set up the secretariat which will provide support to the co-ordinating committee (B.C.C.).

The President represented the Organization on the Canadian Labour Force Development Board and Adonica Huggins, from the Toronto Chapter was on the Women's Reference Group, one of the groups to advise the board about training and development needs of "Disadvantaged Groups".

The President represented the Organization at the Conference for Youth that was sponsored by the Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of Women (1992) and the Symposium on Custody and Access (1993), held to discuss the Federal position paper on Custody and Access Reform.

Health and Welfare held two consultations on the reforms to the Canada Pension Plan: Credit Splitting and Survival Benefits. The Congress was a participant in these consultations, along with other Women's National Organizations (1993).

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES

The Chapters have continued to work tirelessly and are reaching out to their communities. They have lobbied, worked to improve police community relations, conducted anti-racism training sessions, as well as celebrated themselves and the Black community during Black History Month and through their Mother's Day activities. Some representatives have been working on various boards and committees in their provinces, and have been called upon to be speakers and facilitators at seminars and workshops.

There has been little expansion of the organization during the review period, however, we welcome to the family new chapters in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Markham, Ontario, and Ville Marie, Quebec.

Following are the highlights of the activities in the provinces:

NEW BRUNSWICK: Regional Rep. Esther Miller

Black History activities included donations of books on Black History to the Public Library. They plan to donate similar books to school libraries, to make them available to the children. A student was employed to record oral histories on tapes and it is hoped that a book will be written.

A member of the Chapter has started a course in Black History in the city schools. She was celebrated for her work at a tea.

During December, flowers and cards were sent to the sick and shut-in. Members have worked with other organizations on issues of housing, youth and school drop-outs. They have celebrated and recognized senior women at recognition teas.

A scholarship fund has been started. Bake sales at flea markets are one source of providing the

funds. The rep. has been busy volunteering on behalf of the Congress in hospitals and participated in a rally to put a stop to all cut backs on hospital staff. She participated in the consultation of the panel on violence against women, when it met with women in Saint John.

NOVA SCOTIA: Regional Rep. Dolores Gabriel

There are now three chapters in Nova Scotia. The Halifax/Dartmouth Chapter spent a fair amount of the two-year period re-organizing and getting back on track, re-connecting with grass roots people, and rebuilding.

Support and advocacy was provided to Black Families and Youth requiring assistance in schools, and with the law. Youth were accompanied to court, helped to obtain council, and informed of their rights. Moral support and counselling were provided to families needing this support.

Concern that the needs of children were not being met in the schools, streaming into dead end programs rather than academic programs, and high drop out rates led to participation of members in educational workshops, and a demand that Black History be an integral part of the curriculum. Parents were supported by the Chapter to play a more active role in matters to do with the education of their children. There has been some success.

The Rep. has been active on the Race Relations Committee in her school, and has been in a position to suggest and implement programs and projects eg. Martin Luther King Day Celebration, a Black Heritage contest and Staff Inservice Race Relations Training. She has been invited to participate in anti-racism seminars for White teachers and students.

Involvement with other community organizations provided her the opportunity to address the concerns of Black Women.

ANTIGONISH-GREYSBOROUGH:

This newest chapter in Nova Scotia has been very active. Its meetings are alternated between the two communities it covers - Greysborough and Antigonish. An International Symposium on "Women's Voices from Our Communities" to celebrate Women's History Month was held in October (1993). Participants included African and Caribbean women who are attending Cody Institute, African Canadian Women and Aboriginal women. The function was co-sponsored by the Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology and the Cody Institute (St. Francis Xavier University) and was attended by over 100 people. There was an overwhelming support for making the symposium an annual event. Two prizes donated by businesses in Antigonish were raffled; a first step towards serious fundraising.

For Black History celebrations 1994, the Chapter will co-sponsor an Artistic Event. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, will be observed by a film festival and anti-racism forum to be held in co-operation with the ethnic minorities association.

PRESTON / CHERRY BROOK / LAKE LOON / WESTPHAL AREA CHAPTERS:

Like all chapters, Preston/Cherry Brook has been involved in annual Black History month celebrations. It is a member of the Black History Month Association. A number of workshops and seminars were held by the Chapter, including "Women and the Law" and a drug and alcohol seminar for elementary and junior high school students. The attendance was high and the students have asked for more seminars.

International Women's Day is celebrated annually. The Chapter has collaborated with the N.S. Human Rights Commission, the National Film Board and the Black Cultural Society to sponsor a film night, focused women on all cultural backgrounds.

For Elimination of Racial Discrimination Day, the Chapter held an awareness and education day focused on the mix of people and cultures within Canada. The Annual SOWETO day and South African Freedom Week were observed and celebrated as well as South African Women's Day. Women's History Month events honoured women for their contribution to the community.

The Chapter has been involved in a number of community events and some members are serving on agencies. This provides an excellent way of the larger community getting to know about the Congress and its work. Working with the Nova Scotia Alliance, members participated in a four day Black Family Conference. Many concerns were addressed and the recommendations coming out of the Conference were sent to various government departments.

QUEBEC: Regional Rep. Elizabeth Gedeon

The new chapter, Ville-Marie was established in 1992 and is the first French speaking chapter in the organization.

Both chapters, Anglophone and Haitian participated in Black History celebrations which included a book fair, brunch and cultural events co-ordinated by the City of Montreal, and including all Black organizations.

Members participated in workshops and seminars such as "Black Women as Caregivers", which was held at the Children's Hospital, Montreal, "The Police and the Community" and a session on coalition building.

Amanthe Bathalien, former Provincial Representative, and Member of Ville Marie Chapter, presented at the Conference of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women held in Toronto (1992).

Members participated in the launching of the Feminist Economic Association for Multi-Ethnic Groups in Montreal in November 1992.

There has been participation in community activities. The Haitian community is dedicated to the creation of an environment in which the quality of life for its members will be improved, and which will enhance the development and well-being of their children. A co-operative housing project for 46 families has been developed and will serve as a model for this kind of environment. The

representative, Elizabeth Gedeon is administrator of the project.

ONTARIO: Regional Rep. Patsy Jordan

The period began with Noreen Palmer as the Regional Representative, because of illness in February 1992, Patsy Jordan assumed the responsibility as Representative and Betty Ann Craig became the alternate. She resigned for personal reasons in March, 1993. Thanks go to the Chapter Presidents from the Rep. for their support, ideas and information about activities during the year and a half of her term. Congratulations go to all executive members of chapters on their leadership over the last two years. The region welcomes the Markham Chapter under the leadership of Ettie Rutherford, former Vice President of the Congress.

Following are the events and actions undertaken in the region between 1991 - 1993.

Political Action:

- . response to the Employment Equity discussion paper;
- . statement to the Ontario Government on the Issue of Policing;
- . brief to the Stephen Lewis Inquiry on racism;
- . discussions with the Minister responsible for Women's Issues on policies of the Ontario Women's Directorate; funding, employment
- . discussion with Minister of citizenship re: the Employment Equity Act;
- . the London, North-Eastern Ontario, Scarborough, Brampton, Durham, and Mississauga chapters hosted police/community race relations workshops in conjunction with the local police divisions and other community based groups. The workshops were sponsored by the Race Relations Unit of the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Regional Activities:

The first President-Plus One Retreat, funded by the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat was held March 26-28th, 1993 at Geneva Park. The sessions which centred around racism were led by Dorothy Ellis, Charis Newton and Fleurette Osborne. Participants have expressed a desire to have an annual retreat.

At the June 1992 General Meeting of the Region, there was a video taping of a session on "Issues Facing Black Women in Canada". Akua Benjamin who was the person to be interviewed, shared the spotlight with all the women attending the meeting. The video was to be used at a Women's Conference in Jamaica.

The Tenth Annual Kay Livingstone Award luncheon was held on November 31, 1992. Sybil Garrick, Past Regional Representative was the recipient of the award.

Chapter Programs:

Initiatives within chapters included successful fundraising activities, political action re: employment equity and policing, local education programs, Saturday morning classes for youth, networking with other community based groups, and a co-operative housing project (Toronto Chapter and Ontario

coalition of Visible Minority Women) which was officially opened in November 1993. The initial meeting of the York Region, (Markham) Chapter was held on May 29, 1993.

MANITOBA

The Manitoba Chapter has been putting most of its efforts into the planning for the Biennial Conference and General Meeting, but it still continued to work to promote and support its members and the Black Community through a program of education and service.

The Chapter co-sponsored the Black History Month activities in 1993. A forum on Black Women and Work: past, present and future resulted in a number of recommendations which were forwarded to the appropriate agencies and government bodies. There was also participation in the UN End of the Decade for Women Conference on Women and Poverty and in Partnership for Power (I.W.A.M.) and NOI/MWC's 1992 Biennial General meeting/conference. The chapter continued its participation in the International Women's Day celebrations and was responsible for the food table.

The chapter has sponsored computer training sessions and several members have taken the opportunity to learn these skills.

The annual social events, Father's day tea and fashion show, brunch, and annual banquet and dance continued and were successful.

Chapter member Olivia Flynn was nominated for the YM/YWCA Woman of Distinction Award and Dr. June James received the Citizenship Award from the City of Winnipeg. Merle Fletcher participated in a consultation meeting called by the Women's Health Clinic and has been invited to work with the group.

ALBERTA:

The Calgary Chapter continues to grow and rebuilt itself under the leadership of Genevieve Balogun. The Black Heritage school continues its weekly program with an enrolment of 25 students with Gervais Collins as Principal. The 1993 program got off to a great start with an open house and informational session for the parents and volunteers. The annual family BBQ and the grand parents / senior's brunch were successful events and well attended. A fundraising brunch held on October 17, 1993 to celebrate Women's History month was addressed by Vinetta Anderson, recipient of the YWCA Women of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award, and Gervais Collins nominee, YWCA Women of Distinction. The theme was "Her Story of Work: Recognizing Women's Contributions".

A workshop "Walk the Talk: Parents as Partners", covered a number of topics including child rearing practices for the 90's; sexuality and the effects of the media; celebrating uniqueness; looking toward exceptional education; how to live "Almost" happily with teenagers; career planning for an unknown future; parents talking about sex and other issues; cultural diversity and social studies.

The President has been networking with many other women's groups and attending meetings dealing with mutual concerns. Plans are getting underway for the 1994 Black History month celebrations

in Calgary.

EDMONTON

The Mother's Day celebration went off as usual. The entertainment however, was developed and presented by young people ages 13 - 21 years old.

In 1993 the annual banquet and Women's History month celebrations were combined into one event and many women's groups participated. Guest speaker was Zanana Akande.

The President, Wendy Fraser, represented the preliminary meeting of the National Council of Black Educators, to discuss projects to be undertaken to improve young black people.

SASKATCHEWAN

The representative and the alternate represented the Congress at many functions and events and participated in the activities of many community organizations in 1992. They were invited by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People to submit a brief on racism. The representative participated in the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) and presented in the workshop on "Women and the Justice System", in Toronto (1992).

A number of community organizations planned a weekend of educational activities to celebrate Black History month 1993. The Rep. participated on the planning committee.

The Representative has participated on the Federal Government Committee on Employment Equity for Visible Minorities and the Women's Committee for the Canadian Labour Development Task Force, which includes members from women's organizations throughout Saskatchewan. It is hoped a provincial board will be developed to advise the National Labour Board on issues related to training of women in the province.

The Northern Saskatchewan Chapter (Saskatoon) spent much of the energies of its members on rebuilding. For the 1992 Black History celebration a luncheon was held. The guest speaker was the National President -

Projects planned included a Canada Day dance program by youth (1992), as a fundraiser. Members attended workshops and built working relationships with a number of organizations in the city. Two members were appointed to the Board of the Elizabeth Fry Society.

Fundraising projects have included the making and selling of jackets suitable for spring and fall, and a fashion show which has been planned for the spring of 1994. The annual family picnic is always a big hit with the members and their families and friends, and it continued to be so in 1992 and 1993.

THE REGINA CHAPTER

The chapter was assisted by funds from the City of Toronto to launch a tutoring enrichment, and a

cultural program to encourage youth to become familiar with African issues and culture.

Black History activities have included displays at the University of Regina, libraries, the Regina Public School Board, interviews by the media, and a church service in which members of the chapter took active roles throughout the course of the service. Films were also shown as part of Black History events. Fundraising to help sustain activities included a fashion show and dance, selling chocolates and running bingo nights.

Racial incidents in the community and educational institutions resulted in plans to host a seminar/workshop on racial issues. Members have participated in workshops sponsored by the Secretary of State: "The Colours of Our Youth". There was participation in other workshops conducted by other organizations.

The President of the Chapter was appointed to the Federal Justice Committee on crime prevention and safety. The committee advised the government in the developing a national strategy on community safety and crime prevention. She is also a member of the committee on "Racial Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace", at the University of Regina.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Chapter, with support of the office of the B.C. Attorney General, developed and ran a series of weekly sessions for the Vancouver police department. The training was based on the Black Canadian legacy (history of Blacks in Canada and B.C.), and culturally sensitive issues to raise the awareness of the officers, and enable them to better deal with the members of the Black community. The sessions ran over a period of three months, and were co-ordinated with members of the Vancouver police department, Community Relations section.

Other activities of the chapter included summer day camps for Afro-Canadian youth, participation in the constitutional debate held by the committee for racial justice, and in a debate on gender bias. There was participation in a number of Black History events which were co-ordinated by a committee of representatives from several organizations including the Congress.

In October 1992, the first annual women's history month was declared by the minister responsible for the Status of Women. The chapter celebrated with an evening of dance, dinner and drama. A scroll and poster, depicting Black women and their contributions to Canada, were prepared and displayed.

BOUQUETS....

Congratulations to Jean Augustine, one of the Past Presidents, who was elected to the Federal Parliament in the October 25, 1993 elections.

To Yvonne Brown, Past President of the Vancouver chapter who was elected trustee to the Vancouver Board of Education.

And to everyone else to whom bouquets should be given but of whom we have no information.