

THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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

NEWSLETTER

October 1974.

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GENERAL MEETING

The next general meeting will take place at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6, at the Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Ave. West (near Avenue Road). Please make a note of this since there will be no further meeting reminder.

FAMILY PROPERTY LAW

PUBLIC MEETING--The OCSW will sponsor an evening of discussion about the Ontario Law Reform Commission's recommendations on family property law. Following a showing of the explanatory film prepared by the Attorney General's office, lawyers familiar with both the present law and the Commission's proposals will answer questions. The meeting will be on Tuesday, October 29 at 8 p.m., at O.I.S.E., 252 Bloor St. W. (St. George subway at Bedford exit). Admission is free, and everyone is welcome.

CONFERENCE--The Ontario Status of Women Council's conference on family property law will be held from Oct. 25-7, at the MacDonald Block of the Ontario Government buildings, Bay and Wellesley streets. Several OCSW members will be among the 500 delegates selected to represent the province's various regions, groups interested in women's issues, and the female population at large.

PAMPHLETS--Copies of the yellow pamphlet explaining the Commission's recommendations are still available at 25¢ each. Contact Catherine Charlton at 300 St. Clair Ave. W., #511 (phone 920-3366).

SPEAKERS--The OCSW is assisting groups wishing to study family property law by putting them in touch with lawyers willing to accept speaking engagements. For information, call June Holley-Hime, 485-2573.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

Designated IWY by the United Nations, 1975 promises to advance the cause of equality for women around the world, as much activity is anticipated on the part of all levels of government and by private groups. A United Nations planning conference in Ottawa in September was attended by Laura Sabia of the Ontario Status of Women Council, among other invited Canadians. As of this month, the federal government has allocated \$5 million to promote the status of women during 1975. To date, 4 regional conferences are being organized; a national conference will follow in November, 1975. It is hoped that "grass roots" participation can be achieved by paying the expenses of at least some women delegates. The federal Secretary of State is sponsoring a consultation about IWY with representatives of Toronto women's organizations next week, and Moira Armour will attend on behalf of the OCSW, which has been invited to give its suggestions.

Meanwhile, the proposal for an international women's resource and development centre is being sent to the federal government by the National Action Committee. The idea is for the proposed centre to be a meeting place as well as a holding archive, and that it should have links to regional women's centres.

Other suggestions for projects are being encouraged, and should be sent to the IWY Secretariat, Privy Council Office, Ottawa K1A 0A3.

CHILD CARE SERVICES

On September 27, the OCSW issued a press release--"More and Worse Is Better"--to bring to public attention its response to the Ontario Government's day care policy. "The basic thrust of the Ontario Government's policy on day care is to pass the buck to private initiative," the release claimed. "No issue is more basic to the women of this province than day care. In 1970, 23% of all mothers with children under 6 were working. And 47% of married women in the labour force had children under 16. Day care is a poverty issue. It is a labour force issue." Referring to the "enormous need for service", our spokeswomen quoted the National Day Care Survey, updated in 1973, as showing that only 1.75% of the children of working mothers were in formal day care arrangements. "The personal cost to most families is prohibitive. In Metro Toronto it costs upwards of \$1500 a year to place a child in day care. . . . The Ontario Government's professed aim is to preserve the parents' right to choose the kind of care their children will receive. But parents and young children have next to no choice at present. It is almost impossible, for example, to find day care for an infant in the city of Toronto. In January, only 32 of 176 centres in Metro would take children under 2 years of age. Ontario maternity leave provides for a six week absence from the labour force following childbirth. Clearly our society gives very little support to mothers of infants who need or who wish to remain employed. . . . And what about the children? They have no bill of rights to ensure their access to good, basic care."

The press release was issued after Cathy Morrison, Aideen Nicholson, Gail Newall, and Jean Woodsworth met with members of the provincial Cabinet to discuss the OCSW Day Care Sub-committee's brief. Margaret Birch, Provincial Secretary for Social Development, saw the OCSW members on September 12, and René Brunelle, Minister of Community and Social Services, met with them on September 23. No changes in government policy were indicated.

While the OCSW group felt that the province deserved "some credit" for providing \$15 million extra this year in day care funding and for recognizing the principle of "parental capability" in more casual child care arrangements, objections to the new policy were made on the basis of the committee's concern about: 1) the quality of service to children in all programs, including full day programs, due to the cutback in staff numbers and the removal of qualifications for staff other than supervisors, with the concomitant emphasis on volunteer assistance; 2) the effects on day care workers of downgrading qualifications, which will do nothing to assist salary levels in an employment sector where wages are already depressed. The OCSW recommended a new regulatory act to provide for a multi-level approach to child care services which would establish differential guidelines for various types of service such as babysitting, nursery schools, and full day care programs. It noted that the statement of government policy made by Mrs. Birch in the Ontario Legislature in June had not dealt with several topics of major importance in the consideration of child care services, such as: 1) ongoing financial commitment to day care, considering the provincial government's responsibility for the health of citizens from birth and for their education beyond 4 years; 2) the relation of minimal operational requirements to funding standards for day care centres; 3) infant care; 4) services for sick children needing day care; 5) investigation of flexible hours of work and other solutions to the needs of parents of young children.

Copies of the original OCSW brief are available from Cathy Morrison (483-4785) and Gail Newall (294-4765).

SUB-COMMITTEE NOTES

FAMILY PLANNING--Formed at the last General Meeting, this new sub-committee needs energetic members who will investigate present government funding and programs in the area of contraception. Also, those concerned about continuing federal inaction on abortion may want to focus their efforts here. This group would like to meet for discussion on Sunday, October 27. Judy Merino has offered to be in charge temporarily; contact her at 487-3964.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION--Our other new sub-committee will try to apply the principle of "affirmative action" to the Canadian situation. Rather than relying solely on the law to guarantee equal rights, "affirmative action" supporters approach government and the private sector to inquire what they will do actively to achieve participation of minority groups--in this case, women--in the labour force in a proportion more typical of their representation in the population at large. The advantage is in putting the onus on employers to improve the lot of women. However, this is not to downplay the importance of legislative change in favour of equal treatment of women, especially since there is little basis in Canadian law for "class action" suits alleging discrimination against an entire group. A committee of Toronto women is looking into this subject. For more information, call Susan Bax, 922-3265.

MEDIA--The Telephone Tree requires more voices for its campaigns. If willing to help, call Judy Merino at 487-3964. Currently, the Media sub-committee is also looking into the area of subliminal advertising.

EDUCATION--It is reported that the Women's Kit, designed for the education of women about their status in Canadian society, is now available for \$50 (each) from the Publications Department, O.I.S.E., 252 Bloor St. W., Toronto. (923-6411)

BANKING--This sub-committee has proposed expanding its mandate to include other financial institutions such as insurance companies. New blood is admittedly needed. Call Alice Protz at 923-1275.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

History--Gail Newall is establishing a central file about the activities of the OCSW since its inception. Members with duplicate copies of OCSW material they would be willing to donate--briefs, letters, press releases, public notices, etc.--are asked to bring them to the next general meeting. Other material could be lent for duplicating, if necessary.

History, maybe--OCSW member Elsie Gregory MacGill's book about Helen Gregory MacGill, My Mother the Judge, has long been out of print. In the wake of the successful re-publishing of Nellie McClung's In Times Like These and Catherine Cleverdon's The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (University of Toronto Press), one would hope that My Mother the Judge could be re-issued, but the publisher says that this will depend on public demand. Letters expressing interest may help. Write to Mr. Toivo Kiil, publisher, General Books Division, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 330 Progress Ave., Scarborough. History, certainly--OCSW member Aileen Nicholson was chosen Liberal Member of Parliament for Trinity riding in the July federal election. She has joined 8 other women in the House of Commons this session.

AROUND AND ABOUT--GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

FEDERAL--An Omnibus Bill to remove discrimination against women has been re-introduced in the House of Commons. Changes are contemplated in the Criminal Code (rape, family maintenance responsibility), and laws governing pensions, public service employment, immigration, citizenship, and the Armed Forces. Government departments and political parties will be encouraged to assess the situation of women, and other levels of government are being asked to amend their statutes. A Human Rights Commission will be suggested.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa K1P 5R5.

The council recently expressed its continuing concern about birth control, rape, the status of Indian women married to non-Indians, and the appointment of women as judges.

PROVINCIAL--Discussion goes on about revisions in family property law, while the government's day care policy will soon be enacted. New legislation is being prepared on mothers' support and maternity leave.

ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL, 801 Bay St., Toronto M5S 1Z1. Phone 965-1111.

Interest continues in such matters as: women as part-time workers and students; birth control; mothers' support and maternity leave; benefits; sexism in textbooks and the media; girls in training schools for "unmanageable behaviour" more often than for indictable offences. New members were appointed to replace those completing their term of service.

MUNICIPAL--The next election will be on December 2, 1974.

1974 Municipal Elections Workshop--will be held on Saturday, November 2, at O.I.S.E., 252 Bloor St. W., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Women candidates from all Metro boroughs will attend, so bring a sandwich and your questions. For more information, call Helen LaFontaine (789-5230) or Kay MacPherson (485-4268). MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, 8th Floor, East Tower, City Hall.

The Task Force has been extended until December. On September 20-1, it held a conference on working women, with workshops on labour, day care, and political action producing resolutions. Estelle Filo and Shirley Kemp represented the OCSW at a display set up by Moira Armour. Call the Task Force at 367-7203 if interested in its newsletter report of the conference.

AROUND AND ABOUT--NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS, P.O. Box 927, Adelaide St., Toronto M5C 2K3.

A yearly subscription to the NAC-sponsored news magazine can now be obtained for \$3.

WOMEN'S PRESS, 280 Bloor St. W., suite 305, Toronto. 962-3904.

The Canadian Women's Educational Press has further offerings this fall. Already published are: Cuban Women Now; Herstory 1975 (a Canadian women's calendar); and Never Done (in which the Corrective Collective, authors of She Named It Canada, take a close look at the history of women's work). Coming soon are: Born a Woman: The Rita MacNeil Songbook, and Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1940. The Women's Press is making a significant contribution towards re-assessing Canadian social history, and publishes non-sexist children's books as well. Manuscripts are being sought. Discounts are available for group orders; call or write for a descriptive catalogue-brochure.

CANADIAN NEWSLETTER OF RESEARCH ON WOMEN, University of Waterloo, Waterloo.

Appearing 3 times a year, this lists current research on women in a variety of fields. Pat Carter is managerial editor.

NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS (continued)

REDLIGHT THEATRE, 736 Bathurst St. 536-2597

This women's drama centre continues the successful run of its sprightly What Glorious Times They Had (about Nellie McClung and her fellow suffragettes) at the Enoch Turner School House, 106 Trinity St., until November 2. The group is also looking for good scripts by women for future production. And financial donations would be welcomed.

RAPE CRISIS CENTRE, P. O. Box 6597, Station A, Toronto M5W 1X4. 487-2345

This 24 hour phone counselling service needs volunteers and funds.

WOMEN'S PLACE, 137 George St., Toronto. 363-8021.

The centre is closed until November, but can be reached by phone Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

AMAZON WORKSHOP, 12 Kensington Ave., Toronto. 862-0414.

This centre houses the feminist book store formerly at the Women's Place, as well as sponsoring self-defence programmes for women and operating printing facilities.

WOMEN'S ACTION GROUP, c/o Joan Clark, St. Christopher House, 84 Augusta St., Toronto. 364-8456.

At its conference in June, this group produced recommendations from workshops discussing food prices, day care, rent controls, court problems, and government financial support plans. The conference also brought about the formation of:

MOTHER-LED UNION, c/o Joan Clark

The concern here is with women raising families alone, especially those dependent on government support plans or low wages.

Another person interested in problems with Mothers' Allowance is Lorraine Russell, at 439-8859.

UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT HOUSE, St. Christopher House, 84 Augusta St.

Programs of interest to women--photography, ballet, etc.--continue here. For information, call Laura Jones, 364-2630.

CANADIAN HOUSEWIVES REGISTER, c/o Rita Eggleton, 60 Southport St., #219, Toronto.

Now in Ontario, this is an organization for all women interested in meeting to share social and cultural interests.

NELLIE'S, 275 Broadview Ave., Toronto; information from 461-1084.

The women's hostel can house 30 people, with a maximum stay of 1 week.

UNWED MOTHERS UNLIMITED, c/o Joanna Anaquod or Cathy Ainsborough, 782-5486.

This group offers supportive assistance to unmarried mothers.

"THE TIMES CHANGE", 535 Glengarry Ave., Toronto. 787-6136

A project on a Canada Manpower grant, this job placement and counselling service for women in the North York area concentrates on permanent employment involving flexible hours.

SHERIDAN COLLEGE

The Oakville campus will open a women's centre in February 1975, to serve the community as well as the college's students.

CONTENTIOUS ISSUES

"DO NOT PASS GO, DO NOT COLLECT \$200" DEPARTMENT

Representatives of women's groups from across the country recently expressed concern about changes in the Secretary of State's departmental staff responsible for IWY planning, just 2 months before IWY begins. There was also some dissatisfaction about government spending on conferences.

Justice Minister Otto Lang admitted to intervening with other federal ministers to discourage federal grants to groups involved in abortion referral.

Air Jamaica's "rare tropical birds" are once again claiming to "make you feel good all over". The advertising campaign was praised in a Globe & Mail article.

EDITOR CAUSES CONTROVERSY

Tie-ups in past mail deliveries have forced a switch to first class postage for OCSW mail-outs, but we're still only as good as our mailing list. Please try to inform us of any change of address. More postal codes would also be helpful. A stamped return address should aid our discovering what was not delivered. There is also a need for members willing to work on mail-outs; call Wendy Lawrence at 966-3815.

This is a more lengthy newsletter than usual, due to the following whims of the editor: 1) The discrepancy between the number on the mailing list and the number attending meetings suggests a need for better publicity within the group; 2) Broader access to information about the activities of other groups seems desirable; 3) The issue of day care has become very important, and inquiries have been made about the OCSW stand, which is based on solid sub-committee research; 4) We are avoiding a further mail-out announcing the next general meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

The OCSW was formed early in 1972 to press for implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Affiliated with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the OCSW finances its activities solely through membership fees. While we do not have any formal membership policies, each member is urged to renew membership annually. The membership fee is \$3.00. (The "pink sheet" of OCSW aims and achievements has been up-dated, and can be obtained from Fran Money.)

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Send to:  
Ontario Committee on the Status of Women  
c/o Frances Money,  
195 Stibbard Avenue,  
Toronto M4P 2C4.

\_\_\_ I am renewing my membership and enclose \$3.00.

\_\_\_ I would like to become a member and enclose \$3.00.

I am interested in \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_