

THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

P.O. Box 188,
Station Q,
Toronto M4T 2M1.

NEWSLETTER

June 1974.

GENERAL MEETING

The next general meeting will be held on July 16, 1974, at 8 p.m., in the home of Lorna Marsden, 419 Markham St.

THE OCSW AND THE FEDERAL ELECTION

At its meeting of June 27, the OCSW steering committee decided that it must speak out about the lack of treatment of women's issues by candidates well along in the federal election campaign. Selecting 5 important areas of concern to Canadian women--equal opportunity in the work force, pensions and benefits, services to young children, maternity benefits, birth control and abortion--the Committee checked the literature of the 3 major parties, rating it as to whether reference was made to these issues, changes in legislation proposed, and details of proposed change specified. The Committee argued that, if a party had detailed proposals, mention of these should be made in its campaign literature; positive ratings in the analysis were not meant as endorsement of any party.

Speaking for the OCSW at a press conference on July 4 were Lorna Marsden, Naomi Black, Elsie Gregory MacGill, Helen LaFontaine, and Cathy Morrison. Charging a "shocking lack of attention" to women's issues in the campaign, they stated: "The 3 major political parties have one thing in common: they are ignoring an oppressed majority--the women of Canada. . . . Often when we speak to members of the major political parties they tell us that there is no public outcry for the correction of existing injustices in the lives of Canadian women. Then they fail to raise these issues at a time when the public has a chance to make their wishes heard. We ask candidates questions during this campaign and meet ignorance and indifference." Coverage of the press conference appeared on CBC-TV Metro News and CITY-TV; stories were also carried in the Globe and Mail and on CBC Radio's Bruce Rogers Show.

OCSW members seeking election were Aileen Nicholson, Kay Macpherson, and Freda Hawkins.

FAMILY PROPERTY LAW IN ONTARIO

The Family Law Reform Act (Bill 117) was introduced for first reading in the Ontario Legislature early in June, 1974. Its provisions are based on the recommendations in the recently tabled report of the Ontario Law Reform Commission on Family Law. In the light of the federal Supreme Court's decision on the Irene Murdoch case in Alberta, the OCSW is concerned that the women of Ontario should make their views known to the government on this crucial subject. We are pleased that the Attorney General is encouraging discussion of the recommendations through public forums in various centres around the province. Women in the Toronto area will be given their say at such a forum in the St. Lawrence Centre on August 28, 1974, at 8 p.m. The film "Family Property Law", which explains the recommendations for change will be shown, and Attorney General Robert Welch will be there to discuss the issues. In addition, the Ontario Status of Women Council will hold its own forum on family property law on October 25-6, 1974, at Queen's Park. The OCSW has been invited to send representatives.

FAMILY PROPERTY LAW IN ONTARIO (continued)

A booklet summarizing current law and suggested reforms has been prepared by the government with the assistance of the OCSW and women lawyers. It can be obtained (free) from the Ministry of the Attorney General, Queen's Park, Toronto. Copies of Bill 117 and the full Ontario Law Reform Commission Report on Family Law may be purchased from the Queen's Printer, Queen's Park, Toronto.

Organizations wishing to use the film for discussion may borrow it by contacting the Ministry of the Attorney General; they should be ready to specify the desired screening date and alternatives. (The group must supply a 16 mm. sound projector.)

The OCSW has also co-operated in setting up a bureau of speakers familiar with the new legislation, to meet with groups interested in discussing its recommendations. For more information, call Catherine Charlton at 920-3366.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

The United Nations has declared 1975 to be International Women's Year, in hopes that member countries will try to bring present conditions into line with its "Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women". Much Canadian activity is anticipated. Among the federal government's plans are hosting an international U.N. seminar in September 1974, and promoting an educational campaign to influence Canadian attitudes toward equality for women. The federal government has indicated that it will make funds available to voluntary organizations to develop special IWY projects.

To date, a resource centre for women has been suggested as a local venture. OCSW members with further ideas are urged to bring them to the next general meeting.

APPOINTMENTS AND OTHER POSITIONS

As Director for the provincial Women's Crown Employee Office, Ministry of Labour, Kay Eastham is responsible for improving job opportunities for the nearly 26,000 women employed by the Ontario government.

Moira Armour is now writing a weekly column. Her "Women/Status Report" appears Thursdays in the Toronto Sun.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women elected Grace Hartmann President at its general meeting in April. OCSW members on NAC's new executive are: Moira Armour (Editor, "Status of Women News"), Lorna Marsden (Editorial Board, "Status of Women News"), Cathy Morrison (Board of Management), Irma Melville, and Aline Gregory.

TALENT BANK--As qualified women are increasingly sought for government boards and commissions, the Ontario Status of Women Council is maintaining a talent bank. Names of women candidates should be submitted to Marjorie Pinney at the Council's office, 801 Bay St., Toronto. Nominations of Ontario women living outside Toronto are especially welcome.

SUBCOMMITTEE NEWS

EDUCATION--Child Care Services

Judy Palmer, Gail Newall, Cathy Morrison, and Michèle Coburn held subcommittee meetings to discuss the proposed changes in legislation affecting daycare services for children. A brief to the Honourable Margaret Birch, Provincial Secretary for Social Development, resulted.

EDUCATION--Child Care Services (continued)

The OCSW subcommittee opposes any relaxation in professional standards for day care services, although it supports the government's recognition of parental capability in group babysitting situations. The subcommittee has requested a meeting with Ms. Birch in September. Copies of the brief are available. Contact Gail Newall (294-4765), or Cathy Morrison (483-4785).

EDUCATION--Local Board Committees

The group which has formed a Status of Women committee dealing with education in North York is concentrating on improved guidance service promoting equal opportunity for young women. Schools are being encouraged to use a kit assembled to make young women more aware of sex stereotyping in Canadian society.

MEDIA

The Telephone Tree protest of Air Jamaica's radio commercial resulted in a recent meeting with Air Jamaica executives and advertising consultants, during which the airline agreed to remove the most offensive portion of the ad.

NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN--has published a 40 page assessment of government action on the 122 recommendations of the Royal Commission Status of Women Report involving federal jurisdiction, concluding that about 1/3 have been implemented, 1/3 partially so, and the final 1/3 not implemented at all. The report, entitled "What's Been Done?", is available from the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa K1P 5R5. Singly requested copies are free; bulk orders can be purchased at \$1.00 per booklet.

ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL--now has offices at 801 Bay St., 3rd floor; phone 965-1111. Its meetings on alternate Thursdays are open to the public. In addition to a forum on family property law, it will sponsor a conference on birth control. The latter is scheduled for early October; details will be announced later.

MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN TORONTO--recently produced controversial reports on local day care and abortion referral services. It can be contacted at 8th floor, East Tower, City Hall, Toronto; phone 367-7203.

WOMEN'S PLACE, TORONTO--Operating on an OFY grant for summer, the Women's Place (new phone: 363-8021) continues drop-in groups on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday through the day. The centre at 21 Dupont St. now has a selection of books by and about women in the book store. On July 19, it will celebrate its second anniversary with a picnic at Bathurst St. United Church.

WOMEN AND FILM--This group is travelling around the province by van, hoping to interest women in the use of the film medium. Information can be obtained by contacting Women and Film, 4 Maitland St., Toronto; phone 967-6908, or 964-9562.

BOOKMOBILE--Also on Ontario roads this summer is a bookmobile specializing in literature related to women. Its itinerary is available from CORA at 195 Seaton St., Toronto; phone 921-6517.