

THE DISADVANTAGED MAJORITY

A BRIEF PRESENTED TO MEMBERS OF THE
CABINET OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

BY

THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

MARCH 1979

INTRODUCTION

This brief addresses the key problems women in Ontario face as adult family members and members of the work force. Most of these problems are unique to women, and women are at a distinct disadvantage compared to men. As a result of limitations on government spending, prompted, we submit, by considerations of very short term economic benefit, these problems have become more acute. A further difficulty is that government develops its policies and programs on the basis of models drawn from the life-pattern of men which are therefore not appropriate to the lives women lead. One example is the refusal of the Government to incorporate into the Canada Pension Plan a provision designed to cover periods spent at home caring for children. A ministerial response to the problem of the eligibility of single fathers under the Family Benefits Act is equally ingenuous:

"Perhaps we should go the other way and enforce work requirements for both sexes".

We do not want to argue that only women should be eligible for family benefits; rather, that the Government should not blindly require all single parents to work without also recognizing that this raises problems of child care, equal job opportunity and equal pay, among others. Female patterns

of activity must be isolated, understood and assimilated into the decision-making process. The need for economic restraint cannot be used to defend policies which affect women disproportionately.

The issues we deal with, and which the Government must face and resolve to move towards equality for women, are grouped according to women's career patterns. The categories are:

- 1) women whose primary commitment is to family life
- 2) women whose primary commitment is to labour force participation
- 3) women who re-enter the work force

Our focus is on the overall direction of the Government's policies and programs for women. We know that ministers are generally accessible for consultation on specific subjects. We intend to follow up this presentation.

FAMILY LIFE

Just over half of the married women in Ontario are still full-time home-makers. Their work is of considerable significance to society. They maintain the current labour force and they provide for its successors. The Family Law Reform Act, 1978, recognized that the non-financial contributions of women should create economic rights within

the marriage. The Government must accept that the same contributions should create economic rights in the society.

The majority of married women in Ontario are not financially secure. More important, what statistics there are indicate that in old age they will be left with very little money. In 1970 the average income of a widow in Canada between 55 to 64 whose main income source was neither a job nor government transfer was \$3,434.00 (Table One).

The women who work at home fall between the various schemes that have been established with men's life-patterns in mind. Because they have not been part of the paid labour force they have no access to pensions. The Government assumes that they will be provided for by the financial arrangements of their spouses. Their spouses die and they are left on your welfare rolls.

WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

The number of women who work outside the home is rapidly increasing. In 1967, 40% of the women in Ontario between the ages of 14 and 64 worked, in 1977, 50% (Table Six). In 1977 60.3% of the women in Ontario of child-bearing age—(25-44) worked. In the same year 47% of the women from 45 to 64 worked (Table Three). These women do not work for pin money. Over 40% support themselves or a family. Furthermore, many married women work of necessity to

supplement a meagre family income. It is ridiculous to treat them as "secondary wage earners".

Although more women in Ontario work than ever before the choices and opportunities available to women do not begin to approximate those available to men. In Canada in 1976 the average female worker earned 53.6% as much as the average male worker (\$15,180: \$8,114). In effect, women earned about half as much as men. Even in occupations where women predominate, they earn less than men. In Ontario in 1976, some classes of female office workers earned between 84% and 94% of the income of their male counterparts, and the gap increased from junior to senior positions (Table Five). In 1977 in Ontario unemployment among women was 2.7% higher than that among men (8.6%: 5.9%). The gaps in average wage and unemployment were greater than those in 1974. Women receive fewer job benefits. Twenty-nine percent of female workers in Canada participate in private pension plans. Sixty percent of them work in government. In the private sector half as many women as men are in pension plans.

Many factors cause women's inequality in the work force. Almost all these factors come under provincial mandate and deserve the attention of the legislature. We deal with four of them below.

1. School Guidance

School guidance counsellors still do not prepare women to work for the greater part of their lives. Also, they continue to direct women to jobs commonly thought of as women's jobs.

The fault does not lie in the policy of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry has prepared a number of excellent guidelines and has in general been responsive to women's needs. However, this policy is not being carried out by individual school boards and schools for the following reasons:

- (i) School boards purchase many of these new resource materials as extras. Budget cutbacks prevent them from doing so.
- (ii) Guidance counsellors themselves need education in the implementation of the policies.
- (iii) Many school boards and schools take little initiative in the guidance of female students.

WE RECOMMEND

THAT THE MINISTRY ENFORCE ITS OWN GUIDELINES ON
NON-SEXIST GUIDANCE PRACTICES

2. Job Ghettos

Sixty-two point six (62.6) percent of women workers in Ontario are concentrated in the clerical, sales and services sectors. Twenty-seven point nine (27.9) percent of male workers are in these areas. In other sectors there is

a tendency for women to be clustered: in the professions, the majority of women are teachers and nurses, in manufacturing, textile and clothing workers. Job ghettos encourage wage discrimination. Employment standards legislation does not prevent this.

The least advantaged women in Ontario are the least protected under the Employment Standards Act. In textile and clothing factories minimum labour standards are often not enforced. Workers do not complain because they are afraid of being dismissed. In addition, many of them are not English-speaking, and so lack a skill essential to pursuing their rights.

WE RECOMMEND

THAT SPOT CHECKS BE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 45 OF THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT;

THAT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND RECREATION'S PROGRAM FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO IMMIGRANT WOMEN BE EXPANDED TO COVER WORKING WOMEN, ON THE JOB

Domestics are exempted altogether from the most important provisions of the Employment Standards Act: minimum wage, statutory holidays, overtime pay, vacation pay, hours of work. Many cannot choose to leave these jobs because they are in Ontario on limited work permits.

WE RECOMMEND

THAT DOMESTIC WORKERS BE INCLUDED IN THE EMPLOYMENT
STANDARDS ACT

3. Child Care

In 1973 there were 206,000 children under 6 years old in Ontario with working mothers. In 1977 there were just under 50,000 licensed child care places in Ontario. There are in addition some after-school programs run by boards of education in co-operation with parents. These are not fully supervised. As more women work, more children will need care and fewer women will be available to care for children in their homes.

The present cost of a licensed place for a two-year old is approximately \$2,280 a year. For supervised after-school and lunch programs the cost is between \$936 and \$1,404 yearly. In 1976 the average yearly income of a women in Canada was \$8,140.00. In 1978 the average income of young families headed by women was \$7,052.

Even with subsidization, child care in Ontario is not available or not affordable. If, in consequence, women do not work, the Government will have to pay to maintain them-at-home-or deal with a growing class of working-poor. If women work despite the lack of child care, they must either reduce their commitment to their jobs, to their own detriment, that of their employers, and, ultimately, to that

of the economy, or to their children, to the detriment of society which must suffer the consequences of abandoned, disturbed, battered or delinquent children.

WE RECOMMEND THAT THE GOVERNMENT SPEND SOME MONEY AND IMPROVE CHILD CARE

- 1) INCREASE PUBLIC CHILD CARE
- 2) INCREASE LICENSING OF PRIVATE CHILD CARE
- 3) INCREASE USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES, SUCH AS SCHOOL BUILDINGS
- 4) RAISE THE INCOME LEVELS QUALIFYING FOR SUBSIDY

In 1977 we presented a brief to the Minister of Community and Social Services detailing these and other positions. We have received no response.

4. Equal Pay

Women are not earning as much as men (Tables Four and Five; Brief, page 5). This is due in part to the fact that women are not paid the same wage for the same job. This situation is in principle contrary to section 33 of the Employment Standards Act. However, the Act compromises its own principle.

Section 33 defines "equal work" in such a restrictive way that the Act is easy to evade: the work must require substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility, and be performed under similar working conditions.

The Act has a very broad "escape clause " which allows men's and women's wages to be unequal if they are

"based on any factor other than sex".

Provisions for the enforcement of the Act make it ineffectual. First, the employee must bear the onus, and so the cost and the burden of proof, of bringing action against the employer. Second, the Act does not itself provide for class actions; it is oriented towards an individual complaint model. The Act does not specify complaint procedures and therefore does not explicitly allow or disallow class actions. Third, although the Employment Standards Branch, set up by the Act, has the power to investigate violations, it does not have the staff to do so. Fourth, the damages an employee may recover are minimal; they are limited to a maximum of \$4,000.

The second reason women do not earn as much as men is that their jobs differ from men's jobs and, for the most part, carry lower wages irrespective of the value of these jobs to their employers and to the economy. The legislation of equal pay for work of equal value is the only solution to this problem. The establishing of criteria for non-sexist job evaluation is essential. As long as there are job ghettos, such legislation is mandatory.

WE RECOMMEND

THAT THERE BE NO BLANKET EXCEPTION TO EXISTING
EQUAL PAY LEGISLATION;
THAT THERE BE PROVISION FOR CLASS ACTIONS;
THAT THE EMPLOYER BEAR THE ONUS OF PROOF;

THAT LIMITATIONS ON DAMAGES BE REMOVED AND FINES INCREASED;

THAT THE ACT INCLUDE PROVISION OF EQUAL BENEFITS AS PART OF EQUAL PAY;

THAT EQUAL PAY BE RELATED TO WORK OF EQUAL VALUE;

THAT REGULATIONS FOR NON-SEXIST JOB EVALUATIONS BE ESTABLISHED

These recommendations would save you the cost of establishing the proposed equal opportunity advisory committee. We do not need another vehicle for delay.

RE-ENTRY

In the past decade the female labour force in Ontario has grown more than twice as quickly as the female population (Table Six). The increased rate of participation of married or formerly married women accounts for almost all of this increase. Most of these women have never worked or have returned to the work force after raising a family. The situation for both groups is similar. We describe both as re-entering the work force.

The woman returning to work after a considerable break has a great adjustment to make. Both she and the paid work area have changed. The years she has spent at home have given her skills. These need to be applied to a new work situation. In many cases she will need more extensive training. At present, opportunities for part-time training are limited to areas where jobs are few or non-

existent, e.g. the social sciences.

Women returning to work need counselling. In most cases their education and upbringing have not prepared them to be long-term wage earners and to compete for jobs with potential for advancement. They therefore need employment counselling, which may include educational guidance. They often lack confidence, and are in general affected by the radical changes in their lives that have brought them back to the work force. In addition, older women are discriminated against because of their age. For these reasons many will also need personal counselling.

For the past few years the federal Outreach program has helped organizations providing the services needed by women returning to work. Times Change, Women's Counselling Referral and Education Centre, and a number of community college groups are among these. Federal funding for such programs is now being withdrawn. The client group for these programs is being redefined too narrowly. There is no longer a general service for women and there needs to be.

WE RECOMMEND

THAT THE GOVERNMENT PICK UP THE SLACK BETWEEN EXISTING PROGRAMS AND THOSE NEEDED TO SERVE ALL THE WOMEN ENTERING THE LABOUR FORCE;

THAT THE GOVERNMENT FIND WAYS OF USING EXISTING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES TO PROVIDE CAREER COUNSELLING AND TRAINING;

THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER CONSOLIDATING FUNDS FROM SEVERAL MINISTRIES TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SERVICES;

THAT THE NEW MINISTRY OF LABOUR & MANPOWER EXPAND ITS PLAN TO CREATE MORE TRADES TRAINING TO INCLUDE WOMEN OF ALL AGES AS A TARGET GROUP. THE PROVISION OF COURSES AND FINANCING SHOULD BE ADJUSTED TO ACCOMMODATE WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR FORCE.

We support the move of Labour & Manpower into the Secretariat for Social Development.

Women returning to work are negatively affected in one other basic way, in relation to the Canada Pension Plan. A woman's contributing years are averaged over the total years she could have worked instead of the years she actually did work. The result is a much lower pension for a woman who has worked all her life, but has received an economic wage for only a part of it. The inequity of this has been recognized by the federal government and almost all provinces.

Your Government has argued that the Plan already has an adequate drop-out provision. It does not recognize that the basic 15% drop-out provision is likely to cover periods of lowest earnings, unemployment, training and so on, for men because the male employment pattern is being used as the model. This drop-out provision is not sufficient for women. The Government has expressed other concerns about the drop-out proposal--concerns of equity, leverage and the integrity

of the scheme. As we have stated before the Royal Commission on the Status of Pensions in Ontario, these concerns can be answered. We can only conclude that the Government exercised its veto to ensure deferral of its obligations as borrowers with respect to the Plan.

WE URGE

THAT THE GOVERNMENT ADOPT THE CHILD-BEARING
DROP-OUT PROVISION TO THE CANADA PENSION PLAN

CONCLUSION

Half of the population of Ontario lacks equal opportunity for economic independence and well-being. That should be reason enough for your Government to take action. We are quite aware that the Government faces a period of great economic constraint. We expect you to say that though you agree with our principles you cannot afford to act on them. That is just not good enough. Many of our recommendations are for changes in policy that do not involve significant expenditure. You must also consider the hidden cost of inequality. For example:

It is the older woman without an adequate pension who occupies the Ontario Housing Senior Citizens unit.

It is the family without an adequate income, particularly the mother-led family, which lives in rent-geared-to-income housing.

It is women with children, who cannot find adequate care for their children and therefore cannot take a job, who are living on welfare.

APPENDIX

TABLE ONE

Average Income of Widows and Widowers Aged 55 to 64
by Major Sources of Income, Canada 1970

| | Average income of those whose main source of income is: | | | |
|-----------------|---|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | % |
| | Employment | Government transfers | Other sources | without any income |
| <u>Widows</u> | | | | |
| Income | \$4,536 | \$1,448 | \$3,434 | - |
| % | 41.5% | 26.2% | 21.0% | 11.3% |
| <u>Widowers</u> | | | | |
| Income | \$6,553 | \$1,439 | \$5,183 | - |
| % | 72.7% | 13.8% | 8.5% | 5.0% |

TABLE TWO

Women in the Ontario Labour Force and
Their Participation Rates

| | Number | Participation Rates |
|------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1957 | 594,000 | 30% |
| 1967 | 966,000 | 39% |
| 1977 | 1,589,000 | 50% |

TABLE THREE

Women's Participation Rates by Age, Ontario, 1977

| Age | |
|----------|-------|
| 15 - 19 | 50.8% |
| 20 - 24 | 71.8% |
| 25 - 44 | 60.3% |
| 45 - 64 | 47.0% |
| 65+ | 4.1% |
| All ages | 49.7% |

TABLE FOUR

Average Annual Earnings of Some Full-time Workers
in Canada--1976

| Occupation | Average Earnings | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------|---------------------|
| | Male | Female | Female as % Male |
| Managerial | 23,145 | 12,299 | 53.1% |
| Professional | 19,051 | 11,479 | 60.3% |
| Clerical | 12,656 | 7,852 | 62.0% |
| Sales | 15,214 | 6,754 | 44.4% |
| Service | 11,428 | 5,119 | 44.8% |

TABLE FIVE

Median Weekly Earnings for Some Office Occupations,
Toronto--1976

| Occupation | Average Earnings | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------|
| | Female | Male | Female as % Male |
| Accounting clerk, Jr. | \$151 | \$167 | 90.4% |
| Accounting clerk, Sr. | 184 | 221 | 83.3% |
| Clerk, General Office, Jr. | 143 | 152 | 94.1% |
| Clerk, General Office, Sr. | 203 | 238 | 85.3% |
| Computer Operator, Jr. | 176 | 194 | 90.7% |
| Computer Operator, Sr. | 196 | 239 | 82.0% |
| Programmer, Jr. | 239 | 252 | 94.8% |
| Programmer, Sr. | 286 | 303 | 94.4% |
| Secretary, Jr. | 177 | 188 | 94.1% |
| Secretary, Sr. | 205 | 218 | 94.0% |
| Systems Analyst, Jr. | 275 | 294 | 93.5% |
| Systems Analyst, Sr. | 325 | 365 | 89.0% |

TABLE SIX

Population and Labour Force by Sex,
Ontario, 1967 and 1977

| | Sex | 1967 | 1977 | % increase 1967-77 |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Population over 14 | male | 2,359,000 | 3,081,000 | 30.6% |
| | female | 2,446,000 | 3,197,000 | 30.7% |
| Labour force | male | 1,926,000 | 2,455,000 | 27.5% |
| | female | 966,000 | 1,589,000 | 64.5% |

THE DISADVANTAGED MAJORITY

A BRIEF PRESENTED TO MEMBERS OF THE
CABINET OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

BY

THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

MARCH 1979

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

WE RECOMMEND:

1. SCHOOL GUIDANCE

THAT THE MINISTRY ENFORCE ITS OWN GUIDELINES ON NON-SEXIST GUIDANCE PRACTICES

2. JOB GHETTOS

THAT SPOT CHECKS BE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 45 OF THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

THAT THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND RECREATION'S PROGRAM FOR TEACHING ENGLISH TO IMMIGRANT WOMEN BE EXPANDED TO COVER WORKING WOMEN, ON THE JOB

THAT DOMESTIC WORKERS BE INCLUDED IN THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT

3. CHILD CARE

THAT THE GOVERNMENT SPEND SOME MONEY AND IMPROVE CHILD CARE

- 1) INCREASE PUBLIC CHILD CARE
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- 3) INCREASE USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES, SUCH AS SCHOOL BUILDINGS
- 4) RAISE THE INCOME LEVELS QUALIFYING FOR SUBSIDY

4. EQUAL PAY

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THAT THE GOVERNMENT PICK UP THE SLACK BETWEEN EXISTING PROGRAMS AND THOSE NEEDED TO SERVE ALL THE WOMEN ENTERING THE LABOUR FORCE

THAT THE GOVERNMENT FIND WAYS OF USING EXISTING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES TO PROVIDE CAREER COUNSELLING AND TRAINING

THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER CONSOLIDATING FUNDS FROM SEVERAL MINISTRIES TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SERVICES

THAT THE NEW MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND MANPOWER EXPAND ITS PLAN TO CREATE MORE TRADES TRAINING TO INCLUDE WOMEN OF ALL AGES AS A TARGET GROUP. THE PROVISION OF COURSES AND FINANCING SHOULD BE ADJUSTED TO ACCOMMODATE WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR FORCE

THAT THE GOVERNMENT ADOPT THE CHILD-BEARING DROP-OUT PROVISION TO THE CANADA PENSION PLAN

Brief Abstract

Brief to be presented
by the Ontario Committee
on the Status of Women

March 29, 1979

I. WOMEN IN THE HOME

51.5% of all married women in Ontario work inside the home

TABLE ONE

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by Major Sources of Income, Canada 1970

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| Income | \$6,553 | \$1,439 | \$5,183 | - |
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The married woman at home receives no direct economic recognition for her work although it benefits society. Her work is not paid for. It attracts no pension benefits. Grown old and widowed, she is likely to be poverty-stricken.

II. WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

TABLE TWO

Women in the Ontario Labour Force and
Their Participation Rates

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| All ages | 49.7% |

The number of working women is increasing and is likely to continue to do so. Women need to work to support themselves and their families, or to supplement family incomes. They are met with the following difficulties.

A. (Lack of) CHILD CARE

- Number of Children with Working Mothers--Ontario 1973
 - under 16 yrs: 895,000
 - under 6 yrs: 206,000
- Total Licensed Child Care Places (including full-time care, after school programs, and home care)--Ontario, current
50,000

- Cost of Licensed Place for 2 year old child--Ontario, current \$190.00/mo.
- Cost of Approved Place--After 4 and Lunch Program--Ontario, current \$72.00 - \$108.00/mo.

There are very few licensed child care places in Ontario. Those that exist are expensive. As a result, working women with children will be forced to go on welfare or limit their commitments to their jobs or to their children (because they cannot provide them with adequate care).

B. (Lack of) EQUAL PAY AND OPPORTUNITY

TABLE FOUR

Average Annual Earnings of Some Full-time Workers
in Canada--1976

| Occupation | Average Earnings | | |
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| Secretary, Sr. | 205 | 218 | 94.0% |
| Systems Analyst, Jr. | 275 | 294 | 93.5% |
| Systems Analyst, Sr. | 325 | 365 | 89.0% |

Women do not earn as much as men, and if recent statistics indicate a trend, they will earn increasingly less. Inequalities of income arise, in part, because the range of jobs available to women is narrower than that available to men, and the jobs, in general, are lower paying. This situation is fostered early on by school guidance counsellors, and subsequently by the existence of "job ghettos"; job enclaves--clerical or textile worker, or nurse, for example--where there is a concentration of women. Women also earn less than men because they are paid less for the same job. In addition, the existence of job ghettos encourages wage discrimination between men and women. Present employment standards legislation does little to change this situation.

III. WOMEN RE-ENTERING THE LABOUR FORCE

TABLE SIX

Population and Labour Force by Sex,
Ontario, 1967 and 1977

| | Sex | 1967 | 1977 | % increase 1967-77 |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Population over 14 | male | 2,359,000 | 3,081,000 | 30.6% |
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| Labour force | male | 1,926,000 | 2,455,000 | 27.5% |
| | female | 966,000 | 1,589,000 | 64.5% |

The increase in the number of working women is due in great part to the entry or re-entry into the job market of women on separation, divorce or widowhood. We call all this activity "re-entry". Such women are frequently disadvantaged by their education and upbringing, which presupposed a short tenure in the work force (or none at all), and by their consequent lack of immediately marketable skills. They are often unable to perform at their best because they lack confidence, and are affected by the changes in their lives. They are discriminated against not only for the reasons suggested in section II but also because of their age. Such women need training and counselling. Federal money for such services has been cut back. There is room for provincial initiative in this area.

Ontario women re-entering the work force will also receive a pension calculated on the number of years of paid work and unpaid work at home. Since women who work at home are not assured of economic benefit for their labour, this is unfair and is recognized as such by every province but Ontario.

The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

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NEWS RELEASE

Toronto, March 29, 1979 "The Disadvantaged Majority" is the title of a brief presented today to the Premier of Ontario and members of his cabinet by the Ontario Committee on the Status of Women.

The brief specifically addresses the problems faced by three groups of women in Ontario today: those who are at home, those who are in the workplace and those who return to the workplace after some years at home. At the root of the problems facing all three is that government policy is based on the work patterns of men and not women. Women at home are financially insecure because they are dependent on their spouse's wages and pensions. Women in the workplace lack child care arrangements and suffer from lack of opportunity. They make, on average, only 53.6% of what men make. Women who re-enter the labour force need training, counselling and support systems.

The Committee presented a short list of recommendations to the Premier calling for changes in the equal pay legislation in Ontario, for more child care places and extended services to immigrant women and for a change in the government's stand on the drop out provision in the Canada Pension Plan.

The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women is a voluntary group founded in 1971 to press for implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

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