



# The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

Newsletter, August, 1982  
ISSN 0227-6879

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## OCSW FUND RAISER!

Wine & Cheese & Auction

Thursday, September 16

6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Hart House - East Common Room

\$15 per person

Buy two tickets and give or  
sell one to a friend.

This is OCSW's first fund  
raiser in 11 years. Because  
we have kept the membership  
fee to \$10 for another year,  
we need the revenue to meet  
printing, mailing and  
membership costs.

For tickets:

Lee Grills

488-1486, days

Beth Atcheson

961-6551, evenings

Janet Skelton

481-2514, evenings

Brigid O'Reilly

533-2194, evenings

Carol Sutton

960-3213, both

Please help ensure the success  
of our fund raising evening.

## OCSW RECOMMENDATIONS ON PENSIONS

The OCSW last August (1981) presented a report, including 16 recommendations, to the provincial Select Committee on pensions. This Committee has made its final report and seems to have missed the point in most of the cases specified by OCSW.

The recommendations fall into several broad categories: elimination of poverty among the elderly; universal pension coverage of employed persons; ensuring that pension plan members receive benefits from participating in their pension plans; equitable treatment of women who take pregnancy leave and those who raise very young children; equitable treatment between employees of the same employer, and equitable treatment between spouses.

For instance, the OCSW recommended that the Old Age Supplement be increased substantially to a level that would ensure income above the poverty line to both couples and single persons, by taxing back OAS payments of those people whose net taxable income is \$30,000 or more. The Select Committee did not support this suggestion.

Our report suggested universal pension coverage of employed persons, using one of several methods, to a benefit level of 50% of the average industrial wage. The Select Committee

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does not support any of the methods which could bring this about.

We recommended that vesting be immediate, or, at the latest, after one year of plan membership. The Select Committee has recommended vesting after five years of service (or membership in the plan) with effect prior to the end of 1982, and further recommends a review in three years.

To make people aware of the significance of retirement planning, we stated that pension plan membership start at age 18 or on joining the work force with an exemption for students. Employers could have a one year service requirement. The Select Committee has proposed instead one year of service and 30 years of age.

Many people contributed to the OCSW submission, public meeting on pensions and subsequent follow-up with the Select Committee. However, two women deserve special recognition for their work: Lenore Davidson and Audrey Orr. Contact either of them to see a full copy of the report or to join the continuing committee on pensions. During the day both may be reached at 923-6661.

#### OTHER PENSION NEWS

Most women and low income workers have no private pension plan coverage, according to a Health and Welfare Canada study, "Pension plan coverage by level of earnings and age, 1978 and 1979."

The study confirms that private plan coverage is low, although it increases with the level of earnings. In 1979 only 49% of men in the private sector and 30% of women belonged to a pension plan. Thus more than 2 million women working outside the home had no private pension plan protection.

Copies of the study are available from

the Planning, Evaluation and Liaison Directorate, Income Security Programs Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare. (613)593-7091.

#### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN ATHLETICS

By an Order in Council dated April 8, 1982, John Sopinka, O.C. was appointed as technical consultant and advisor to the Minister of Labour to study and make recommendations in respect of equal treatment of the sexes in athletics.

By his terms of reference, Mr. Sopinka may look at how the organization of athletics, public institutions and public funding provide equal opportunity for participation of both sexes in athletics. He is empowered to look at the legislation and experience of other jurisdictions in Canada and elsewhere.

This issue has been in the public eye since 1979 when the Ontario Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal to allow two girls to play on competitive minor softball and hockey teams with boys. It was raised last year before the committee of the Ontario legislature which was reviewing amendments to the Human Rights Code by a number of groups, including the OCSW. (The OCSW also participated last year in laying a complaint under the Canadian Human Rights Act against the organizers of the Robbie Soccer Tournament.) Although Mr. Sopinka will not be holding public hearings, representatives of the OCSW hope to speak with him at various stages throughout the study. For this purpose, we have joined forces with Bruce Kidd. One meeting has been held already.

If you have any experience in this area, please contact Lynne Sullivan, 921-3205, or Beth Atcheson, 961-6551.

## VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY

The Social Development Committee of the Ontario Legislative Assembly recently spent nine days hearing testimony from a variety of sources on violence in the family. The 10th day was spent discussing their report which will be available in late September or October, 1982.

This does not give them much time to develop a thorough understanding of a problem on which we have been working actively for the last 15 years but there is hope.

Most of the MPPs involved had done their homework so their questions were to the point and, for the most part, extremely well informed. In particular four should be given special credit: Marion Bryden, Sheila Copps, Phil Gillies, and Richard Johnston. Call or write to them to express your appreciation; they deserve it.

"Witnesses" at the hearings included Transition House workers, battered women, batterers, social workers, workers from the justice system, police officers and the Attorney-General.

Trudy Don, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, set the tone for the hearings by outlining the problems and possible solutions. She described the limited resources currently available to women who are forced to flee battering situations, taking their children with them, the lack of police protection and follow-through, the lack of public education on this crime, and the lack of prevention services, such as self-help service for the batterers. When asked for specific recommendations, Don said that her three "wishes" would be funding stability for Transition Houses, second stage housing and education.

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Metro Toronto has a Domestic Response Team, which began in one division, August 17, 1981 and expanded to a second in January, 1982. The Team consists of a social worker and a community relations officer. Their visit is followed the next day by a social worker who refers the family to a counselling agency. Through the testimony it became evident that the Metro Team was poorly informed about the Family Consultant Programme in London, Ontario where police officers were ordered to charge batterers.

Metro officers have discretion regarding the laying of charges. The officer may arrest the offender or may want the woman to lay the charge so the officer is free for other duties if it is a "minor" assault (i.e. no visible marks to prove the assault) or if the batterer is "provoked". The victim is often told to go to the Justice of the Peace to lay the charge.

However, in London the conviction rate tripled in common assault cases and increased five times in cases of assault causing bodily harm when compared with cases such as in Metro where the victim lays the charge.

If the victim laid the charge, 66% of the cases were withdrawn or dismissed but only 28% of the cases were withdrawn if the police laid the charge. Furthermore, when the police lay the charge, the matter is handled in a criminal court but when the victim lays the charge, it is generally handled in family court. Ordinarily it takes less time to get to criminal court, fewer charges are dismissed and the sentencing is more severe. Family courts have hesitated to sentence in wife-abuse cases and have looked at therapy as the solution. That is beginning to change. Prior to the London directive, charges were laid in only 3% of the complaints. Now they are laid in 88%.

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For battered women in less populated areas of Ontario, the situation is desperate. There are few, if any, community resources. Because of the distances separating population centres, battered women pay huge amounts of money for a cab ride to take them from a battering situation or rely on the generosity of the Ontario Provincial Police to remove them.

Further information from the Social Development Committee hearings showed that native women have the additional burden of being abused by many officials who often suggest that they "just go back to the reserve."

Immigrant women who are sponsored to come to Canada by their spouses are unable to apply for social assistance until it can be proven to federal immigration officers that the contract with the husband has been broken. Immigrants may apply for citizenship after three years in Canada but sponsorship may continue for 10 years and the sponsor is expected to financially aid the immigrant for that period of time even if the immigrant has citizenship. What spouse would be willing to do this if he is a batterer and the woman has fled?

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On July 29, Ontario's Attorney-General, Hon. R. Roy McMurtry presented the committee with a "Policy statement concerning the role of the criminal justice system in cases of domestic violence..." This document was addressed to the Liaison Committee on the Enforcement of Family Law Orders which has not met for almost a year.

The document had been sent by courier to members of the Liaison Committee on July 22, 1982 and the Liaison Committee members were contacted by telephone on July 27 for their reactions. The Policy Statement is worth reading and is

available through the Ministry of the Attorney General. Warning: it may make you angry, maybe angry enough to make your opinions known to the Attorney General, your MPP and OCSW.

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In Ontario we need more: emergency shelters with secure funding, followed by second stage housing and support; police to lay more assault charges; community services (such as self-help groups for batterers to learn that violence is not an acceptable answer to their problems; public education on the issue, and training for all who work with families. Ask your MPP to provide you with a copy of the report from the Social Development Committee and let her/him know how you feel about it.

#### FAMILY BENEFITS CHANGES PROPOSED

If the changes proposed by Hon. Frank Drea, Minister of Community and Social Services, come to pass it will mean less aid for sole support parents now living on Family Benefits Assistance, FBA.

Mr. Drea has announced that pilot projects will be undertaken to begin the process of transferring the responsibility for administering FBA programs for single parents to the municipalities and to add new "employment supports" to the Family Benefits program.

Municipal general welfare will provide only \$386 a month for a single mother with one child, while family benefits now allows \$473 a month for the same situation. A mother with two children would be eligible for \$442 from general welfare, but \$549 in family benefits.

One of Drea's arguments is that sole-support mothers should not be considered unemployable, one criterion for being on family benefits. Yet the training and supports (such as daycare) to

### TORONTO ASKS FOR HELP

In a recent newspaper ad the City of Toronto asked for assistance "in broadening the representation of racial and ethnic minority groups, women and disabled people on City of Toronto Boards and Committees, to better reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the City."

The positions available are listed below. For an application, call 367-7020. Completed forms must be returned to the City Clerk, 2nd fl., City Hall, Toronto, M5H 2N2 by Friday, September 3.

Committee on Civic Awards, 2 places, no stipend; City of Toronto Planning Board, 11 places, Chair: \$4,178, Vice Chair: \$3,819, Member: \$3,581. Housing Standards Appeal Committee, 6 places, Chair: \$5,789, Member: \$4,549; Local Board of Health, 3 places, Chair: \$8,270, Vice Chair: \$4,774, Member, \$4,178; Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations, 10 places, no stipend; Toronto General Hospital Board of Trustees, 4 places, no stipend; Toronto Historical Board, 5 places, no stipend; Toronto Hydro Electric Commission, 2 places, Member: \$10,000; Toronto Public Library Board, 1 place, no stipend.

### WOMAN STUDIES

Canadian Woman Studies/Les cahiers de la femme is a quarterly bilingual, interdisciplinary journal which reaches out to all women. Recent issues have explored sexuality and symbol and art. The summer issue deals with women and the economy; the fall issue focuses on adolescence. Subscriptions are \$15 for individuals and \$25 for institutions. Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Suite 204, Downsview, M3J 1P3, 677-3725.

### DEFEND YOURSELF!

A four week self-defense course for women starts Monday, September 20 and

and runs for eight consecutive weeks at the YWCA Woodlawn Residence, 80 Woodlawn Avenue East, \$45. The course includes discussion about self-defense as well as basic practical techniques such as kicks, punches, breaking holds and verbal defense. To register, call the YWCA at 487-7151 or go to 2532 Yonge Street.

### DAYCARE REP NEEDED

The OCSW needs one of its members to act as the organization's representative on the Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare. The Coalition is holding a special general meeting on Monday, September 13, 10:00 a.m., at the Ontario Federation of Labour Building, 15 Gervais Drive, suite 204, Don Mills. (Note: change of date and time.)

If you are interested or would like to nominate someone to act as our rep on the Coalition, please contact Brigid O'Reilly at 864-1234 (days) or 533-2194 (evenings).

### A WOMAN OF DISTINCTION

The OCSW has nominated Mary Eberts for a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. We believe that the work she has done for women in many areas, particularly on the Constitution, has benefitted not only the women of Ontario but those across Canada as well.

All nominees will be honoured at a dinner on Tuesday, October 26, at the Royal York Hotel, when the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto will present the winners with their "Aggies."

Tickets are \$50, roughly half of which is tax deductible. If you would like to join an OCSW table for the event, please telephone Jannie Mills at 961-8100 and indicate your seating preference. The YWCA accepts VISA.

## MEMBERS' NEWS

Abby Hoffman and Kay Macpherson have been named to the Order of Canada.

Lynn McDonald won the nomination as the NDP candidate in Toronto's Broadview-Greenwood riding.

Connie Taylor has opened a new office on Yorkville Avenue for her consulting practice on affirmative action and equal employment opportunities.

## NDP SEARCH FOR INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN

The concern of women in their middle and later years form the subject of an investigation by the "Task Force on Older Women in Canada", sponsored by the Participation of Women Committee of the New Democratic Party and by the federal NDP.

The Task Force is conducting public hearings across the country until December, 1982, after which the members will prepare a final report to be used as a guide for proposals to improve the situation of older women in Canada.

The OCSW has been asked to tell its members that the Task Force is seeking information also via a questionnaire and anyone who would like to complete this confidential survey is invited to write (postage free) to request one from: Pauline Jewett, M.P., Margaret Mitchell, M.P., or Neil Young, M.P., House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario.

## HUSBAND-WIFE VIOLENCE

The first in-depth report on husband-wife violence in Canada is the result of doctoral research of Dr. Pat Kincaid (The Omitted Reality, Husband-wife violence in Ontario and policy implications for education). Using Canadian statistics, it looks at this phenomena, particularly wife assault, demographically before exploring two major theories

of causation -- the cycle of violence and the cycle of sexism. The implications of the findings for schools are discussed in the final chapter.

To order, send \$15 per copy, plus \$2.50 postage and handling for the first and 50¢ for each additional copy to: Dr. Pat Kincaid, Family Violence Research Project, Box 853, Station B, Willowdale, Ontario, M2K 2R1.

## STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL

Lynn Gordon's term as chairperson of the Ontario Status of Women Council ended on June 30. To date the Ontario government has not appointed a successor.

According to a news release in July, Dr. Josephine Somerville is acting chair until September 26.

The OCSW wrote to Premier Davis in June urging that his government appoint soon someone with well-established credentials among women's groups in the province. Any further action by the Davis government will be reported in the next issue of the newsletter.

## FINDING TIME FOR ME

Planning your physical recreation might well start with a movie. Entitled "Just for me" it is about three women who solve the problems of how to find the time, where to begin and what to do with the kids in order to do something "just for me." It runs for 27 min.10 sec. and is available at all National Film Board offices. Également disponible in français sous le titre Pour moi seule.

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This issue of the newsletter was prepared by: Carol Sutton, Brigid O'Reilly, Beth Atcheson and Lee Grills.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE OCSW

The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women is a Toronto-based voluntary organization formed in 1971 by women wishing to see the implementation of those recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women which fall under provincial jurisdiction (equal pay, social services, education, family law, family planning, etc.) Members of the OCSW are from a cross-section of backgrounds and occupations.

The Committee holds six general meetings a year. Projects are carried out by subcommittees working on specific issues. Past activities have included taking briefs to government, and educating the public through press conferences or open information meetings. A Newsletter is published three times annually.

Membership Fee -- The OCSW covers its costs solely by means of a fee paid by each member, and other voluntary donations. The membership fee is \$10 per person (\$7 for students and seniors.) Donations above the membership dues are always welcome.

To join, send the portion below with \$10 to: Ontario Committee on the Status of Women, P.O.Box 188, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2M1.

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (postal code) \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

Issues in which I am interested:

pensions _____	women and aging _____	equal pay for work of _____
child care _____	women in law _____	equal value _____
health _____	women in politics _____	education _____
Constitution _____	Other (please specify) _____	

I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a new member \_\_\_\_\_ renewal \_\_\_\_\_ donation \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_