

THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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

NEWSLETTER
September 1977.

GENERAL MEETING

The next general meeting of the Ontario Committee will be held at 8 p.m. on Thursday, September 15, at the home of Marjorie Cohen, 16 Wellwood Ave., Toronto.

Wellwood runs parallel to and 2 blocks north of St. Clair Ave., in the area of Bathurst St. To reach Wellwood, go via St. Clair. Go west from Bathurst St. on St. Clair to the second traffic light (Christie stop on the TTC streetcar). Walk north on Humewood Ave. 2 long blocks to Wellwood. Turn left.

Read on to see how much there is to be done as an OCSW member in the coming year! Let's all try to get out to this first fall meeting, and bring along a friend.

ONTARIO COMMITTEE ACTION

PROVINCIAL ELECTION

During last June's campaign, an OCSW sub-committee held a press conference to publicize the lack of attention to issues concerning women on the part of all 3 major parties. Surveying policy statements, the OCSW found the parties "poor on making significant commitments to act on women's needs and concerns.... No party addresses itself specifically to women." The parties were also rated for their acknowledgment of and proposals for selected problem areas, including equal pay for work of equal value, family law reform, day care, and educational opportunities and materials. Out of a possible 12 points, no party scored higher than 3! In concluding, the OCSW representatives--Karen Fejer, Anne Hill, Chaviva Hošek, Loreen Joe, Lynne King, Wendy Lawrence, and Brigid Munsche--remarked, "The women of Ontario will continue to work until their rights are met and they get the kind of support they need." Coverage of the press conference appeared on CBC-TV News and in 2 Toronto newspapers.

SOCIAL SERVICES

A brief on the attachment of women to children will be presented to the Hon. Keith Norton, Minister of Community and Social Services, at a meeting on September 6. Speaking on behalf of the OCSW will be Anne Hill, Chaviva Hošek, Thea Hughes, Wendy Lawrence, and Brigid Munsche. The brief sets out our concerns about day care, crisis intervention accommodation, and Ontario's position on the Canada Pension Plan amendments.

PENSIONS AND BENEFITS

Canada Pension Plan--Two amendments affecting women have now been passed by Parliament. These are: 1) "divorce and divide" (equal pension credit splitting at divorce), and 2) "drop-out" (allowing parents leaving the work force to raise children under 7 to remove low or zero earning years from their calculation of average lifetime earnings). However, the "drop-out" amendment will not be proclaimed unless the Government of Ontario ends its objections to it. (Because changes in CPP legislation must be approved by 2/3 of the provinces having 2/3 of the population in total, Ontario's rejection of the drop-out clause operates as a virtual veto.)

The OCSW has for some time been pressing the provincial government to reverse its stand, as have the National Action Committee and other women's organizations across the country. All Canadian women, not just those in Ontario, will be affected by the Ontario Government's position. The issue has attracted lively public debate lately in the press, and the OCSW will push further for action on this first step towards recognizing the contribution of those who leave paid employment to rear children at home. Concerned individual women may wish to support the drop-out amendment by writing to the Hon. Keith Norton, Minister of Community & Social Services, Queen's Park, Toronto.

Other Pensions--Meanwhile, Premier Davis has announced that a Royal Commission will investigate the relationship between private and public pension schemes in Ontario. The OCSW has formed a sub-committee to work towards recommendations to the Commission. If you wish to help with this project, contact Brigid Munsche at 533-2194 (evenings).

FAMILY LAW REFORM

When the new Ontario Legislature reconvenes, the OCSW will be eagerly awaiting re-introduction of the family law reform legislation by the Attorney-General. Some of the changes suggested by the OCSW were not incorporated when the legislation was revised last spring; nevertheless, the OCSW will be working during the fall to ensure speedy passage of family law reform that will finally recognize marriage as a partnership of equals. To become involved in this issue, contact Irma Melville at 294-5762.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Life Together: A Report on Human Rights in Ontario was recently issued by the Ontario Human Rights Commission to "address the urgent needs" of the changing situation in our province. It contains over 100 recommendations & a detailed proposal for a new Human Rights Code, now that it is 15 years since the existing one was enacted. The Commission points out that in 1976-7, its professional staff handled 16,908 inquiries and referrals, 1,445 formal complaints (with investigation and conciliation proceedings), and 1,710 cases involving the defusion of community tensions. Yet due to inadequate funding, a backlog of cases has occurred, and little attention can be given to educating the public. "The province currently allocates more money to promote the sale of lottery tickets than to protect the human rights of the people."

Among the recommendations of the Commission are: a tripling of its budget to \$4 million; greater autonomy from government; increased staff & resource facilities; wider access to the Commission; more powers to initiate public education and other preventive action; in regard to employment, the use of "class action" complaints, affirmative action programs, and contract compliance; extending coverage of the Code to comprise race & colour, age, sex, nationality, creed & political belief, marital & family relationship, physical disability, criminal record, sexual orientation. (In some cases, a "bona fide consideration" for exemption could be applied for.) Of particular interest to women are further recommendations concerning: eliminating sex stereotyping in educational materials; determining access to credit & loans on the basis of financial background; and doing away with discriminatory height & weight requirements which have no bearing on the ability to do a specific job.

The OCSW will be considering action to promote implementation of the Commission's objectives as seen in its Report, which incorporates many recommendations made by the OCSW in its brief last year. To participate, call Connie Taylor at 251-4948.

EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AND EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

The introduction of the "equal value" concept into the federal Human Rights Act has encouraged women's groups in the country, but there seems to be little movement towards this goal in Ontario's labour legislation.

Last spring, the Ontario Committee issued a press release in support of Janet Crook, an employee of the Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk whose equal pay complaint had dragged on unresolved for almost a year. The OCSW pointed to flaws in legislation and enforcement, as well as documenting the facts of this employee's specific case. The Regional Government eventually dropped its request for a review of the order put out against it by the Employment Standards Branch and gave Ms. Crook an amount in back pay, yet it denied in a news release that she had been discriminated against on grounds of sex. The OCSW has been in contact with the Hon. Bette Stephenson, Minister of Labour, in regard to the case and what it illustrates about the inadequacy of the current law on pay.

Equal remuneration for work of equal value remains a priority issue for the OCSW. In August, Marjorie Cohen and Wendy Lawrence met with visiting sociologist Ronnie Ratner of Wellesley College, Massachusetts, to discuss an international conference on equal value, to be held next year in the U. S.

New members wishing to work on employment issues should contact Marjorie Cohen at 653-2488.

FAMILY PLANNING AND HEALTH

Last spring, the federal government announced "major initiatives" in the health fields, especially in "assisting the provinces and voluntary agencies to develop family planning services." More than 2 years have passed since the OCSW presented a brief on family planning to the Ontario Government, which has a committee now inquiring into the operation of the abortion law in this province. Therefore, the OCSW is planning to look into current conditions surrounding family planning. To participate in such a sub-committee, please call Pat Lundie at 445-6778 (evenings).

MEMBERS' PERSONAL NOTES

Lorna Marsden--has become Chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto for a 5 year term. . . . Mary Eberts--is the first woman appointed to chair a Board of Inquiry for the Ontario Human Rights Commission. . . . Cathleen Morrison--is now Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Children's Mental Health Centres. In May, she represented NAC at a conference in Quebec on Canadian values. . . . Brigid Munsche--attended the annual meeting of La Fédération des Femmes du Québec in May. . . . Susan Bax--in the summer attended a conference of American Quaker women.

Cheers!--When the spokesman of a Canadian brewery recently claimed that women are not interested in beer, a group of women including several OCSW members rose to the challenge. In a letter, they traced the history of women in brewing, and urged that the brewery appoint to its Board of Directors Mary "Chug-a-Lug" Bruce, "whose fine and very close second place finish in a chugging contest was an inspiration to us all".

A GRACIOUS HELLO!--The OCSW Newsletter salutes actress/comedienne Lily Tomlin, who brought her excellent one-person show, Appearing Nitely, for a week of sell-out performances in Toronto during August. Because Tomlin is a feminist both on and off stage--some of her comedy is specifically feminist, and she has performed in benefits for women's causes--the OCSW Newsletter Editor sought to interview her for NAC's Status of Women News. Unfortunately, Tomlin was unable to grant any press interviews while in Toronto, but she replied in a letter, "Thank you for wanting me to be in the magazine of women who are doing strong, good things." (Editors' Note: "And that's the truth!")

NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

National Action Committee on the Status of Women, 40 St. Clair Ave. E., suite 300, Toronto M4T 1M9 (922-3246)--With over 130 organizations now in affiliation, NAC is busy on many fronts. A November strategy session is planned, at which women from all provinces will be represented.

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, P. O. Box 6597, Station A, Toronto M5W 1X4. (368-5695) The Centre is still in the throes of raising funds to continue work regarding public education and personal crisis support. Donations are gratefully received.

Women's Counselling, Referral & Education Centre, 884 Bathurst St., Toronto M5R 3G3. (531-3501)--Note the new phone number and location, $\frac{1}{2}$ block north of Bloor. In this new location, the Centre hopes to develop more group activities for women of various interests. Donations--both financial and of furnishings (cushions, small tables, chairs, kitchen ware, cutlery)--would be especially appreciated now. Get in touch for more information about plans and participation.

Women's Liaison Committee, Toronto Board of Education--invites membership by parents, students, employees, & taxpayers within the Toronto Board's jurisdiction. It has sub-committees dealing with employment, curricula, & consciousness-raising. Action so far has revolved around affirmative action, funding of physical education programs, and the integration of industrial arts with family studies. For information, call Mel LaFontaine (598-4931, day) or Moira Armour (469-0920, evening). The next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on September 12 in room 635 of the Education Centre, 155 College St., Toronto.

Movement for Christian Feminism, 40 St. Clair Ave. E., Toronto M4T 1M9. (921-4152) --has for the past 2 years been working with women from all denominations who wish to explore "a new theological image of themselves", and assess the institutional church in its attitudes to women. To further these aims, the Movement would welcome donations towards expenses. Contributions are tax deductible. Brochure on request.

RECENT HAPPENINGS OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

The new federal Human Rights legislation has now been made law. The first Chairman of the Human Rights Commission will be Gordon Fairweather, who leaves the House of Commons to take up this position. NAC reports that, although the concept of equal pay for work of equal value was accepted into the Act, other changes proposed by NAC were not. For instance, "sexual orientation" and "political affiliation" are among grounds not yet protected from discrimination, while the Indian Act is excluded from coverage at present.

The Committee for Indian Rights for Indian Women--will co-operate in a research project to study the position of Indian women and their families as set out in the Indian Act. The project will last 3 years and will receive support from the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The Committee is concerned that the special interests of Indian women be heard, now that major revision of the Indian Act is contemplated.

RECENT HAPPENINGS OF INTEREST TO WOMEN (continued)

The federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women, in summing up the situation of Canadian women in 1977, uncovered some discouraging facts: the unemployment rate for women remains higher than men's; married women are still considered "dependent"; no woman has been appointed to the Senate this year in spite of vacancies; and there was almost no improvement in the status of women in the federal public service last year.

A unified family court has now begun operating in Hamilton as a 3 year test project. The court has jurisdiction over divorce, marriage annulity, alimony, child custody & maintenance, juvenile offences, protection of children & their property, adoption, truancy, and children placed in boarding homes or training schools.

Manitoba has now enacted its family law reform. The new law recognizes house-keeping and child care as contributions to the maintenance of the family, and calls for equal sharing of assets after separation (with certain exceptions).

A study of child care arrangements in Metro Toronto estimates that about 40,000 children are cared for by "in-home entrepreneurs" on a "highly unregulated basis" at an average charge of 50¢ an hour.

At an international conference on violence in the family held in Montreal in June, several speakers addressed the question of wife-battering. Among the most frequently mentioned suggestions for dealing with the problem were: an increase in the number of hostels (as alternatives to staying in the matrimonial home), more child care facilities, and better employment opportunities for women.

In July, the Ontario Court of Appeal decided unanimously that the judge in a rape trial is not required to question the believability of a woman victim who does not have a witness to the rape. The decision is seen as upholding a change made in the law in 1975, although a judge may still caution a jury about relying on the evidence of one person.

The referee of a case under the Employment Standards Act recently set a precedent for Ontario's labour law by ruling that a female sales clerk working in the ladies' section of a store should receive the same pay as a male clerk in the same store's men's wear department.

Women MPs, questioned in a study done for the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women, perceived a continuing reluctance on the part of political organizers to have women as candidates in federal elections. The elected women felt that voters, on the other hand, were looking primarily at the candidate's ability to represent their interests.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE ONTARIO COMMITTEE

INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FEES

Because of higher postal rates and labour costs, we will have to increase our fees to \$5 (from \$3) a year, beginning in January, 1978. This will be our first fee increase in 5 years.

Starting in January, membership in the OCSW will be for a calendar year, and members will be asked to renew membership each January. Anyone who pays in the last third of the year (September to December) will have her membership carried over to the new year. There will be one more reminder to renew membership after January. If we do not hear from you then, we will assume that you wish to be dropped from the mailing list.

Brochure--Do you need a brief sketch of OCSW aims and action? One is now ready. Write to us at our postal address to obtain copies.

Interested in Joining?--The OCSW is a group of women who came together to press for implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. General meetings are held 6 times a year, while smaller sub-committees meet more frequently to work on issues under provincial jurisdiction. To join, send to: Ontario Committee on the Status of Women, P. O. Box 188, Station Q, Toronto M4T 2M1.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____

I AM INTERESTED IN _____

I ENCLOSE \$5 FOR 1978 MEMBERSHIP _____

I AM _____ A NEW MEMBER; or _____ RENEWING MEMBERSHIP

BASIC READING

Interested people frequently ask what they can read to familiarize themselves quickly and accurately with the condition of women, past, present and future. There is a great deal of material available, much of it in local libraries & book stores, and some of it free upon request from governments. What follows is a list of items most often mentioned by OCSW members as helpful for reference. If you have trouble locating the non-governmental publications, you can order them from the Toronto Women's Book Store, 85 Harbord St., Toronto. (922-8744) The Book Store also has a catalogue containing a more comprehensive list of books on women.

FREE FROM GOVERNMENTS, THEIR AGENCIES, AND ADVISORY COUNCILS

Federal

Facts and Figures: Women in the Labour Force--is an annual statistical compilation from Labour Canada, Ottawa.

Person Papers, and Background Papers--deal with questions such as taxation, pensions, rape, matrimonial law. From Advisory Council on the Status of Women, P. O. Box 1541, Station B, Ottawa K1P 5R5.

Federal Services for Women--is a guide to federal programs specifically designed for women. Order from 63 Sparks St., Ottawa K1A 1C3.

Provincial

Women's Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Labour--has many good pamphlets & booklets, such as Law and the Woman in Ontario, The Job Search, Sex Discrimination in Employment, etc. You may also request a complete catalogue of publications, and and of films available on loan. Write to 400 University Ave., 10th floor, Toronto M7A 1T7. (965-1537)

Ontario Government Publications About Women--is a list available from Publications Centre, 3B7 MacDonalld Block, Queen's Park, Toronto M7A 1N8.

About Face--This series of booklets about women and sports, textbooks, and advertising comes from Ontario Status of Women Council, 801 Bay St., 3rd floor, Toronto. (965-1111)

INDISPENSABLE BOOKS

Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women--Since its publication in 1970, some of the recommendations have been implemented. The discussions of the situation of women at home, in employment, at school, etc. are so accurate and sensible that the Report remains the best single work to read. (\$5.50)

Opportunity for Choice: A Goal for Women in Canada--edited by Gail Cook. Using government statistics, experts look at the current condition of Canadian women and suggest trends for the future. (\$3.75)

Women in Need: A Sourcebook (1976)--This booklet by the Canadian Council on Social Development shows the connection between women, sex discrimination, and poverty. Order at \$3.00 from 55 Parkdale Ave., Box 3505, Station C, Ottawa K1Y 4G1.

ENLIGHTENING BOOKS ON CANADIAN LAW AND HISTORY

The Law Is Not for Women!--by Marvin Zuker & June Callwood. Though rather general, this book is organized for easy understanding by the average reader. (\$4.95)

The Neglected Majority--ed. S. Trofimenkoff & A. Prentice. Canadian women historians examine women in the fur trade, teaching profession, etc. (\$5.95)

In Times Like These--Nellie McClung's classic feminist book of 1915 has been reprinted and is still marvellously quotable. (\$3.50)

Women in Canada--ed. Marylee Stephenson. Included in the new edition of this collection of essays is one on the widening wage gap, by Lynn MacDonald, a founding member of the OCSW. (\$8.95)

Women in the Canadian Mosaic--ed. Gwen Matheson. The achievements of certain women's organizations and individuals are featured in this set of essays. (\$5.95)

Women at Work: Ontario, 1850-1930--by the Women's Press. This has valuable data in articles on women as domestic servants, garment workers, etc. (\$6.00)

Never Done: 3 Centuries of Women's Work in Canada--by the Corrective Collective. An informal illustrated and entertaining look back at our foremothers and their unsung contribution to Canadian society. (\$3.75)

A Harvest Yet to Reap--ed. L. Rasmussen. Strengths developed out of rigorous homesteading receive their due in this history of prairie women. (\$8.95)

Penelope's Web: Women in European and Canadian Society--by Naomi Griffiths. (\$4.95) Another historian takes a comparative approach to women and social structures.

SCHOOL DAYS

Time to think about registering for continuing education, whether at home via radio, in a night course, or full-time on campus. Ryerson Radio's Open College (297 Victoria St., Toronto; 595-5273) has both credit & non-credit courses. Local Boards of Education have lots to offer; in Toronto, call 598-4931, ext. 224 for information & course listings. And senior citizens are reminded that many courses are tuition-free to them at certain Ontario universities, including Toronto.

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

Here are some books which OCSW members find themselves re-reading & lending:

The Politics of Women's Liberation--Sociologist Jo Freeman gives a fascinating analysis of the development of & structures within recent American women's movement organizations. (\$7.95)

Crazy Salad--In this best-seller, writer Nora Ephron is witty & informative about everything from feminist consciousness to the Pillsbury Bake-Off. (\$1.95)

Man's World, Woman's Place--Elizabeth Janeway studies "social mythology" to discover why we believe as we do about women's nature. (\$4.15)

A Room of One's Own--Virginia Woolf sets out the requisites for the life of the imagination in this enduring series of essays. (\$1.75)

Sisterhood Is Powerful--This anthology of articles on feminist topics, edited by Robin Morgan, is quite readily available. (\$3.50)

Against Our Will--This provocative study of rape by New York journalist Susan Brownmiller is already a classic. (\$2.75)

From Reverence to Rape--Film critic Molly Haskell looks at movies historically to see what they imply about the changing perception of women and their roles. (\$3.95)

The Second Sex--Simone deBeauvoir pioneered in the theory of women's history and sociology with this influential book written in 1949. (\$4.75)

Literary Women--Ellen Moers discusses the careers of several great women authors, seeking out shared elements in their writings. (\$4.50)

The Female Eunuch--Germaine Greer describes the socialization of girls, etc. (\$2.50)

LITERATURE

Publishers this year have decided that women want to read interminable exotic romances. OCSW readers, who have always preferred to make up their own minds, are instead selecting their reading from:

--contemporary writing (fiction, essays, poetry) by:

Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, Emily Carr, Jane Rule, Marian Engel, Sylvia Fraser, Sheila Watson, Ethel Wilson, Marie-Claire Blais, Anne Hébert, Dorothy Livesay, Adele Wiseman, Gabrielle Roy, etc. (all Canadian)
Grace Paley, Tillie Olsen, Joan Didion, Margaret Drabble, Doris Lessing, Anais Nin, Joyce Carol Oates, Sylvia Plath, Lillian Hellman, Jean Rhys, Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, Nadine Gordimer, Simone DeBeauvoir, Adrienne Rich, Katherine Anne Porter, Carson McCullers, Mary McCarthy, etc., etc.

--to say nothing of perennial favourites:

Virginia Woolf, Isak Dinesen, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Charlotte Brontë, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Emily Dickinson, George Sand, Mrs. Gaskell, Elizabeth Browning, etc.

(This list is skimpy. For a concise but still not comprehensive one, see Ellen Moers' Literary Women. Prices quoted are approximate for paperback.)

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September, 1977

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