

# Health workers still on strike

By Linda Wilson

Employees of the Winnipeg Clinic are this month continuing a seven week old strike effort. Attempts at conciliation efforts on July 24 resulted in their indefinite termination. It is the second time in a week that talks have stalled.

Foremost among the issues is the establishment of job descriptions, a lay-off procedure and the recognition seniority in regard to advancement and lay-off.

Strikers are concerned about the absence of standard benefits and wage parity.

For example, doctors' assistants are paid as little as \$400 less per month than the starting wage of hospital nurse's aides. Many doctors' assistants are RN's and LPN's.

Also requested is a channel of communication to the employer in the case of adverse reports and disciplinary action, including representation by the association. Appropriate levels of wage parity have also been requested.

Objections have also been raised over some of the building's health and safety conditions. The striking staff say that two elevators are not enough for eleven floors.

Picketers allege one of the major stumbling blocks to a settlement is the issue of their

reinstatement after the strike is over. They say their employers are willing to allow reinstatement of the strikers only as openings occur.

The Clinic has already begun to replace the striking doctors' assistants through advertisements placed in issues of the Winnipeg Free Press on July 19 and 21.

As long as the Clinic remains uncommitted to reinstate-men-

uncommitted to reinstatement, union members fear that their strike action will cost them their jobs. The resolution of outstanding grievances is futile, they say, without the assurance that they will be even able to resume their positions.

The management's position has moved little since the middle of May, when their negotiator, according to one of the strikers, presented a contract to "expedite settlement, not to commence negotiations". The new offer was virtually the same as the old one.

They have since offered only an 8% - 9% increase in pay and agreed to a program of workers' compensation. Previously, an employee hurt on the job could be sent home for her health by a physician who would then as her employer, dock her paycheque.

**Those on Strike:**

**Wages:**

**Working Conditions:**

**Anti-Union Management:**

**Union Proposal:**

—RN's, LPN's, Technologists, Doctors' Assistants.

—For 5 years the starting rate has been \$580 per month, before deductions.

—Average wage, approximately \$650 per month, before deductions.

—One woman who has worked 12 years and was sent for special training to the Mayo Clinic, only make \$790 per month before deductions.

—An LPN, after 27 years is only making \$770 per month before deductions.

—Paid for 7½ hours per day while many often work 2 - 3 hours unpaid overtime.

—Frequently workers must miss their lunch breaks due to heavy work load.

—Since 27 secretaries were let go by the Clinic, Doctors' Assistants must do all clerical work (previously done by secretaries) except the typing, which is left to a small typing pool.

—Doctors who are making \$100,000 annually on the average are refusing a decent living wage to these women, many of whom are single mothers.

—Scabs are being treated royally: \$120 - \$135 raise upon hiring.

—Roses and champagne from the doctors.

—The right to lunch in the Doctors' private lounge.

—Winnipeg Clinic has hired off-duty Winnipeg Police at time and a half to "protect" the scabs and the public from "incidents" as reported in the local media.

—Union recognition for doctors' assistants.

—Decent contract for technologists and technicians.

—\$950 starting wage.

—Job security.

—Job description.

—Seniority clause.

—Grievance procedure.

—Workers compensation.

## Nellie McClung calls for support



The Nellie McClung Theatre Group and the M.F.L. have put out a call of support for the workers of the Winnipeg Clinic. The following is an excerpt from their instatement:

By Barb Bettazzoni

Much has been written about "Women's Job Ghettoes" where women work long hours for little pay and more often than not, don't enjoy the benefits of union organization.

The Winnipeg Clinic is a classic example of a job ghetto for women.

Since June 9th, 50 women represented by the Manitoba Paramedical Association, have been on strike against the Winnipeg Clinic to win their first contract, decent wages and job security. They are facing a vicious anti-union attitude and an unconcealed attempt to break their strike and ultimately their union.

The Nellie McClung Theatre Group and the Manitoba Federation of Labour, Equal Rights and Opportunities Committee are appealing for all out support for these strikers.

These sisters cannot beat the doctors administrators to win a gain contract ALONE.

All our solidarity is needed, especially from women's groups who are committed to ensure that women's job ghettoes become a relic of the past.

Please pledge your support to the picket line for a MASS PICKET, Tuesday and Thursday mornings, between 8 - 9 a.m. to help win this strike.

For further information contact:

Sandra Oakley, Chairperson, MFL-EROC

Millie Lamb, Nellie McClung Theatre  
Leslie Spillet

474-3152  
261-8979  
744-4180  
489-8544

The Women into Rail campaign has been steadily garnering support in their fight to win affirmative action in the railway trades.

The campaign began through the actions of three Winnipeg women who were denied jobs as carmen trainees and switchers with Canadian National Railways. No adequate explanation was offered. The women, Helen Kirkpatrick, Helen Nelson, and Cheryl Pruitt have filed complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission charging the railway with sex discrimination. CNR is a Crown Corporation that advertises itself as an equal opportunity employer.

Although all three women have had past experience in some aspect of industrial work and passed written CN tests

for intelligence and mechanical aptitude, none passed the practical tests. All of their interviews were marked by frequent discouragement to go farther with their applications. References were made to the women's "small" stature, the lack of facilities for women and the problem of being the "only" woman in a male dominated shop. According to Nelson, it appeared that men are not given the same practical test. Kirkpatrick was told she could not re-do the test "because of her weight".

Presently, Kirkpatrick is employed with CN as a car checker which is a clerical position. Pruitt is also working at CN as a classified labourer. Nelson works as a secretary for a temporary agency.

cont'd to page 8



## Editorial

### No girls in this office

By Martina Freitag and Julie Green

"I'll get one of the girls to do it."

No matter how important or menial the task is, being referred to as the 'girl' who performs that task, bugs me.

Homemakers don't have the constant contact that working women do, and so perhaps being referred to as girls doesn't grate on them as often. Although that shouldn't be an excuse, on the whole girls earn women's laurels through marriage and childbearing. In the office, regardless of age, marital status, or number of children, the female workers remain 'girls'.

The word 'girls', when applied to small female children, suggests weak, helpless and naive creatures. While small male children probably fall under the same description, 'boys' grow into 'men' around the age of 18.

"I'll get the boy responsible for that district into it." 'Boy' in this case suggests a novice to the business, not a respected member of the business team. It boils down to a simple way of respectfully addressing a co-worker.

Slot 'man' into the following phrases instead of 'girl', and you would be surprised how different the description sounds: a good man - a good girl; a successful man, a successful girl. A good man is someone you can depend on, while a good girl may also be dependable, she is more likely a dutiful daughter. A successful man is probably successful at business, but if a girl is successful at business is she then a child prodigy?

Now read 'woman' for girl in the above phrases, and I think you'll emerge with a description closer to the man's. Obviously there are many women that fit these descriptions. Traditionally men have occupied the decision-making, higher wage and status positions in society, for whatever reasons. It would probably take a different editorial, however, to persuade you that the secretarial and clerical jobs most women still occupy merit as much respect as the higher decision-making positions have. The fact that the work they perform is absolutely necessary to the running of most businesses is not always acknowledged.

There are times when I don't mind being called a girl. Often people over the age of 60 find it impossible to think of anyone under the age of 40 as anything but a boy or girl. People who have known you since early childhood sometimes also forget that girls and boys eventually grow up.

There's also a type of team spirit camaraderie in which being part of the girls - or boys - leaves no derogatory taste in the mouth.

Some people will argue that it is a form of flattery of be called a girl, and so suggest, no doubt, that one still possesses the fresh bloom, vitality and beauty of youth.

The key about this kind of attractiveness is that it only lasts for a few years. It's often followed by a sophisticated, more self-assured beauty that is more characteristic of women than of girls. Certainly, then, being called a 'woman' can be flattering as well.

Technically boys become men and girls become women at puberty, and some people will argue that this is when to differentiate. There are obvious problems with this cut-off date, because it's often difficult to tell whether one has been through puberty or not within the critical age range.

I generally find it difficult to speak of teenage men and women. It usually takes a certain amount of experience before either sex has moved from a more-or-less carefree childhood to a more responsible adulthood. It's perhaps ridiculous to set an arbitrary age, but the law considers citizens of age 18 responsible enough to vote and drink - it's probably as good an age as any.

If people are more conscious of the way they use the words 'girls' and 'women' (there doesn't seem to be a problem with 'boys' and 'men') it's a simple step towards giving credit where credit is due.

"We've got several good office women that could take care of that."

## BulletinsBulletinsBulletins

Female sexual mutilation is a world-wide problem only recently coming out into the open. Although we may think that excision is restricted to Africa and the Middle East, cases are appearing in other parts of the world. In Europe, African immigrants are known to import a midwife every few years to excise their daughters. In Sweden, the subject is being discussed in parliament after it was discovered that a Swedish doctor performs excisions on women on request. In the U.S., a nurse aid working in a nursing home reports in an outraged letter in *Ms. Magazine* (July '80) that out of 40 residents in the home, five women have had clitoridec-tomies. Closer to home, inquiries have been made in the Toronto area, with little uncovered except rumors. If

anyone has information relating to women in Canada, please contact Betsy Carr, National Action Committee, 306-40 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto, Ont. M4T 1M9.

★ ★ ★ ★

The premier showing of the film *Isitwalandwe* will take place on South African Women's day August 9th commemorating the 25th anniversary of the South African Freedom Charter when 20,000 women of all races marched to Pretoria to demonstrate against the introduction of the pass system for women. The event is sponsored by the African National Congree (Wpg. Branch), Box 147, St. Vital, and takes place Saturday, August 9th, 1980, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., Centennial Library Aud-

itorium. Coffee and discussion follows the film.

The Research Branch of the Department of Labour and Manpower has released a report *Outlook of Job Opportunities*, April, 1980, which indicates what areas would be the most promising in terms of steady employment in the next few years. Some of the following seem to have the best outlook: managerial, administrative and related occupations; natural sciences; medicine and health occupations; processing occupations; machining and related occupations. For more information about the report or training for any kind of employment, contact the Women's Employment Counselling Service, 301-374 Donald Street, Winnipeg (943-0473).

## Letters

Dear M.W.N.:

No, this country will probably never need a Status of Men Committee as your report (*M.W.N. Volume 1, Number 3*) so aptly pointed out. It is unlikely men will ever suffer the kind of injustices women continue to.

And while the point of the report was well made, I found it, at best, an incomplete and abrupt response to the broader question of men's changing role in response to feminism (as raised by 'John's' simplistic query). In the same vein I am dissatisfied with the assumption that all feminists are women as made in the editorial (except for the token 'She or he' in the discussion of liberal feminism).

No doubt the lot of men who are feminists is a good deal better than that of women. Yet the problem of defining oneself as a feminist in relation to society and in relation to members of the other sex bear similarities for both sexes.



Liberated men and those achieving liberation shouldn't look to the women's movement to lead them by the hand through their struggles. At the same time I think it reasonable and necessary that the feminist press - which rightly focuses on women - should recognize its brothers and on occasion broaden its debate to include them.

Keep strugglin'  
Kris Klassen  
Ottawa, Ontario

Dear M.W.N.:

I am enclosing a money order for one year's subscription and with it comes my

wholehearted support. The articles cover a broad spectrum of issues that concern women and I am looking forward to receiving these articles regularly. I have read only two complimentary copies.

Though I am not on welfare, I am concerned about the struggles of women in this category and would like to read about problems they encounter and their legal status vis-a-vis these problems.

Perhaps the bill recommending changes to the Act has been discussed in issues I have missed - well, I shall miss them no more!

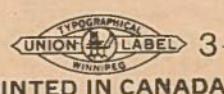
Irene Brown  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

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In Thompson at The Northlander; in Traverse Bay at Traverse Bay Corner; in Steinbach at Son Lite Book Mart; in Beasuejour at Western Drug Mart and in other areas across the province.

The aim of this newspaper is to provide an alternative means of communications with a feminist perspective in order to stimulate, to inform, to effect change and to unify women's strengths. It also serves as a public forum of discussion for the women of Manitoba.



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### Staff this issue

This month's staff: Barb bettazoni, Wendy Craig, Vic Enns, Linda Gouriluk, Debbie Holmberg, Shelley Kowalchuk, Millie Lamb, Heather Marshall, Yvette Parr, Pat Rawson, Sharon Reilly, Ron Schwartz, Alice Stienbart, Brigitte Sutherland, Gerri Thorsteinson, Irene Todd, Linda Wilson and Sue Wood. and Al Genik,





## Finance

By Wendy Craig, B. Comm. (Hons.)

More and more women today, either through choice or necessity, are joining the ranks of the self-employed.

Many may be setting up business as interior designers, cosmeticians or boutique operators; others may be launching on a freelance writing or photography career; while still others may be starting a secretarial or accounting service. (The choice of occupation for the self-employed is virtually limitless).

So if you are self-employed, in whatever field or endeavour, then you are entitled to certain tax breaks that are denied to the salaried person and the wage earner. And you should make absolutely certain that you are getting all the breaks due to you by virtue of your self-employed status.

One of the best ways to make sure of this, of course, is to seek some sound professional advice.

But whether or not you choose to do so, remember that your self-employed status entitles you to certain specific tax breaks — and you should be aware of them.

No matter what sort of business you start, you are entitled to claim depreciation for income tax purposes on any business-related assets and equipment. Such depreciation will be based on the replacement or fair market value (FMV) of the particular assets.

For example, if you are running a hairdressing or beauty salon, then it would apply to chairs, hairdryers and all salon equipment, even down to coffee tables, ashtrays and magazine racks — as long as they were for the use of your customers.

If you are running a secretarial service it would apply to desks, chairs, typewriters, dictating and duplicating equipment, and even to your library of reference books.

In addition to any depreciation you may be entitled to claim all legitimate expenses incurred in operating your business are tax deductible. Such expenses would include telephone, postage, stationery, travel and parking in connection with the business, as well as any business-related entertaining. If you use your car in connection with your work you may claim all or part of its depreciation.

Also, you may claim certain costs of running, maintaining and repairing your car, depending on what proportion of its use is devoted strictly to business use.

If you happen to be working from your home and you keep one room *exclusively* for business use (and you should), you can claim a proportion of your rent, or the interest portion of your mortgage payments, as legitimate business expenses. Again, these expenses should be prorated between business and personal use.

This will mean that you must keep careful track of all your business expenses. Keep all invoices, receipts and cancelled cheques, and make a note of what they are for.

Paying by cheque, or by credit card is a good idea since both provide you with a reliable record. You should also keep meticulous records of every penny spent in connection with your business activities. In other words, be expense-conscious.

As a self-employed business person, there is another device you can use to ease your tax burden, at least temporarily. That is, to choose a year-end date for your business other than December 31st.

By choosing your business financial year-end carefully you can, in effect, defer your payment of income taxes for a whole year. You should *definitely* seek professional help and advise on this matter.

Several other factors such as earnings from present employment, your expected business earning cycle and personal contributions into tax deferral plans, such as Registered Retirement Savings Plans, must be considered.

Another important thing to remember is once you have selected a business year-end, you cannot change it without first making a formal application, and not with good economic reason.

Remember also, as a self-employed business person you must make arrangements to make quarterly instalment payments on your income tax. You *must* make these quarterly payments if your annual income tax will exceed \$400.

Check with your local district taxation office regarding the arrangements you must make to pay your tax, and also pick up the booklet *Instalment Guide for Individuals*, which, as the name implies, is a guide to help you figure out your instalments.

Running your own business may very well be the best thing that ever happened to you. But remember, just because you happen to be self-employed doesn't mean that you are tax exempt.

Far from it.

The above suggestions merely point out that as a self-employed person you are entitled to certain tax breaks that are designed to help you make your business a success.

## Nestle's not quick enough

By Irene Todd

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women recently endorsed a boycott of Nestle's Ltd. products. To provide some background they printed a story by Nina Klowden Herman in their summer issue of "Status of Women News". The following is an adaptation of that story.

Millions of babies are sick or dying in Third World nations around the globe, and the culprit is what is commonly referred to as the "baby bottle syndrome". Women are being bombarded by propaganda from infant formula manufacturers that extolls the benefits of bottle-feeding; and these same women, hoping to have healthier, happier babies, are unwittingly following the advice of the large corporations and doing their babies more harm than good.

Breastfed babies are supplied with the cheapest, most nutritious food an infant can receive, with the added benefits of immunity to disease, unlimited supply, and ease of preparation. In order to formula-feed a baby, formula must be purchased, mixed in correct proportions with water, placed in sterilized bottles, and refrigerated until use. This places a burden on families, both time-wise and financially.

In the Third World countries, many women do not have the knowledge or the money to bottle-feed properly. Formula is mixed with water that is far from clean and placed in unsterilized bottles, making an ideal breeding ground for bacteria.

Often, the formula is watered down too much, either

to make it last longer because of the prohibitive cost or to make it look more like breast milk (which is naturally thinner-looking and the only standard women have to go by). Whatever the reason, the result is the same: babies are undernourished and this lack of nourishment combined with lack of immunity inherent in breast milk produces babies prone to illness.

The largest offender amongst the formula manufacturers is the Swiss-based multinational corporation, Nestle's. When faced with world-wide criticism, Nestle's claimed to have ceased certain promotional practices, including radio jingles, newspaper ads, and free samples that were given to women in hospital and clinics by authoritative women in white uniforms.

Actually, although Nestle's seems to have stopped direct advertising and handing out formula directly to mothers, it has *increased* its number of "medical representatives" (now in *blue* uniforms), and still sponsors baby shows. Doctors are still given free samples, and provided with funds for expensive medical equipment and travel expenses to conferences.

Even though Nestle's was condemned last fall by the World Health Organization for its marketing practices, Arthur Furer, Nestle's president, claimed that no changes were needed in their procedures and said, "We do not feel restricted in any way in the field of commercial activity by the WHO recommendations."

Since Nestle's has refused to change its practices, there has been a growing movement to put economic pressure on the huge conglomerate by boycotting its products. The boycott is led by the Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFACT) which has called for an intensification of the boycott until an agreement has been reached to end all forms of promotion and a monitoring system set up to ensure that more violations do not occur.

In Canada, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women has recently endorsed the boycott of Nestle's products, and the campaign is gaining momentum all over the world. If you want to join the Nestle's boycott, clip out the inset on this page as a reminder when you go shopping.

Further information can be obtained from:

INFACT, 1611 Quadra Street, Victoria, B.C., V8W 2L5.

### BOYCOTT NESTLE'S PRODUCTS!

Nescafe, Encore, Decafe, Taster's Choice, Nestea, Nestle's Quik, Nestle Crunch, Libby's-McNeil and Libby, Souptime, Maggi Soups, Crosse and Blackwell, Wispride, Cherry Hill Cheese, Swiss Knight Cheese, Old Fort Cheese, Beechnut Baby Food.

— Clip for your purse —

MWN needs poetry and prose contributions for the upcoming Arts issue. Deadline: yesterday. Contact Debbie Holmberg at 772-8170 or mail to 447 Webb Place.

## the newspaper

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# Land of milk and honey

By Yvette Parr

Vera Johnson, a singer and songwriter from Saskatchewan has written *Canada your immigrants you lure and hide your hungry and your poor!* These words are extremely apt. Not surprisingly the majority of poor people are female; more often than not they are single parents and older women. Women who have to resort to welfare to survive and raise their children, face a humiliating experience.

Women's poverty begins at birth with the proverbial 'pink and blue'. Even if sexism does not exist in the home, the greater world of school, television, media, etc., defines what a woman should be. Women are still discouraged from the traditional male bastions, and encouraged to enter the nurturing fields, eg. waitressing, typing, factory work, etc., all extensions of housework. Even the women who do manage to get into the better paying 'male fields' still constantly fight sexism, although, these days, it's more disguised and subtle.

Tradition also has it that when women marry or decides to have children, there will be a male who will support her and their offspring. Of course this is not always so. Marriages fall apart and today more and more single mothers want to keep their children. These women are faced with low wages, lack of quality daycare and employers who are not sensitive to the needs of single mothers. Mothers who feel their full time job is in the home raising children or who cannot find adequate childcare often are faced with only one alternative: WELFARE!

They have no other choice... a survey by the National Council of Welfare found that almost half of all mothers that head families are on some sort of welfare. They add:

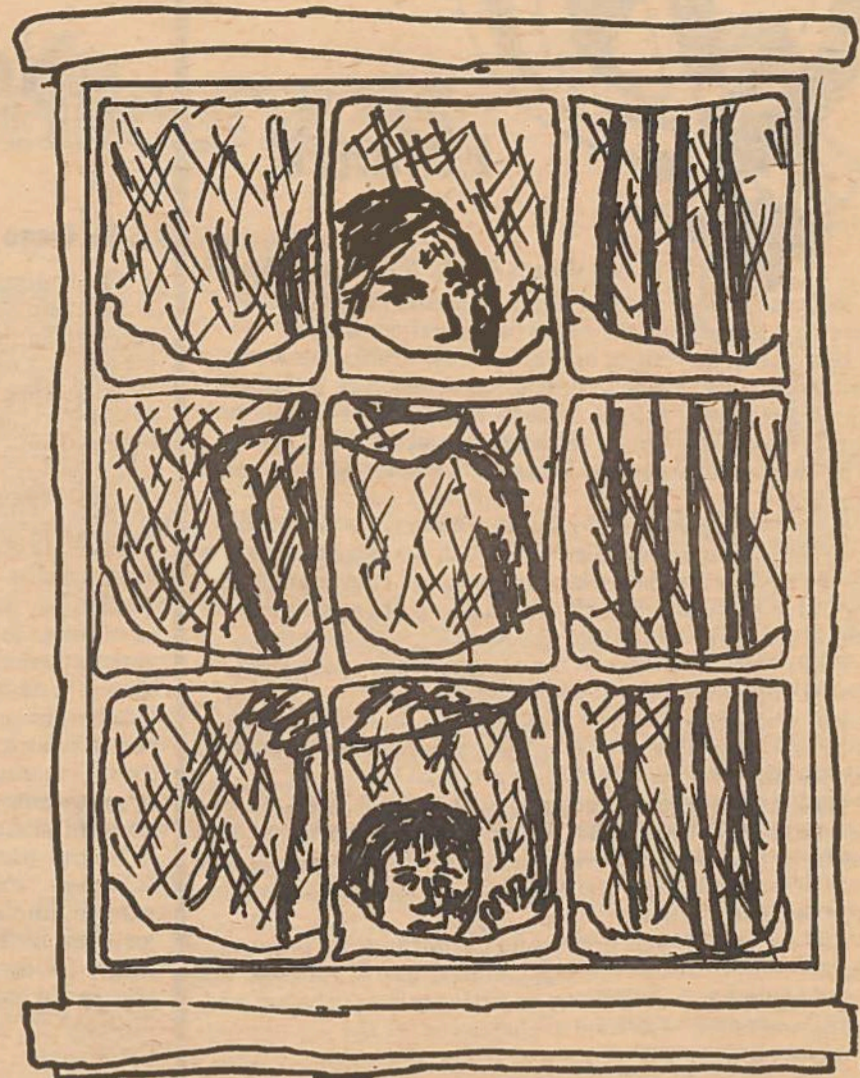
Those who must choose the option of welfare fall victim to one of the cruelest and most senseless myths of our society: that the person who stays in the home to raise the family is not working. This myth is engrained in our thinking and is rooted in our out-of-date and utterly illogical definition of what constitutes work.

To be on welfare in Canada is to be condemned to the bottom of the economic ladder. Women who rely on welfare are provided with it very grudgingly, by a society that defines the recipients as failures, no-hopers or "welfare bums", whom the regular 'worker' supports by taxes.

It is hard to live and function when the work of raising children is so demeaned. A welfare mother becomes a file number and is constantly being assessed and re-evaluated by the politicians and welfare officials. They are no longer 'productive' citizens. Great expense is gone to channel these 'misfits' back into a productive independent life. They are considered leaches. Their privacy is not respected and it is assumed they have something mentally or emotionally amiss. All kinds of social workers and services are created to help them become proper members of society. In fact, if one scrutinizes carefully how these women manage their homes and families on the pittance they receive, it becomes clear that they must become financial experts in order to feed, clothe, house and meet the demanding needs of their families. As well, dealing with the bureaucracy makes them, indeed, candidates for the legislature.

No worker in the welfare system should be without knowledge of being on the other side. Women that work solely in the home receive their 'welfare wage', which in no way compensates for the work they perform. When a woman is in this position for any length of time, it is not surprising that her confidence and self-worth is shattered. She is told she has done nothing with her life. She is in fear of the system that threatens her very livelihood. She has to be thankful for what she receives and dare not entertain the thought that she is a productive member of society.

She is discriminated against everywhere she goes. Housing presents problems since no one wants to rent to welfare people, so they get the holes and hovels that no 'decent' person would live in. Some low income housing is provided but the waiting lists are so long that it



takes years to be admitted unless there are exceptional circumstances. The housing provided is usually in outlying areas and the recipients have no choices to where they live.

A welfare woman who is an invalid recovering from a severe car crash said:

Sometimes the cheque is late and I wonder how I'm going to make it. They say I'm lucky to have a homemaker and someone to empty my commode. They want to put my baby in a foster home. It's hard being in the wheelchair, I fight to get well and keep my family together.

Other women on welfare try to hide it from their friends and associates. They're embarrassed and feel humiliated. They feel they have no choice but to accept the indignities they are constantly subjected to. Welfare recipients are well below the defined poverty level (see chart). In one instance a woman who was brought to Canada as a young child was deserted in her early teens.

When she approached for assistance, she was asked why she had come here! Her retort was "Land of milk and honey... don't-cha know?"

A report by the National Council of Welfare, October 1979 quotes a 67 year old woman, Mary S.:

We live in fear. Fear of the future, of more illness, less money, less pride. Fear that the cheque won't arrive and we won't be able to work our way through the red tape in time to pay our rent. Fear that we will run out of food before the next cheque comes in. So, fear holds you in line. It is our punishment for getting old sick.

We see that poverty affects all ages. Older women who have spent a lifetime mentally and physically tending to their husbands and children, tended yesterday's workers and raised today's workers. What is their reward? POVERTY.

Women make up 60% of

Canada's poor. The Federal Committee on the Status of Women, in 1978 printed statistics showing housework was worth \$26 billion or 27% of all the production of this country. So why do women have to suffer poverty?

Every woman is one man or one job away from welfare.

How many starry-eyed young women have found this true? Until housework and childrearing are bonified 'work', and paid for accordingly, women will continue to carry the burden and fight for themselves and their children's very survival. Life becomes a horror, where is the money coming from? It's Friday, if the cheque doesn't come today, how am I going to survive the weekend? With all thoughts and energies centred on the basic survival needs, there is no time or money for personal growth.

Welfare women are starting to fight back, as a woman carrying a sign in Toronto stated: raise our money or we raise hell.

Maybe it's time Canada followed Iceland's example, where in October 1975, there was a General Strike of Women. Housewives, factory workers, secretaries, childminders, telephone operators, prostitutes, bank clerks, school girls, strippers, mothers and grandmothers went on strike. Ninety per cent of the country's industry ground to a halt! Women refused all their 'duties'. Some men arrived in the offices and places of work, unshaven and with toddlers under their arms. No meals were cooked and the floors remained unswept. Of the 60,000 women in Iceland, 25,000, attended a mass meeting in the capital city of Reykjavik. Pictures of this event present a truly awe-inspiring sight! With 90% of the industry grinding to a halt these women proved that "women's work" was indeed valuable and necessary to the functioning of a country.

Women must demand their right to a decent wage, for it's on our apron strings that the future adults tag.

Difference between family income and poverty level-urban female-head and single-parent welfare family with two children aged 9 and 12, 1979.

|                  | Total benefits | Poverty gap | Benefits as a % of the poverty line |
|------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| St. John's Nfld. | \$6,488        | \$2,669     | 71%                                 |
| Charlottetown    | 6,772          | 2,398       | 83                                  |
| Halifax          | 6,508          | 2,609       | 71                                  |
| St. John, N.B.   | 5,584          | 3,533       | 61                                  |
| Montreal         | 5,858          | 3,908       | 60                                  |
| Toronto          | 6,592          | 3,174       | 67                                  |
| Winnipeg         | 7,130          | 2,636       | 73                                  |
| Regina           | 7,120          | 1,997       | 78                                  |
| Edmonton         | 7,126          | 2,640       | 73                                  |
| Vancouver        | 7,220          | 2,546       | 74                                  |

(Poverty level 1979 \$9117)





# SOAPS — the daytime fix

By Millie Lamb

My own research was limited to some frantic dial twisting in the course of writing some topical skits for the two health care workers' conferences, and conversations with housebound friends who taxed their memories to untangle the twists and turns of plots going back ten or twenty years. During this time each character had married, divorced and remarried practically everybody else. Doubtless the writers themselves can't keep track of these snarled relationships. Ingrown and incestuous, they create highly charged tensions that command the loyalties of countless viewers.



musicians to devote themselves to their men's careers and blissful domesticity.

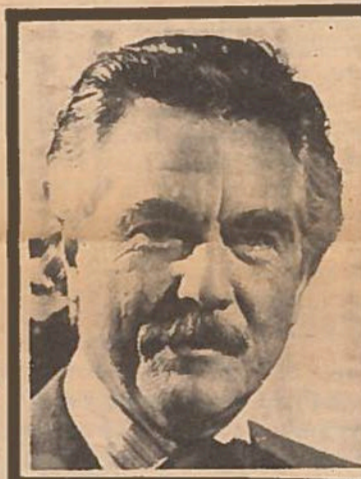
War, pollution, nuclear hazards, the arms race, the danger of global annihilation, colonial oppression, racism, hunger, don't intrude into soapland. Crime yes, for each daytime soap must have its quota of assaults and killings for excitement, and the tensions of courtroom drama. Evil, of course, lurks in the hearts of men and women, not in an oppressive and alienating system. The soaps never questioned the morality or legality of the Vietnam War, and sent their young men proudly off to kill the hated commies. And every religious or patriotic holiday is made the occasion for a pious affirmation and glorification of the American Way of life.



What's been happening with the soaps? Now as always, they're pure escapism. The idea, after all, is to sell soap, junk food, consumerism, and this can't be done by sharpening the critical faculties, or presenting the real world. Certainly, concessions have been made to changing times and the heavy increase of women in the work force. Career women play more or less positive roles. After all the viewer may be a woman with a part-time job, and it's expected that the housebound woman may get vicarious satisfaction by identifying with the glamorous lives of lady doctors, nurses, entertainers, artists, or executives. Some career women find happiness in their work, and occasionally even achieve warm marital or maternal relationships; others demonstrate that careers lead inevitably to sterility and loneliness. They're playing both sides of the street.

Soaps now recognize the rising expectations of black and blue collar Americans. There's a smattering of black characters and other non-Wasps of Greek or Italian origin - but not Chicano, Puerto Rican, Jewish, Asiatic or indigenous Americans. Various soaps include waitresses, prostitutes, truckdrivers, construction workers, cops. They're rarely shown on the job, they're not concerned with mortgages, inflation, indebtedness, and unemployment, and in their trite lexicon there's no such word as union.

But it's the world of doctors, nurses and hospitals which preoccupies the soaps. They



Millions of viewers, men as well as women, are addicted to the day-time soaps. Send-ups like *Mary Hartman and Soap*, evening sitcoms and serials like *Dallas* only testify to their pervasive influence.

build on the awe for the medical profession fostered by the medical establishment and the media. The policies of the AMA on medicare, public health and welfare cast no shadows of doubt on this idealized picture. In the soaps doctors have no private practice, medical and hospital fees present no problem, and doctors, nurses, volunteer workers and support staff socialize within and without the hospital corridors in perfect camaraderie. There are no insurmountable class barriers to romance.

And what of the concerns that have actively engaged hundreds of thousands of women during the past decade? In the world of soaps, ERA gets not mention. There's no struggle for equal opportunity, for affirmative action, for equal pay, for the right to abortion, birth control information, contraceptives. Rape, however, was an issue. In one episode, the rapist was the victim's husband, the court humiliated and harassed the victim and her witnesses, the rapist went free, and his lawyer made a name for himself. What's more, counselling was provided for the vic-

tim through the Rape Crisis Centre.

Generally, the soaps reflect the rightwing backlash aimed at undermining the gains achieved by the women's movement in the past decade. Abortion is taboo; obviously the sponsors dare not offend the so-called pro-life lobby and the powerful forces behind it. A teen-ager finds herself pregnant; her mother, who is a doctor, advises abortion, the girl recoils in horror. Schooling, career plans, youth-



ful interests and companionship - all must be sacrificed to the developing fetus. The ideal solution is marriage to the biological father, whether she dislikes or even hates him. The pregnancy may result from a rape, a casual affair, a first-time encounter, but abortion is a no-no. And no one suggests counselling to avoid further unwanted pregnancies.

Along with this is a heavy

emphasis on paternal rights. In one scene the pregnant woman who loathes her seducer must listen to a lecture from her doctor on the moral right of the father to be consulted about the child. The out of wedlock biological fathers and the non-custodial divorced fathers, young and old, are possessively and obsessively paternal. They harass the mothers, or bully them into marriage, or kidnap the children, or come back after years of absence to claim their own. The message for the single mother seems to be that she cannot hope to make it on her own, and she's doomed to be a victim. Seeking resources in self-help women's groups is not in the script.

Strong-willed women are still the witches and villains. They are the ones who are compelled to dominate their husbands and children, to foil any rivals for their devotion, to interfere in spheres reserved for the male establishment - hateful scapegoats for the viewer's frustrations and anxieties. Presumably, housewives also derive comfort from episodes about gifted women who are more than willing to cast aside years of training as artists or



What about the Canadian way of life? There've been sporadic attempts to create Canadian soaps, but at the mercy of commercial sponsors; they've been just as vapid and divorced from reality. Good honest Canadian daytime drama is needed, and would provide opportunities for Canadian writers and filmmakers. CBC should see to this, and ditch the commercials which invariably insult the intelligence of women viewers especially.

Is there hope for the soaps? Not much. The soaps provide a daily fix, producing passivity, blocking out real concerns. Sponsors of course want an audience that can be lulled into buying their deodorants, mouthwashes and other magical pathways to popularity and bliss. Women have already been aroused to protest degrading commercials; the next step could well be to protest the mindless content of the dramatic fare itself. The deepening economic crisis is bound to strengthen consumer resistance; the Conference Board reports consumer confidence in the economy at its lowest ebb. Despite the efforts of the networks, with profits last year of five billion dollars, to sell escapism and patriarchal values, the soaps may yet bubble up with the toils and troubles of the real world of women.



# The Constitution and Family Law

By Alice Steinbart

The Constitution and family law have both had a great deal of publicity lately, but little has been said on how they relate to each other.

Last year, the federal government in an effort to find an agreement on at least one matter for constitutional change, proposed that divorce become a provincial responsibility. The effect of this would be to make enforcement of maintenance and custody Orders in a divorce more difficult.

Thus, an Order of separation, custody, and maintenance made in one province, such as Manitoba, is not recognized in any of the other provinces, unless the person who has obtained the Order, usually the wife, goes to the Court in that province to have it confirmed or accepted.

For example, if a wife gets an Order for separation, custody and maintenance, and the husband goes to Ontario and doesn't pay maintenance or takes off with the children to Ontario, the wife will have to hire a lawyer in Ontario, who must apply to the Court there for recognition of Manitoba's Order.

After that, she would again have to apply to Court to have the Order enforced, such as a garnishing of his wages.

However, if the wife had obtained a Decree of divorce (rather than separation) and custody, and maintenance, in Manitoba, then that Order is recognized in every province, without having to get a new Order; if the husband took the children to Ontario or went to Ontario and did not pay his maintenance, she simply has to file her Order there, and then go to Court for enforcement, such as wage garnishing.

So long as divorce remains under federal jurisdiction, enforcement of divorce Orders across the country is easier. If it comes under provincial jurisdiction, then enforcement will be harder, will take more time, and will cost more money.

Another problem is if each province has jurisdiction over divorce, then some provinces may become like "Reno" and others may not allow divorces at all. Those who can afford to go to the "Reno-provinces" can get divorced and those that can't, won't.

Many of the provinces, Manitoba and Newfoundland being the exceptions, were initially willing to accept jurisdiction for divorce. It appears that they gave little thought to the consequences.

Since then a number of women's organizations, principally in Manitoba, along with the Manitoba Government have worked towards changing the position of the federal and other provincial governments.

We have had some success, as this issue is one of the twelve which the First Ministers are to consider before their meeting in September, 1980. This means that the transfer of divorce is no longer a closed issue as it was in 1979.

But it also means that divorce could still be given to the provinces.

You should write to your Federal Member of Parliament in Ottawa to voice your support of federal jurisdiction over divorce and also to Attorney-General Gerry Mercer at the Legislative Building in Winnipeg who is fighting a lonely battle.

Alice Steinbart is a Winnipeg lawyer.

# Nelliegrams

By Irene Todd and Brigitte Sutherland

**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN** Canadian history Parliament's female politicians have abandoned party ties for feminist battle. Calling themselves sisters of all women in Canada the 23 female MPs and Senators announced they have formed a coalition to fight for equality for Indian women. Together with Indian women rights leaders they called for an immediate moratorium on application of the discriminatory section of the Indian Act which strips Indian women of their native status and accompanying benefits - federal funds, housing, land, burial rights - if they marry white men. The Act contains no penalty for Indian men if they marry non-Indian; white wives gain full Indian status and so do their children.

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**LAST FEBRUARY, VAN-**couver hosted the International Conference for Midwifery, attended by over 300 people from North America and Europe. The main topic of discussion was the legalization of midwifery and recognizing the role midwives can play in healthy birthing. This led to the formation of an organization to fight for these objectives in B.C., where the midwives are the best-organized in the country.

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**IN THUNDER BAY, A** committee sponsored by the Lakehead Social Planning Council, has been set up to develop a model for a Family Dispute Counselling Unit. The Counselling Unit will be proposed as a preventative service, to prevent future incidents of wife and child battering and, in particular, to prevent serious psychological effects on young children involved in family violence.

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**THREE SOVIET WOMEN** dissidents who arrived in Vienna after having lost their citizenship said they have appealed in an underground journal

MARIA for Soviet men to go to prison rather than fight in Afghanistan. MARIA protests the Soviet intervention and asks women to encourage their men not to fight. The MARIA group was formed in March with 30 members from Leningrad, Riga and Kiev.

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**THE APRIL 15TH ISSUE** OF THE Manitoba Women's Newspaper featured a headline "Bank Unions are opening the door". Sixty tellers on strike with six Royal Bank branches in Quebec's Saguenay region have just had that door slammed in their faces. On strike for a first contract since last September, the Canadian Labour Relations Board has decided against forcing an agreement on the bank but will not reveal its reasons until some time in the future. In the past, strikes have proved ineffective for unions seeking first contracts with Canadian banks because management has been able to maintain customer service by bringing in outside staff. A decision to impose an agreement would have forced union recognition on the bank and established the board as an arbitrator in bank disputes. Federally-chartered banks such as the Royal are covered by the federal labour code.

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**FIVE MANITOBA** women, from age 19 to 28, working in the smelter at the Hudson Bay Mining and smelting Company in Flin Flon, have been told that they will have to take other jobs, possibly meaning a cut in pay. The company is concerned about the dangers of lead poisoning, but instead of making the environment safe for all workers, they say they will only hire women who can prove that they have been sterilized. Research indicates that excessive levels of lead in the blood can cause sterility, miscarriages, stillbirths, and retarded children.



**ALTHOUGH DOWRY** payments have been illegal in India since 1961, it seems the law is impossible to enforce. Men can ask for as much as \$12,000, depending on their profession and status, and it is difficult for most families to cope. While some families have gone into debt for generations to pay dowry, or daughters into prostitution, other young wives are not so fortunate. According to a report in *Maclean's* in July, 1979, at least one new bride is burned to death each day by her in-laws because her parents have failed to make the dowry payments. And a new law, requiring a police investigation into the death of any wife with 18 months of marriage, has had little effect. Apart from the police being alloused, women who do survive refuse to speak up for themselves, being ashamed of their experience.

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**IF YOU'RE TIRED OF** seeing women depicted as creatures whose supreme creative outlet is writing Tide commercials, women who go nearly hysterical because their chicken might be too greasy, and whose greatest scientific experiment is testing the absorbency of diapers, relief *might* be in the offing. A seven-woman committee has been established by the federal government to monitor sexist stereotyping in the electronic media. The committee will have its independence guaranteed, says Janne Sauve, former federal communications minister, "by the stature of its members and . . . by its right to publish what is pleases without reference to either the minister or the department of communications".

*'Remember the dignity of your womanhood. Do not appeal, do not beg, do not grovel. Take courage, join hand, stand beside us, fight with us.'*

— Christabel Pankhurst  
(English suffragette 1880-1958)



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# Feminist Party of Canada

By Irene Todd

On June 8th, 1980, the Feminist Party of Canada celebrated its first anniversary in Toronto with speakers, poetry, dance, and music. Outside of Toronto, the F.P.C. is not so well known, even though it does boast 300 members with some in major centres across the country, and it is always willing to help start up chapters if enough people are interested.

But getting people interested and involved just might pose a problem, especially if the attitudes of the local press don't change. On June 20th, the Winnipeg Tribune reprinted an article from the *Sault Star* commenting on the F.P.C.'s likely entrance into Toronto politics this fall.

In a totally negative vein, the writer concluded that the F.P.C. is "so bent on one relatively narrow purpose", and is "pursuing only the narrow interests of the feminine movement", that "therefore it does not deserve popular support."

However, in April 1979, the F.P.C. made a statement which read in part:

"The vision women will contribute to politics is that same vision we have always been depended on to bring to our more traditional spheres. In the family we have provided a moral base; in the wider world we have consistently struggled to humanize our environment - humanize it too for the men who share it with us - whether it be the neighbourhood, the

workplace, or any of the many other institutions which structure our communal lives.

Moral values, social relationships - women have taken historic responsibility for all that which renders communities more human. If politics is the process through which society safeguards the humanity of its members, then women belong in politics; and if politics is not such a process, then clearly women are needed to make it so.

This position scarcely "shuts out the interests and concerns of a sizable number of the

**F.P.C.:**

**"Women have taken historic responsibility for all that which renders communities more human".**

people whose support the group seeks" as stated in the *Sault Star* reprint.

Looking at the background and policies of the F.P.C. gives one a clearer understanding of the party. In February 1979, the original meeting was held to found a women's political party. The main difficulty seemed to be deciding whether a political party or a feminist caucus would be the most effective.

An interim committee was set up to explore all the possibilities, and the committee explains how they came to a decision in a statement entitled *The Beginnings of the Feminist Party of Canada*:

In an attempt to get a wider perspective, we recounted the records of women already in politics . . . (and) we discovered that most female politicians, regardless of background or party affiliation, reduced their connections with women's organizations to a minimum when they obtained office. No matter how many women are elected, from the evidence we have thus far, they do not, on the whole, address themselves to those issues of concern to women that have been continually neglected by everyone else -

We realize that a feminist caucus is rendered ineffectual for this very reason; it has no reliable voice to depend on.

While not everyone may agree with the logic behind the formation of a party as opposed to a feminist caucus, the fact is that the party now exists (in Toronto, at least) and it has some interesting principles and objectives that are worth considering.

According to the E.P.C., feminism has examined the strengths and defects of our world, which, they say, men have created, and is now

challenging the oppression which women face in all aspects of life.

But the F.P.C. goes further, stating that it is determining to restructure society, "to redefine life, to assert the value of integration over separation, of sufficiency over poverty, of creative work over drudgery, of peace over war."

While sounding very idealistic, to say the least, the F.P.C. claims it has no illusions about the difficulty of its tasks. They conclude their statement of principles as follows:

We confront (these tasks) with a superb confidence born of the knowledge that feminism is an irresistible progressive force in history, and that the struggle in Canada is our part of an international movement which is rapidly gathering the strength to overcome the resistance it creates."

With such wonderful objectives, one might wonder why the F.P.C. is still only a reality for Torontonians. But Winnipeg lawyer, Alic Steinbart, doesn't believe it will spread outside of Toronto.

"I like the concept, but I'm pessimistic about it," said Ms. Steinbart in a telephone interview in June. She believes that the other political parties can't be ignored and need to be educated to be concerned with feminist issues.

Sally Shrofel, chairperson of the Political Action subcommittee of the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of

Women, has similar feelings. She said that many women in Manitoba have taken up membership in the F.P.C., but still retain their memberships in the traditional parties.

While thinking that the F.P.C. gives women a terrific "opportunity to get into politics", Ms. Shrofel feels that a lot can be accomplished by women who have voting power at the conventions of the other parties, especially since the F.P.C. is not well-established nationally.

Both women said that they cannot agree with the idea that women who are elected cease to be feminists. "There are some prominent women who seem to be very committed to women's issues, but they have other concerns and interests too," said Ms. Steinbart. In agreement, Ms. Shrofel mentioned Rosemary Brown, Flora MacDonald, and Monique Begin as examples.

For anyone interested in joining a local chapter of the F.P.C. - you may have a long wait. Most politically active women in Manitoba have their hands full with the traditional parties, and are too busy to put their energy into forming another party.

However, if you're interested in becoming a member of the F.P.C., receiving their newsletter, or just learning more about it, you can write to the following address:

Feminist Party of Canada  
Box 5717  
Station A  
Toronto, Ontario

## Fat for a reason

By Patricia Rawson

Men and women are different; especially as it pertains to obesity. Women should be aware of definite disadvantages so as not to compare their dieting ability to that of men.

Social pressures and body make up, combined with guilt are but a few barricades overweight women must confront. Realization of these and other limitations is one step towards successful dieting.

Anyone who has gone on a diet at the same time as a man certainly would understand this dilemma. Men's weight losses are often twice as effective as women's.

Often women's obesity is judged as a lack of willpower. However, this reflects ignorance of the fact that men's bodies are not identical to ours. We are made to feel as if we are weak minded individuals, incapable of reducing.

Susie Orbach, author of *Fat Is A Feminist Issue*, states that we are "rejecting male ideals of how we should look as pro-

jected in advertisements and movies".

Traditionally, women spend considerable time in the kitchen, invariably exposed to food. Modern women concentrate less on meal preparation, but are now subject to high-calorie convenience foods.

Our bodies are devised for producing babies. Nature has provided ample padding to keep the fetus warm and secure. However, except for pregnancy, we do not require the extra insulation.

Every month our body prepares us for pregnancy. During that time, it is especially hard, if not impossible, to lose weight. Therefore, to achieve positive dieting results, that leaves a mere three weeks per month.

Women on birth control pills face additional weight-related problems. They contain fat-producing hormones, in addition to those already secreted from our ovaries.

If you are on the Pill, you have about a 10 per cent chance to be overweight. This

percentage is apt to increase if you already have a tendency to gain weight.

Statistically, a woman requires an intake of approximately 2 calories less per pound of body weight than a man. More calories are utilized to support muscle mass than fat mass. Women have greater fat mass than muscle in comparison to men and hence, require less calories.

Society's negative attitudes towards overweight women add further frustration to an already difficult situation. Overweight women are referred to as being lazy, undisciplined and slob; while overweight men have substance and character.

In addition to these obstacles, appetite is not discriminatory. Despite women's smaller frames, appetite is as individual as each person.

Taking the preceding factors into consideration, accompanied by any psychological problems, one can fully realize the plight of obese women:





# Understanding cervical cancer

By Sue Wood, M.D.

Last month a friend of mine phoned me in a flap. She'd gotten a letter from her doctor saying that she had "atypia" on a Pap smear that had been done recently and should come in for another one. She couldn't get through to her doctor that day and knowing vaguely that abnormal Pap smears were somehow connected to cancer, she was understandably panicking.

A similar kind of thing happened to me when I was 17. After the first Pap smear I'd ever had, I got a letter saying that I had "slight atypia" and should come back in six months for a repeat smear. At that point, I had no idea what a Pap smear was, had never heard of a cervix, let alone cervical cancer, so not understanding the importance of it, promptly forgot all about it and didn't have another Pap for three years.

Fortunately, both of us had normal smears the next time around, but because neither of us had known enough about it, she went through an unnecessary fright and I did something potentially dangerous.

So for all the women who have had Pap smears and not really known what they were, I want to talk about cervical cancer.

The cervix is the part of the uterus that projects down into the end of the vagina. If you can reach with a couple of fingers high into your vagina, you should be able to feel a knob, usually about an inch in diameter and with the consistency of the end of your nose. That knob is the cervix. It should have a small indentation in the middle of it which is the opening that leads through the cervix into the uterus and is called the os. The cervix should feel firm and smooth, and if you could see it would be shiny pink. If you're interested next time that you have a Pap smear done, ask your doctor if he/she has a mirror and can show you what your cervix looks like. I was fascinated the first time that I ever saw one - having had one for so many years without ever having had a look at it.

The cervix, for unknown reasons, is the second most common spot in a woman's body for cancer to develop - the first being the breasts. Like the breasts, the cervix is very accessible - with very simple equipment you can see it, feel it, and take samples from it. Like breast cancer, cervical cancer if detected early is a totally curable disease and if detected late is a killer.

The peak ages for developing cervical cancer are between 45 and 65, but it has happened in 16 year old and is not rare in women in their 20's and 30's. Two out of every hundred women are going to get cervical cancer at some point in their lives, and many more than that will have abnormalities that are not clearly cancerous.

How likely you, as an individual, are to get it depends on a variety of conditions known as risk factors. A large variety of different conditions have been associated with the development of cervical cancer but the currently agreed upon factors are:

1. Sexual activity - this is the number one risk factor. Sexually active women are at a much higher risk; the association between sex and cervical cancer being so striking that some researchers are now calling cervical cancer a venereal disease. Early studies compared the incidence in prostitutes and nuns - prostitutes have a very high incidence, nuns very low. Recent studies have concentrated on age and it is now clear that how old you are when you begin having sex more than anything else determines your chances of getting cervical cancer. The younger you are and the more male partners you have (all of these studies are unfortunately exclusively heterosexual), the greater is your risk factor. There is also an association with having children before 20, but this is probably secondary to sexual activity. Anyway, if you started having regular sex before age 18, you are definitely in a high risk category, which is not a problem as long as you know about it and get regularly checked.

At one time it was thought that if your partner was uncircumcised, you were at a higher risk. The major evidence for this was that Jewish women rarely get cervical cancer. That much is certainly true - Jewish women do have a low incidence, but it is probably due to some genetic assistance rather than the absence of a foreskin. Recent studies which removed all Jewish women from the samples found an equal incidence of cervical cancer in partners of circumcised and uncircumcised men.

Men are not entirely off the hook here however. Some researchers have argued that sperms or semen may be the causative agent. A woman researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology several years ago demonstrated that sperm could invade normal cervical cells creating a very abnormal cell which may be a cancer cell. This is, however, just one of many theories - but, if true, cervical cancer really is a venereal disease.

2. Infections - the virus, herpes virus type II (HSV-2), has been incriminated as a carcinogenic (cancer causing) agent. HSV-2 is transmitted by sexual intercourse (semen again may be implicated here in that it is an ideal transport medium for herpes). Any woman who has had a genital herpes infection characterized by a week to two week episode of painful ulcerating blisters around the vagina, is at an increased risk for cervical cancer and should get regular testing for it.

3. Social - why I don't know, but the death rate in single women is half the rate in married women which in turn is half the rate in divorced women. Again, this probably relates back to sexual activity.

Also, the lower your socio-economic class, that is the poorer and less educated you are, the greater are your risks.

4. Contraceptives - so far, no direct link between cervical cancer and birth control pills has been found although since pills have been in use for just over 20 years, it's possible that long-term effects have yet to be uncovered. Barrier methods - diaphragms and condoms may actually decrease the incidence, but not enough evidence is available to know this for sure.

The screening test done for cervical cancer is the Pap smear. How often you should have one depends on your risk factors. If you're over 30, poor, started having sex before 18, and have had a herpes infection, then your risk level is very high and you should be having Pap smears every six months. If you're none of these things, then every 2 - 3 years will suffice.

At the clinic at which I work, we are doing Pap tests yearly on all sexually active women and on all women over 30 whether active or not. If you have either of the following, then I would do one every 6 months.:

1. a history of herpes or
2. a previous abnormal Pap smear or
3. many partners or sex before 18.

Pap smears are vital because unless cervical cancer is quite advanced (and by then it is too late), there are rarely any symptoms at all. In its late stages, it will cause bleeding and discharge, especially bleeding following intercourse; but in its early stages, which is when you want to detect it, it has no symptoms at all.

The Pap smear is done by lightly scraping a wooden spatula over the surface of the cervix; it picks up cervical cells which are then transferred to a slide, fixed, stained and examined under a microscope.

The cells make look totally normal or they may look obviously malignant or they may be somewhere between these two extremes. In order to describe them as accurately as possible, a scale is used.



Usually the degree of abnormality of the cells is grade A to F.

- A no abnormal cells; this is the totally normal Pap smear that most women have.
- B reactive; some changes in the cells are present that are due to a "reaction" of the cells to an infection or irritant of some sort. Usually with these, we test for infections and try to get rid of these if present, then redo the Pap smear.
- C "slight atypia"; some mild changes which may be due to chronic infection or may be very, very early cancerous changes. It's important to know that cervical cancer is a very slow growing disease in its early stages. When a smear is reported as "slight atypia", we treat infection that may be present, wait 6 months, then repeat the Pap. There is no problem with waiting this length of time. The vast majority of the repeats will come back normal. A few will progress to.
- D "moderate atypia" or
- E "severe atypia" - both these cells show change, but none of the cells clearly show enough changes to demand further investigation be done immediately.

This usually involves colposcopy - a microscopic examination of the vagina and cervix. Small pieces of the cervix are cut off and examined - this examination is much more reliable than the Pap smear which only looks at surface cells. If this examination is normal - i.e. no cancer cells founds - then we just repeat the examination in 3 - 6 months.

F carcinoma - clearly cancer cells and of course requires immediate investigation and treatment.

I hope that this explains why it's done and what it all means. Besides teaching breast self-examination, the Pap smear is perhaps the single most important test which your doctor can do for you.



cont'd from page 1

trades. A height requirement of 5'6" prevents them from being hired as switchmen. This requirement appears unnecessary, especially since there are men now employed as switchers who do not meet it.

The Women into Rail campaign has already held four well attended meetings. Support from Unions, Women's groups and from men in the railway trades has been overwhelming. Links are being established nationally to strengthen common proposals to CN. Suits have been filed against CN from women in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. A request for a grant under the affirmative action

Pruitt and Nelson were also denied jobs in the running program has been sent to Lloyd Axworthy, Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

The charges of sex discrimination filed with the Human Rights Commission are now under investigation. The suit challenging the height requirement has gone to conciliation. A petition demanding that CN establish an affirmative action program in all jobs is now being circulated. Interested persons or women with similar CN experiences or who wish to enter the rail trades, are asked to contact Cheryl Pruitt at 452-5124.