

NAC  
2167

NAC ELECTION KIT      QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES

The attached 8½ by 14 sheets were co-produced by NAC and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the 1980 election. The CACSW is preparing a similar set of questions for the upcoming federal election and it seems reasonable that it should be used as part of this package. The questions on the 8½ by 11 sheets are questions that have been suggested by NAC committees. The present NAC executive strongly recommends that we develop a consensus on six positions every party in Canada should endorse to get the women's vote. Please use the questionnaire to tell us which questions or issues you think should be some or all of the six.



## Questions for candidates

### PENSIONS

Do you commit yourself to:

1. raising the minimum guaranteed income of all senior citizens to the poverty line for large cities within the next five years
2. expanding the Canada Pension Plan so that its benefits will equal at least 40% of earnings up to the average industrial wage
3. including homemakers in the Canada Pension Plan

### NATIVE WOMEN

1. Does your party support the reinstatement of all Indian women who have had their Indian status taken away involuntarily, and also the registration of their first generation children as Indians?
2. Will you as an individual push for this as an immediate amendment to the Indian Act?

### FEDERAL PROVINCIAL FUNDING

1. What is the position of your party on using the federal spending power to fund social services such as, for example, child care, services to sexually assaulted women, services for battered women and homemaker services. Is your party prepared to show federal leadership in this area?
2. What is the position of your party on increasing federal funding to the provinces for health care and post-secondary education?
3. What is your party's position on including an amendment on property rights in the Charter?

### HEALTH

1. Do you or does your party support the legalization of midwifery services in Canada?
2. Do you support the five basic principles of medicare as set out in the Canada Health Act?
3. Do you support the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code?

### EMPLOYMENT

1. Seventy-two per cent of all part-time workers in Canada are women. Twenty-four per cent of all women in the workforce work part-time. What is your party's position on providing legislated, compulsory pro-rated benefits for part-time workers?

### SOCIAL SERVICES

1. What does your party plan to do to correct the effects of several years of severe and critical underfunding of social services in Canada?
2. What do you think the role of the federal government should be in providing services to victims of wife battering and sexual assault?
3. Are you in support of affordable accessible day care for all families who want it?

### JUSTICE

1. What does your party propose to do to ensure enforcement of maintenance and support orders?

### SURVIVAL

1. Will you work to rescind the umbrella agreement with the United States government for the testing of weapons systems in Canada which includes the cruise missile, thereby giving Canada an independent position for promoting initiatives for disarmament?
2. At the recent session of the United Nations, Canada opposed the resolution calling for a freeze on arms production and deployment. Will you work to change this policy?

### EDUCATION

1. Given that data easily available from provincial governments, student associations, teacher associations and women's groups indicate that there is irrefutable evidence of institutionalized sexism in the Canadian school system--from primary to post-secondary--and that this institutionalized sexism leads female students into narrow occupational choices which reinforce the stereotypic image of women, and that women as workers in education also suffer from discrimination, are you prepared to recommend the establishment of a co-ordinating body responsible for collecting information on the status of women in education as students and employees, and also charged with the responsibility of identifying to provincial governments the economic and social impact of provinces continuing to fail to meet the needs of women in education.



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ELECTION '80: *State the Facts – Ask the Questions*

### *Jobs*

**Facts:** 8.3% of women are unemployed compared to 6.6% of men (November 1979). Rather than creating permanent jobs for women, recent employment strategies have emphasized counselling and training through short-term placements.

*Ask the question:*

- How would your party create more permanent jobs for women?

### *The Wage Gap*

**Facts:** Women who work full-time in Canada earn, on average, only 60% as much as men. Evidence suggests that this gap may be widening.

*Ask the question:*

- What does your party think should be done to reduce this wage and salary gap?
- Would you support contract compliance measures requiring companies which receive federal government contracts to abide by the Canadian Human Rights Act, in particular the clause requiring equal pay for work of equal value?

### *Equal Opportunities*

**Facts:** The federal government as the largest single employer of women in Canada is committed to the concept of equality of employment opportunities. However, women in the Public Service continue to be segregated in low-paying, low-status jobs.

*Ask the question:*

- Would your party legislate, as allowed by Section 15 of the federal Human Rights Act, special programs to redress historic imbalances and ensure that women are allowed real equality of access to all employment opportunities in the Public Service?

### *Unemployment Insurance*

**Facts:** Recent amendments to the Unemployment Insurance legislation have withdrawn coverage from, or severely penalized, part-time workers and re-entrants to the paid labour force, most of whom are women.

*Ask the question:*

- Would your party support the reinstatement of these workers to full Unemployment Insurance coverage?

**Facts:** Unemployment Insurance is an insurance against loss of income due to unemployment. Anyone paying premiums should be able to collect when unemployed. Recent proposals to have U.I. benefits based on family income or a 2-tier system classify women as secondary workers, and would disentitle entirely many married women, or result in women generally receiving lower benefits than men.

*Ask the question:*

- Does your party support the 2-tier or family income-based U.I. proposals?

### *Maternity Benefits/ Parental Leave*

**Facts:** The maternity provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act are clearly inadequate as currently legislated. Although this program is entirely funded by employer/employee contributions, loopholes leave many women workers without maternity coverage. Adoptive parents are not entitled to benefits, no allowance is made for men to remain in the home to care for their young children nor is there any recognition of workers' parenting responsibilities as in the care of sick children.

*Ask the question:*

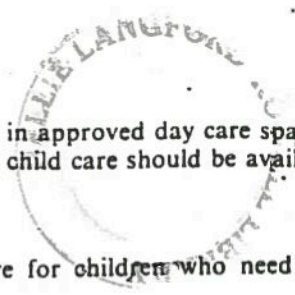
- Would your party support the development of a comprehensive maternity benefit/parental leave scheme?

### *Child Care*

**Facts:** In 1978 barely 10% of the children under 6 with working mothers were in approved day care spaces. This left over 620,000 children in un-monitored care situations. Good quality child care should be available and accessible to all working parents.

*Ask the question:*

- What would your party do to correct the deplorable lack of day care for children who need it?



## Pensions

**Facts:** Most elderly women in Canada are poor. As paid workers, they have earned less than men, often in jobs which provide no pension coverage; as homemakers, their work and contribution to society receives nothing but glib recognition. Few private pension plans have survivor's benefits.

**Ask the question:**

- What does your party think should be done to ensure adequate pensions for all women?

## Indian Women

**Facts:** Under the present Indian Act, Indian women lose their Indian status on marriage to a non-Indian. The reverse does not hold for Indian men.

**Ask the question:**

- Would your party support the immediate amendment of the Act to end this blatant discrimination, as well as legislation to restore the status of those women who have lost it?

## Federal Appointments

**Facts:** Women remain under-represented in appointments to the Senate, boards and commissions, as well as to the bench.

**Ask the question:**

- Does your party agree that qualified women should be appointed equally with men to positions representing the public?

## Rape

**Facts:** It is not currently an offence under the Criminal Code for a man to rape his wife.

**Ask the question:**

- Does your party agree that this 'spousal exemption' should be eliminated?

## Occupational Health Hazards

**Facts:** Policies regarding the health of female workers should ensure that each woman's right to equal participation is upheld while insisting on the employer's responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace.

**Ask the question:**

- Does your party agree that standards which provide for the safety of workers of both sexes be established and enforced?
- Does your party agree that while hazards are being eliminated, women who may be at risk because of their reproductive physiology should be guaranteed local transfers without loss of pay or seniority to jobs where no hazards exist, or be compensated if no such positions are available?

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