



The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

Newsletter Fall 1981

FIRST FALL MEETING

OCTOBER 1, 1981 (THURSDAY), 8:00 P.M.

206 ROXBOROUGH DRIVE, TORONTO

The OCSW is now in its tenth year of operation. It is an appropriate time to evaluate those ten years of activity. It is also time to discuss and plan for the next year in terms of priority issues and womanpower.

OCSW - TEN YEARS THAT SHOOK ONTARIO

By Kay Macpherson

Ten years of action for women in Ontario. Some say, "How little has changed". Others look back to 1971 and count our blessings. Let's do a bit of both.

In December 1970 the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was tabled in Parliament. No response... Silence.

Remember the circumstances? The Ad Hoc Committee of Women, which had called for the Royal Commission, had accomplished its task, or so it thought. There were no Advisory Councils, no NAC, no status of women committees, no "Minister Responsible". There were no women's centres, rape crisis services, no interval houses, no women's counselling or health services, no self defence and few consciousness raising groups. Words such as assertiveness, rape, abortion, affirmative action, contract compliance, sexual orientation, harassment, lesbian were hardly ever mentioned, or were unknown.

On the other hand women were starting to talk about "women's issues", though Ms. Magazine and other publications were yet to emerge. Chatelaine under Doris Anderson was getting attention, not all favourable, by discussing abortion and

birth control and asking why so few women entered the political field. The Ad Hoc committee realising that there was not going to be anything ad hoc about its operations, turned itself into the National Action Committee and started organising women and pestering the Federal Government. Sharp eyed Ontario women examined the 167 Royal Commission recommendations as they applied to provincial legislation and in 1971 the newly formed Ontario Committee on the Status of Women began its continuing series of briefs, statements, presentations, meetings and press releases about the state of affairs for women in Ontario. In those ten years there have been 33 briefs, 31 pamphlets and fact sheets and 27 newsletters to keep members informed and active, not to mention forums, panels, lectures, workshops and conferences and so on.

Reading the Newsletters gives a good picture of the range and effects of OCSW's activities. Some campaigns began with the first meetings and seem never ending. Child care, equal pay, family law, pensions, abortion, human rights and education are always on the agenda. There have been many small but significant victories and more important, a growing public awareness of women, their needs, rights and place in our society today.

It is impossible to list the achievements of ten years of hard work by past and present OCSW members. Read those old Newsletters. But a sampling is in order before space runs out. Remember the meetings, committees, letters, phone calls, interviews, press releases, briefs, pamphlets and fliers which led to:

- Better conditions for "stewardesses" now flight attendants on Air Canada and other airlines, and feminists on their Board of Directors.
- The integration of the University of Toronto Schools, the U of T sports programme, industrial arts and home economics, minor hockey. (This one didn't last.)
- The campaign for women bank employees, the unionization of banks, and women on their Boards of Directors.
- Equal opportunities in the teaching professions, in schools and in hospital staff jobs.
- Women in the police and armed forces. Air Canada's first woman pilot.
- The Matrimonial Property Laws. The Canadian Human Rights Act.
- No more male or female only ads in the newspapers.
- Women announcers on radio and television (Unfinished business here.)
- Ryerson Open College, Air Jamaica's, Benson and Hedges ads.
- The Dare Cookie strike and boycott, Fleck, Puretex, Radio Shack and Blue Cross strikes.
- "Women at Noon" series. Town Hall forums.
- Domestic workers; waitresses; Queen's Park cleaners; topless waitresses.
- Elections - federal, provincial, municipal. Questions...questions.
- CRTC hearings. Monitoring those CBC programmes, those advertisements!
- Bill 1, textbook monitoring, Nellies, clinics, hospital board selections, part-time workers, the drop-out provision, the Jamaican women.....

Life is never dull for members of OCSW. The morning paper can provide instant reason for action, resulting in letters of protest,

delegations to officials and exposure of discriminatory practices. Sexist advertisements or statements by public figures can lead to action or retraction. Let's not forget the Harriet Martineau Ear Trumpet Award (Motto: Am I hearing this?) for outstanding sexist statements, or the renowned OCSW Follies, where remarkably accurate impersonations of our politicians are mixed with hilarious comments on their behaviour.

And so into 1981, 1982.... The same again and many new challenges with many new women to help the cause. Welcome to the Club!

"PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES" LEAD TO BAR AGAINST SOCCER GIRL

Sexism has reared its ugly head in sport again, this time in soccer. The Robbie International Soccer Tournament, the largest event of its kind in the world and one of Canada's biggest amateur sport events banned two females from playing with their teams. After pressure by women's groups, the local press, and the "Washington Post", tournament organisers backed down and allowed nine year old Allegra Milholland to play with the team, the McLean (Virginia) Stingers. However, sixteen year old Lolita Larsen of Denmark was not permitted to play.

The tournament chair stated that the "physical differences between boys and girls of that age were too great to permit mixed competition". Women's groups pointed out that both Allegra and Lolita had won spots on their teams based on their ability to play soccer as well as their male teammates. In a telephone conversation with OCSW member, Lynne Sullivan, Alan Sartland, the Robbie chair, also stated that if girls were allowed to play certain countries or teams might pull out of the tournament. He also foresaw difficulties if both male and female players had to be billeted with local families. Although both the federal and provincial governments initially disavowed jurisdictional responsibility for the Robbie tournament,

the federal government, on the grounds that amateur sport was a provincial responsibility, and the provincial government because the event was international, the Canadian Human Rights Commission accepted complaints laid by Jean Wood and Lynne Sullivan in their personal capacities and on behalf of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women against the Canadian Youth Soccer Association and the Canadian Robbie International Soccer Tournament. Complaints against the Ontario Soccer Association and the Scarborough Youth Association were dismissed on the basis of jurisdiction. A complaint against Air Canada was rejected because the Commission held that sponsorship was not "a service normally available to the public". The airline has since agreed to meet with women to discuss their criteria for sponsoring athletic events.

Although forced to sit out the Robbie games, Lolita Larsen did accompany her team, Idraetsforeningen FREMAD Norhalne (IFN) and did play with them in Calgary at the beginning of July.

Jean Wood and Lynne Syllivan attended the IFN's opening game in order to establish contact with Lolita. However, she was closely guarded by team officials and by a man from Air Canada who stood directly in front of her as she sat in the stands. The translator for the Danish team indicated that the IFN feared trouble with Robbie organizers if there was any fuss over Lolita's exclusion from the tournament. A Robbie official ordered Jean Wood and Lynne Sullivan out of the park after they approached the translator to obtain Lolita's home address so that NAC could write to her parents concerning the human rights complaints.

Lolita Larsen's team could certainly have used her in the Robbie tournament. They lost both of their opening games. Although barred from playing because of alleged inferior physical capacity, NAC's representatives observed that Lolita is taller than many of the boys on the IFN who were considerably outsize by the North American opponents.

OCSW pointed out in a presentation to the Ontario government committee hearings on Bill 7 (revisions to the Ontario Human Rights Code) that the revised Code does not effectively ban the discriminatory situation that occurred at the Robbie tournament nor those that previously arose in regard to female hockey and ball players. The OCSW recommended a revision to the Code that would ban discrimination in access to services and facilities by organizations in receipt of public funds.

The OCSW November meeting will feature the issue of female participation in sport with guest speaker Abby Hoffman. By that time there may be some word on the progress of the human rights complaint and the outcome of the Air Canada meeting.

PENSION REFORM

Chaviva Hosek and Catherine Devlin made a presentation on behalf of the OCSW to the Ontario Select Committee on Pensions on August 25th. This committee is hearing submissions on the recommendations of the Haley report in particular (Royal Commission on the Status of Pensions) and in general on the whole question of reform of the retirement income system.

The OCSW made sixteen specific recommendations including the following:

- Universal pension coverage for all employed persons. At present only 37% of women workers and 51% of men are covered by employer sponsored pensions. The universal Canada/Quebec Pension Plan (C/QPP) replaces only 25% of the average industrial wage (AIW) at maximum. The AIW in March of this year was \$18,000. Universal coverage could be provided via the Provincial Universal Retirement System (PURS) recommended by the Haley Commission, by an expanded C/QPP, or by mandatory employee-sponsored pensions. The OCSW favours a plan with a minimum benefit level of 1/2 the average industrial wage. The OCSW pointed out

that the PURS plan would take 47 years to mature. As interim measures would be necessary, this must be regarded as a serious drawback.

- Pension coverage for part-time workers. 72.45% of part-time workers are women.
- Pension accumulation for women during periods of pregnancy leave of absence. For women who do not receive salary continuance during pregnancy leave, premiums would be employer paid.
- Ratification by Ontario of the "drop-out" provision to the CPP. Ontario and British Columbia are currently blocking this amendment which is favoured by all other jurisdictions in Canada. The "drop-out" would provide that the time spent by a person out of the labour force raising a child less than seven years of age does not count in arriving at average earnings in order to calculate CPP benefits.
- Reforms to private pension plans. Specifically the OCSW favoured vesting immediately or after one year of service, pension portability; protection of pension benefits against inflation, and mandatory joint and last survivor options in pension plans. Benefits to survivors would be at least 80% of the amount paid to the plan member. Couples could elect against this form of pension only by a joint witnessed sign-off.
- Splitting of pension credits on divorce in private pension. The C/QPP already provides for splitting.
- Equal pay-outs to woman out of money purchase pension plans and individually purchased annuities. Women currently receive lower monthly or periodic benefits because they live longer on average than do men. The OCSW pointed out that this practice formerly applied to various racial and ethnic groups but was discontinued because it was

deemed socially unacceptable. The OCSW also pointed out that insurance incorporates many subsidies (i.e., Employer and Woman Subsidy's life insurance for males). This principle should apply to money purchase plans and annuities as well.

- Amendments to the Employment Standards Act to require equal pay for work of equal value. Since pensions are earnings-related, the low wages assigned to jobs normally held by women contributes significantly to poverty for those women in their older years. The OCSW also urged Ontario to ratify the United Nations declaration banning all forms of discrimination. Ontario has not supported ratification because of this province's opposition to equal pay for work of equal value.
- Immediate action by the federal government to increase the Old Age Security (OAS) payments so that the combination of OAS and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) provide an income above the poverty level to both couples and single people. All of the major pension reports have documented the poverty of the elderly, particularly those who are single. This problem is particularly acute for women since 60% of women over 65 live alone. In 1978, 48% of single women over 65 had incomes of less than \$4,000 per year. 62% had incomes of less than \$5,000 annually.

Following OCSW's presentation, the Committee members had a chance to ask questions. Phil Gilles (Brantford, P.C.) and John Williams (Orion, P.C.) both wondered how many women were really "career oriented" and whether part-time workers should be covered by pensions. Their opinion was that women worked to supplement the family income.

David Peterson (London Centre, Liberal) thought that the OCSW should have discussed pensions for housewives and other measures,

such as those that have been introduced in Quebec to increase the birthrate, that might be introduced as a matter of public policy to "induce financial dependence in women".

Ross McLellan and Bob Mackenzie of the N.D.P. were persuaded that only an expanded C/QPP could provide all the features that would be desirable in a pension system (universal, portable, inflation protected, immediate vesting, etc.).

Since the Select Committee on Pensions is clearly in need of education on women's issues all member groups are urged to make submissions to the Committee and request hearings. You may obtain a copy of OCSW's brief by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope and \$2. to cover the cost of printing and mailings to OCSW's address (on this letterhead).

To request a hearing or file a submission contact the Clerk of the Committee, Graham White (416-965-1406 or 965-1624). Another set of hearings will be scheduled soon, possibly for January. You are advised to contact the Clerk as soon as possible to record your intention to participate.

NOTES

The Canadian Advertising Advisory Board has an Advisory Committee on Sex Role Stereotyping. Its mandate is to (a) conduct an ongoing information and sensitizing program with industry associations and groups, (b) to supervise public attitude research on related concerns, and (c) to prepare guidelines to encourage more realistic portrayal of men and women in advertising messages.

A copy of the current guidelines is available from: Canadian Advertising Advisory Board, 1240 Bay Street, Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario M5R 2A7 (Tel. 416-961-6311). If you are aware of advertising which is not in accord with the guidelines, send your complaint to the same address.

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The National Film Board of Canada has published a catalogue entitled, "Beyond

the Image: A Guide to Films about Women and Change". It is available from the National Film Board of Canada, Ontario Regional Office, Mackenzie Building, 1 Lombard Street, Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J6 (Tel. 416-369-4093) or the district office nearest you.

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The Women's Programme of the Secretary of State has published a "Listing of Women's Groups, Canada 1981". It includes national women's groups, women's groups by region, women's centres, rape crisis centers, transition houses, women's periodicals, status of women advisory councils and federal and provincial government programmes for women. Send your request to: Women's Programme, Secretary of State, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5.

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The Toronto Elizabeth Fry Society has prepared a series of information brochures on its operations: history, organization, program, direct service, bequests, library-resource centre and volunteers. If you wish to request copies of these brochures or arrange for a speaker, contact: Mae Couzons, The Toronto Elizabeth Fry Society, 215 Wellesley Street East, Toronto, Ontario M4X 1G1.

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The University of Chicago Press has announced the publication of Homemakers: The Forgotten Workers by Roe Andre. She has spoken with "housewives"-- and a few "househusbands", has examined the psychological and economic and legal constraints now facing homemakers and has drawn guidelines for future action.

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The "Women's Bureau Newsletter" is available from the Women's Bureau, Ontario Ministry of Labour, 400 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7 (Tel. 416-965-1537). Did you know, for instance, that a new regulation, effective January 1, 1981, has been issued which expands employment protection for domestic

workers? Or that Women in Trade Associations are forming across the province? Or that the Women's Bureau has a Career Consultant on staff?

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"The Working Poor: People and Programs" is a statistical profile published in March, 1981, by the National Council of Welfare. Copies may be obtained from: National Council of Welfare, Brooke Claxton Building, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9.

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"Women, Health and the Law in Canada" is the subject of a one day seminar of lectures and question periods on: abortion, contraception, sterilization, sex discrimination in health matters and other topics. Sponsored by Centennial College, the seminar will be held at: the Ramada Inn Downtown, 111 Carlton Street, Toronto, Ontario on Monday, October 5 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The \$75.00 fee covers lunch, coffee and course materials.

MEMBERS' NEWS

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs is holding an open meeting on Thanksgiving weekend at Lake Louise, Alberta on Women in the 1980's. Because of a grant they have received, the registration fee of \$50.00 covers accomodation and meals.

More information is available from Margaret Jackson at 967-3939.

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Dr. Rose Sheinin, Chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in the Academy of Sciences. She has been named a Josiah Macey Jr. Faculty Scholar with a fellowship to be held during research leave at the Institute des Recherches Contre le Cancer at Villejuif, France.

OSCW PUBLICATIONS LIST

The latest revised edition of our publications list is enclosed as an insert with

this Newsletter. You will note that several items are "Not Available". Do you have a copy of these items in your own files? Do you know of any other publications which have not been included in the list? If so, please telephone Beth Atcheson at 961-6551 (evenings).

OCSW BROCHURE

The OCSW has recently up-dated its information brochure; it contains an application for membership. If you would like extra copies to distribute among friends or colleagues, telephone Beth Atcheson at 961-6551 (evenings) to request copies.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW

The following are the meeting dates for the OCSW for 1981-82.

October 1, 1981 Thursday.
206 Roxborough Drive, Toronto

October 28, 1981 Wednesday
152 Cambridge Avenue, Toronto

November 20, 1981 Friday
Hart House, University of Toronto

February 12, 1982 Friday
41 Admiral Road, Toronto

April 7, 1982 Wednesday
To be confirmed

June 16, 1982 Wednesday
To be confirmed

Meeting Notices will be forwarded to members for each meeting.

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 O.C.S.W. 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, seniors). Donations above the membership dues are always welcome.

To join the OCSW, send the following coupon with \$10 to:

Ontario Committee on the Status of Women
P.O. Box 188, Station Q
Toronto, Ontario M4T 2M1

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____ PHONE: _____

ISSUES WHICH I AM INTERESTED IN: _____

I ENCLOSE \$ _____ AS A: NEW MEMBER _____ RENEWAL _____ DONATION _____

DATE: _____

