



The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

Newsletter, December 1982
ISSN 0227-6879

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Once again women everywhere welcome in another year of challenges, full of potential for change and improvement. May whatever Power that exists give us the strength to continue to work and laugh together through another 12 months. Maybe this is the year even more women will become active in the struggle for equal rights and responsibilities on all fronts.

EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

The first OCSW general meeting of 1983 is scheduled for Tuesday, January 11, 8:00 p.m. at the home of Lorna Marsden, 206 Roxborough Drive. (Roxborough is just north of the Rosedale subway stop on the Yonge line. Take any bus to Whitney, go east one block; or, if driving, go east off Glen Road.)

Our topic will be equal pay for work of equal value. We'll look at what that expression means, what the implications are for women, what forms exist elsewhere, and what is currently available in Ontario. The focus will then turn to what OCSW has done on the issue to date and where we go from here. As a result of the meeting, there well may be a new sub-committee to pursue further action.

Although Ontario Labour Minister Russell Ramsey seems baffled by the proposition, the equal value concept has already been defined and implemented in Quebec and federal government jurisdictions. According to consultants, the concept can be assimilated into job evaluation schemes which exist in most large

companies where jobs of different sorts are routinely rated and compared.

Plan to come along and share your questions and opinions.

THE LEATHERDALE DECISION

The Supreme Court of Canada has awarded Barbara Leatherdale a share of her former husband's stock and savings in recognition of only the nine years she had worked outside the home. Her contribution made by working in the home the rest of their married life counted for nothing.

Many OCSW members are seriously alarmed at this decision and have begun to talk about compiling a position paper for presentation to Ontario Attorney-General Roy McMurtry. Lee Grills (488-1486) has volunteered to act as coordinator for this ad hoc group, and anyone interested in more information and making a contribution to the effort is urged to call her.

McMurtry has stated that Ontario's Family Law Reform Act is due for review this year. Now is the time to influence his review process.

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

FEDERAL PENSION REFORM

The federal government's Green Paper on Pension Reform, finally released last month, tells us nothing new.

The report states the grim facts of how poorly retired women fare by use of several illustrative examples. The suggestions for improvement are modest. For example, vesting after two years and not immediately, as women's groups have been urging.

As the report notes, the traditional federal/provincial rights wrangle lies at the heart of changes to Canada Pension Plan. Reform requires provincial assent and private plans are a provincial responsibility.

The one action the federal government could have taken independently, it refused to pursue. In the current grim economic time the feds could have raised the Old Age Supplement and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Instead, they declared they will take no action until the economy improves, leaving the present elderly to cope as best they can: a group composed predominantly of women.

The OCSW Pension Sub-committee is putting together an official position paper to be presented to the Parliamentary Committee on the subject when it tours the country later this year.

Audrey Orr, co-chair of the sub-committee (926-2645), says the report package consists of the main paper, highlights, and a booklet (Focus on Women). They should be available through your local office of the Department of Health and Welfare.

SYNTHETIC HORMONE AFTER-EFFECTS

Between 1947 and 1971 thousands of women took DES to prevent miscarriages. Today we know this synthetic hormone is linked to a number of abnormalities in the reproductive systems of the children of these women. Ask Mom if she took any such drugs, and if you need more info: Canadian DES Action Group, c/o Ms. Simand, Box 233, Snowdon Post Office, Montréal, Québec H3X 3T4

DIVORCE REFORM

Look for changes to the Divorce Act in the coming year. Any changes the federal government may be contemplating should have our input and there are a host of questions to consider.

For instance, should the waiting period after separation be reduced? Should divorce become a provincial responsibility? Should a displaced homemaker be required to undertake skills retraining at any age--even 50 or 60 years of age or more? Should we make it more difficult for people to get married?

These are only a few of the questions raised by the prospect of change to the act and only some of the aspects discussed on a recent Tom Charrington talk show on CHCH-TV, Hamilton, by OCSW representative Lee Grills (on Friday, December 17, 1982).

If you would like to get involved in the issues, contact OCSW at the Newsletter address or call the editor, Carol Sutton, 690-3212.

This issue of the newsletter was prepared by Audrey Orr, Lee Grills, Linda Pergantes, Janet Skelton, and Carol Sutton.