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Swag



VICTORIA STATUS OF WOMEN NEWS

Jan 1980

P.O. Box 6296, Station
Victoria, B.C. V8P 5L5

END THE PATRIARCHY

Next Meeting:
Jan 28, 8:00 PM
Annual General Meeting
Reports/Elections

The Victoria Status of Women Action Group was formed in 1971 in order to work for the implementation of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; to foster public knowledge of the rights and status of women; and to promote full participation of women in social, economic and political life.

SWAG is a voluntary group, registered as a society, with an executive elected yearly.

ADDRESS: P. O. Box 6296, Station C
Victoria, B. C. V8P 5L5

President	Shirley Nordstrom 7, 2209 Oak Bay Ave. 595-0405 V8R 1G4
Vice-President (Programmes)	Gwen Bavin 1160 Greenwood Ave. 383-2502 V9A 5M1
Vice-President (Projects)	Avis Rasmussen 3050 Uplands Rd. 598-3188 V8R 6B4
Secretary (Correspondence)	Josephine Payne 949 Patullo Place 595-7802 V8S 5H6
Secretary (Recording)	Susan Slatkoff 1422 Wende Rd. 477-8385 V8P 3T5
Treasurer	Elaine Forsey 207, 955 Dingley Dell 384-5019 V9A 5R6
Membership Chair	Mary Jane Lewis 1815 Seawood Place 477-8535 V8N 4N2
Past President	Mimi Robertson 1149 Wychbury Ave. 385-8680 V9A 5L1

MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS

SWAG meets the fourth Monday of each month (except when it falls on a holiday) at the James Bay Community Centre, 140 Oswego St., Meeting Room 11 at 8:00 p.m.

WORKSHOPS*COFFEE*GUEST SPEAKERS*

COMMITTEES

Members are encouraged to focus their energies on one or more committees. This is where the real work of SWAG goes on. You need not be an expert. Call one of the chairpeople and offer your services.

CHAIRPEOPLE

Family Law	Gwen Bavin
Education	Avis Rasmussen
Human Rights	Norrie Preston 755 Monterey Ave. 598-1390 V8S 4V2
Health	Cathy Mountain 241 Howe St. 383-2165 V8V 4K7
Labour	Diana Butler 2149 Granite St. 598-6964 V8S 3G8
Herstory	Alice Albert 5, 1159 Yates St. 382-1536 V8v 3N1
Media Liaison	Susan Slatkoff

MEMBERSHIP entitles you to a subscription of SWAG NEWS -- a completely volunteer effort dependent upon your contributions ... poems, articles, opinions, reports. ALL FEMINIST MATERIAL WELCOME.

Editorial Board:	Alice Ages Shirley Nordstrom Lois Vickery
Editor:	Lois Vickery 552 Victoria Ave. 598-1704 V8S 4M6
Typist:	Joan Pearson
Collation:	Mary Jane Lewis Susan Chang Jode Angione



Honourable Rafe Mair
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.

I thank you for the experience
of editing our News for the past
1 1/2 years. Shirley will be taking on

Dear Mr. Mair:

Having recently learned of your intention to restrict the
availability of abortion services in B.C., I would like to
express my strong opposition to any such action.

Such a restriction would have serious implications for the
women of this province, particularly lower-income women, and
would lead to a resurgence of self-induced and back-room
abortions. Emergency wards will once again be forced to cope
with the after-effects. Some women will die.

In attempting to enforce your personal bias, you are
jeopardizing the health, safety - and very lives of women in
B.C.

Yours truly,

suggestions/interests/ideas for
speakers/topics/workshops in the
coming year, would you call me.
Lois

Women at Oakalla need our support.

They are protesting cutbacks in
medical and educational programs,
excessive disciplinary methods and
the use of male guards in the jail.
The protestors from the New Year's
Eve demonstration were placed in
solitary confinement. Fourteen women
refused to be returned to their cells
and continued their protest. We must
support their demands and express our
outrage over the use of the under-
ground punishment cells.

Feb. 15 Open House
EVERYWOMANS BOOKS
10:30 - 5:30
5th birthday
Poetry Readings
Feb. 18 Federal Election
Vote

Submit Art Posters for Inter-
national Woman's Day.

Deadline: Feb 10

Send to:

Pat Smith
Press Gang
603 Powell St.
Vancouver

Honourable Rafe Blair
Minister of Health
Parliament Buildings
111 Victoria B.C.
Dear Mr. Blair:

The Victoria Women's
Group was pleased to
work for the...
Report...
Status...
Knowledge...

Having recently learned of your intention to restrict the availability of abortion services in B.C., I would like to express my strong opposition to any such action. Such a restriction would have serious implications for the women of this province, particularly lower-income women, and would lead to a resurgence of self-induced and back-room abortions. Emergency wards will once again be forced to cope with the after-effects. Some women will die.

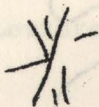
In attempting to enforce your personal bias, you are jeopardizing the health, safety - and very lives of women in B.C.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|
| Vice-President (Programs) | ... | ... |
| Vice-President (Projects) | ... | ... |
| Secretary (Communications) | ... | ... |
| Secretary (Records) | ... | ... |
| Treasurer | ... | ... |
| Membership Chair | ... | ... |
| Past President | ... | ... |

MEETING WORKSHOPS

SMAG meets the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th, 31st of each month (except when it falls on a Sunday) at the James Bay Community Centre, 1111 George St., Meeting Room 1, at 7:30 p.m.

WORKSHOPS*COFFEE*FREE*...



MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Jan. 28 Annual general meeting

Reports/Elections

Jan. 30 SWAG Health Collective

7:30, 1260 Walnut St.

Feb. 5 Tues. SWAG Ex.

8:00 at Susan's

Feb. 15 Kate Millett

Violence Against Women

U.B.C. 8:00 PM

\$3 wine & cheese following programmes in Feb. If you have

call Lois

Feb. 16 Open House

EVERYWOMANS BOOKS

10:30 - 5:30

5th birthday

Poetry Readings

Feb. 18 Federal Election

Vote




Submit Art Posters for International Woman's Day.

Deadline: Feb 10

Send to:

Pat Smith
Press Gang
603 Powell St.
Vancouver

I thank you for the experience of editing our News for the past 1½ years. Shirley will be taking on the newsletter next month.

My thanks to all those who submitted articles, worked on the gestetner and collated. A special thanks to Joan  for a massive amount of typing.

I will/may be switching to suggestions/interests/ideas for speakers/topics/workshops in the coming year, would you call me. Lois

Women at Oakalla need our support. They are protesting cutbacks in medical and educational programs, excessive disciplinary methods and the use of male guards in the jail. The protestors from the New Year's Eve demonstration were placed in solitary confinement. Fourteen women refused to be returned to their cells and continued their protest. We must support their demands and express our outrage over the use of the underground punishment cells.

LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Nordstrom:

Please insert in your Newsletter the following:

A support group for widows called Challenge of Widowhood begins Tuesday, February 5, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. YWCA Chapel. To register call 386-7511. \$12.00, 7 sessions.

Yours sincerely,
Gladys Whittaker
President

Dear Mrs. Nordstrom:

The Association of Women Electors wish to extend to SWAG their congratulations for their part in arranging the recent seminar at the University of Victoria on Women in Political Life.

A number of our members attended the sessions and found the programme and speakers most stimulating and interesting. We hope you will arrange another in the not too distant future.

Sincerely,
M. Laughlin
Corr. Secretary

Mr. Rafe Mair, M.L.A.
Minister of Health

Dear Mr. Mair:

We have read your statements in the Daily Colonist (Friday, January 11th). You are over stepping your authority. You are jeopardizing the rights of women. You are also questioning the integrity of doctors in our city.

You say you are asking for a report. However, you are jumping to conclusions and stating your policies before the study has been done and the report completed.

You say you are going to cut the abortion rate. You have no right to do this. Let me draw to your attention the World Health Organization definition of

health which has been accepted by the Canadian Medical Association: "Health is a complete state of physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

The Canadian Criminal Code, Section 251 provides that a woman may be granted an abortion if a Therapeutic Abortion Committee certifies "that the continuation of the pregnancy would, or is likely to endanger the life or health of the woman."

There has been some suggestion in the media that Therapeutic Abortion Committees do not have enough time to properly review cases. Let me point out that each application is made by two doctors; a general practitioner and a gynecologist, both of whom examine the patient and both of whom certify that the pregnancy is endangering her health. These doctors have professional integrity that should not be discredited.

You are opposed to abortion. You and those who share your views may make that decision for yourselves. You have no right, however, to impose your will on a woman who needs an abortion.

Let me remind you that if women can not obtain abortions in B. C. hospitals they will look elsewhere. Those who have enough money will travel to another province or the United States. Some will have illegal abortions. Some will use a tube to force toxic fluids into their uterus. They may cause blood poisoning. Some will use a coat hanger or a knitting needle to dislodge a fetus. This may cause hemorrhaging. Some of these women will arrive in our hospitals as emergency cases. Some will die.

We are angry at your presumptuous conclusions, your threats to the medical community, and your flagrant lack of concern for women. We want to see your statements withdrawn.

Letters(Contd)

Yours sincerely,
Shirley Nordstrom
President
Status of Women Action
Group

cc: Mr. J. Fair, Executive Director
Mr. A. Patterson, Chairman, Board of
Directors

cc: Editor, The Daily Colonist
Editor, the Victoria Times
The NDP Caucus
Rosemary Brown, M.L.A.

Therapeutic Abortion Committee
Royal Jubilee Hospital

Dear Friends:

We have been following developments in the General and Jubilee Hospitals over the past two weeks and would like to offer a word of encouragement and appreciation.

We realize that yours is not an easy task and we also fear that you may face much opposition.

Please remember that you have a great deal of support in the Victoria community. We appreciate you.

Yours sincerely,
Shirley Nordstrom
President
Victoria Status of Women
Action Group

The Therapeutic Abortion Committee
Victoria General Hospital

Dear Sirs:

It has come to our attention that you have reversed the practice of the General Hospital by rejecting twenty-six applications out of the thirty that you have reviewed this month.

cc: Dr. R. Le Huquet, Medical Director
Chair: Jubilee Hospital Board of
Directors

We are angry. We are concerned about what will happen to these women. Some seeing no options, will continue a pregnancy under unfavourable conditions. Those who have enough money will travel elsewhere. Those without money may try more desperate measures. Some may come to your hospital as emergency cases. Some may die.

NOTE: John Young of the Provincial NDP Office called to ask questions about the abortion issue. He expressed support and interest and I have taken the liberty of sending him copies of the above three letters. S.N.

Remember, each application is sent to you by two physicians, each of whom has examined the patient and has certified that her health is in danger. You have not even seen the patient. How can you presume to question your colleagues' judgement?

Do not forget the World Health Organization definition of health: "Health is a complete state of physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition of health is accepted by the Canadian Medical Association. Remember to use it.

Have you noticed the 17¢ stamps?
The "male" hand is tied with a cord - the "woman's" hand is knotted with a typewriter ribbon. (WE should be so lucky that all women are typists.)

We want to see a statement assuring us that the pattern of behaviour you have shown will be reversed. You are working in our public hospital. We will not give up our legal rights.

Get with it post office!!!!!!

Yours sincerely,
Shirley Nordstrom
President
Status of Women Action
Group

COUNSELLORS DEVELOP FEMINIST RESPONSE TO PLANET OF THE INSANE

By Sara Joy David

An enthusiastic group of over 200 women from a variety of agencies gathered at a conference on Counselling Women for Change at the London Psychiatric Hospital in London, Ontario, October 26 and 27 of this year. A few participants came from distant points: Regina, Calgary, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Quebec and Newfoundland.

Rosemary Brown, a member of the legislative assembly of British Columbia set the tone by offering a world perspective on women and mental health. Drawing on data from North America, Europe, Britain, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, Rosemary stated that oppression of women is a way of life in all countries and nations, that more and more women are "escaping" into insanity, and that the use of prescribed psychotropic drugs is reading alarming proportions, forcing most other forms of traditional therapy into disuse. She indicted mental health professionals and volunteers for their too willing silence and dulled responses to the reality of a society that would rather a woman be insane than non-conforming.

Rosemary suggested that we live on the planet of the insane whose inhabitants display a callous disregard for a dying environment, destroy animals and resources in the name of recreation, cannot communicate with each other, seem intent to destroy themselves and their planet, and who are committed to an ideology which demands that one half the species oppress and exploit the other. She stressed the centrality of social change in any programme directed at improving women's mental health.

Helen Levine, a professor of social work at Carleton University provided a thorough description of the condition of women in society and a critique of conventional practice. She suggested that such a feminist analysis must be shared with all women seeking help as a critical element in the helping process for consciousness raising is at the heart of feminist counselling. She stated further that The answers to personal dilemmas do not lie in therapeutic blueprints. They

most often lie in a redefinition of the struggle itself specifically in a redistribution of power, resources, and responsibility in both public and private spheres. Because women have been encouraged to be rather than do, feel rather than decide, react rather than act Helen urged counsellors to help the women they see make decisions, take risks, and act upon the problems facing them, individually and collectively rather than settling for talking, ventilation, taking drugs, finding temporary relief from tension.

Small group workshops permitted participants to focus on specific skills and issues such as crisis counselling with victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, career and employment counselling, counselling in traditional settings, a model of cooperative problem solving, the use of linguistic exercises to alter language behaviour and expand self expression, counselling adolescents, mediation counselling, and sexual counselling with women.

The greatest controversy was sparked by a combination of genuine disagreement and misunderstanding between workshop leaders about what constitutes rescuing other women and whether and when it is appropriate to do so.

Hogie Wycoff, a radical therapist from Berkeley, California, and author of Solving Women's Problems and various articles that have appeared in Issues in Radical Therapy, introduced the issue of No Rescues.

She defined a Rescue as doing something for someone she can do for herself, and doing more for someone than she does for herself, or doing something you do not want to do.

In her book Hogie tells us that she capitalizes terms such as "Rescuer," "Victim" and "Persecutor" to distinguish inappropriate role behaviours from legitimate rescuing -- a lifeguard throwing a drowning woman a line. It is clear that she recognizes that there are survival situations where real rescue is

warranted and in no way deprives real victims of their power. She is merely warning us about the dangers of reinforcing women's feelings of powerlessness, weakness and passivity by taking excessive responsibility for them when they seek help.

The misunderstanding that occurred was reflected in the agitation experienced by those who have worked with severely battered women or women in the midst of massive breakdown who could not ask for help, make contracts, or share responsibility in a time of severe stress and crisis. A few of those counsellors thought they were being taken to task for "rescuing" and began to question themselves or feel guilty. A few others felt righteously angry.

No real dialogue took place on this very important issue. I perceived this as a serious problem resulting from the attitudes of those on both sides of the issue toward one another and the manner in which it was raised. Those critical of Wycoff spoke accusingly and with hostility about the danger of "simplistic jargon."

Hogie, reacting to the tone of the criticism judged the critics to be closed rather than open. As a result she did not respond to the content of their remarks. It was a classic example of how dialogue grinds to a halt when people fail to apply the principles of constructive criticism or to use simple communication skills such as careful listening, paraphrasing, and checking out their understanding of terms or ideas.

It was my hunch that two other factors widened the gap. I believe these were failure of the critics to discharge frustration and anger that originated elsewhere which produced a hostility out of proportion to the issue at hand, and tiredness, heightened sensitivity and irritability on Hogie's part which made her less able to spot what was happening and rendered her less willing and able to clarify her ideas in a way that could be heard.

Increased awareness of such dynamics, and an openness to giving each other the benefit of the doubt, is imperative if we wish to engage in serious debate as opposed to attack, counterattack or indifferent silence. The actual issue at stake could have been cleared up simply and quickly.

What the conference managed to achieve was considerable. It provided a feminist analysis to many women in the field just beginning to open to feminism. It brought together people who ordinarily have no means for communicating with or supporting one another thereby decreasing feelings of isolation and alienation. It heightened awareness of and ability to articulate central issues that must be dealt with in counselling women for change. It made possible the beginnings of a cross Canada network of feminist therapists to develop feminist therapist rosters, communicate further with one another, plan future regional and national conferences, and possibly take a united stand on political issues salient to women's mental health. Finally it made clear the need for more training of women by women with a feminist consciousness and extensive knowledge and skills.

Shortcomings that need to be corrected at future conferences are: the lack of structure provided for workshop leaders to learn from and share with one another; the lack of planning for different levels of knowledge and consciousness; the limited range of workshops (most presented verbal, cognitive problem solving skills). There was little skill training in body awareness and intervention techniques; the lack of structure for groups to form to discuss issue-oriented topics arising from informal contacts; the lack of a business agenda or forum for taking a political position on current mental health delivery or national issues affecting women's mental health; and failure to provide evaluation forms.

Nonetheless, the organizers of the conference are to be congratulated for providing a forum where important beginnings were made. Helen Levine summed up accurately when she stated that while a range of different positions were expressed, there were basic shared values.

Moreover, the large turn-out dispelled any remaining feelings we may have had as feminist counsellors of being part of a "lunatic fringe." On the contrary, we left reaffirmed and recommitted to the integration of personal and political change.

From: Kinesis, December 79-January 1980

I WANT A WIFE

A FEMINIST CLASSIC FROM THE EARLY '70s

Judy Syfers

I belong to that classification of people known as wives. I am a Wife. And, not altogether incidentally, I am a mother.

Not too long ago a male friend of mine appeared on the scene fresh from a recent divorce. He had one child, who is, of course, with his ex-wife. He is obviously looking for another wife. As I thought about him while I was ironing one evening, it suddenly occurred to me that I, too, would like to have a wife. Why do I want a wife?

I would like to go back to school so that I can become economically independent, support myself, and, if need be, support those dependent upon me. I want a wife who will work and send me to school. And while I am going to school I want a wife to take care of the children. I want a wife to keep track of the children's doctor and dentist appointments. And to keep track of mine too. I want a wife to make sure my children eat properly and are kept clean. I want a wife who will wash the children's clothes and keep them mended. I want a wife who is a good nurturant attendant to my children, who arranges for their schooling, makes sure that they have an adequate social life with their peers, takes them to the park, the zoo, et cetera. I want a wife who takes care of the children when they are sick, a wife who arranges to be around when the children need special care, because, of course, I cannot miss classes at school. My wife must arrange to lose time at work and not lose the job. It may mean a small cut in my wife's income from time to time, but I guess I can tolerate that. Needless to say, my wife will arrange and pay for the care of the children while my wife is working.

I want a wife who will take care of my physical needs. I want a wife who will keep my house clean. A wife who will pick up after me. I want a wife who will keep my clothes clean, ironed, mended, replaced when need be, and who will see to it that my personal things are kept in their proper place so that I can find what I need the minute I need it. I want a wife

who cooks the meals, a wife who is a good cook. I want a wife who will plan the menus, do the necessary grocery shopping, prepare the meals, serve them pleasantly, and then do the cleaning up while I do my studying. I want a wife who will care for me when I am sick and sympathize with my pain and loss of time from school. I want a wife to go along when our family takes a vacation so that someone can continue to care for me and my children when I need a rest and change of scene.

I want a wife who will not bother me with rambling complaints about a wife's duties. But I want a wife who will listen to me when I feel the need to explain a rather difficult point I have come across in my course of studies. And I want a wife who will type my papers for me when I have written them.

I want a wife who will take care of the details of my social life. When my wife and I are invited out by my friends, I want a wife who will take care of the baby-sitting arrangements. When I meet people at school whom I like and want to entertain, I want a wife who will have the house clean, will prepare a special meal, serve it to me and my friends, and not interrupt when I talk about the things that interest me and my friends. I want a wife who will have arranged that the children are fed and ready for bed before my guests arrive so that the children do not bother us.

And I want a wife who knows that sometimes I need a night out by myself.

I want a wife who is sensitive to my sexual needs, a wife who makes love passionately and eagerly when I feel like it, a wife who makes sure that I am satisfied. And, of course, I want a wife who will not demand sexual attention when I am not in the mood for it. I want a wife who assumes the complete responsibility for birth control, because I do not want more children. I want a wife who will remain sexually faithful to me so that I do not have to clutter up my intellectual life with jealousies. And I

want a wife who understands that my sexual needs may entail more than strict adherence to monogamy. I must, after all, be able to relate to people as fully as possible.

If, by chance, I find another person more suitable as a wife than the wife I already have, I want the liberty to replace my present wife with another one. Naturally, I will expect a fresh, new life; my wife will take the children and be solely responsible for them so that I am left free.

When I am through with school and have a job, I want my wife to quit working and remain at home so that my wife can more fully and completely take care of a wife's duties.

My God, who wouldn't want a wife?

From: The New Ms, December, 1979

COMPUTER DATING SERVICE



"Good news, Mr. Schneider! We finally found a female for you whose only ambition in life is to SERVE her man! Meet Queenie!"

New Woman FEB '80

TURKEY OF THE MONTH -



RAFE MAIR

has expressed concern over the number of abortions in B.C.

Is he concerned enough to do something about our inadequate birth control methods and the near lack of birth control information given to women (especially young students)????

If you do not have time to write your own letter, please use the form letter included in the News.



HUMAN RIGHTS FOR BRITISH COLUMBIANS

Shirley Nordstrom

It has been a difficult year for the British Columbia Human Rights Commission. Minority and women's groups have called for accountability. Individual commissioners have been held responsible for irresponsible statements. The Commission itself was faulted for lacking expertise and credibility.

The Commission sat empty for eight months of 1978. Finally, as a result of mounting pressure and criticism, Allan Williams (then Labour Minister) appointed a new commission. Civil libertarians and human rights activists were appalled to find only two of the 12 people named were women and almost all of the members of the Commission had never been active in the human rights field. The past year has only confirmed the worst of our fears.

As a gesture of good intent the Commission joined the Secretary of State Department and the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews to co-sponsor a conference on Human Rights for British Columbians. Wary and cynical after a year's experience with the present Commission many groups questioned whether or not they should even participate. The entire procedure looked suspiciously like an elaborate public relations event. Most groups attended acknowledging that given the present Commission is all we have and protests have thus far fallen on deaf ministerial ears, this was at least an opportunity to make contact with each other and perhaps create some interaction with Commission members.

Given those parameters the conference was partially successful. It was great to be in discussion with representatives from a cross section of minority and women's groups. There was strength in hearing again that our struggles were the same in so many ways. We all find ourselves virtually invisible in the education system. We all find ourselves stereotyped in employment. We all find ourselves misrepresented in the media.

The frustration comes with knowing that even these diverse groups have banded together before. We have spoken with one voice to demand the enforcement of legislation. We have supported each other in the search for basic rights. It is fine to speak together again. What we need is to be heard.

The Conference was divided into three forum groups: Education, Media and Employment. I attended the "Media" session and after reports from a number of group representatives and the usual round of "how to deal with the media" techniques we divided into small groups. I chose the group discussing the B. C. Federation of Women's proposed amendments to the Human Rights Code. I left the group when they decided the entire code needed to be thrown out. I had visions of the Commission spending the next three years researching a new code when our present government won't enforce the one we have.

The presence of women at the conference was energizing and confirming. Darlene Marzari chaired the Media Forum. In plenary report she avoided the traditional litany to simply introduce reporters from each of our small discussion groups. As individuals they were able to give more graphic and accurate descriptions of the "media" proceedings. What a marvelous example to show that women do it differently! The seminar for women was chaired by Lynn Foster from the Secretary of State Department. I was quite struck by the cooperation and power operating in that seminar. About sixty women gathered and began immediately to discuss issues. The interaction moved consistently around the entire group. Differences were aired promptly and clearly. There was a tangible support and unity in the face of incredible diversity.

B. C. Federation of Women maintained a high profile throughout the conference. We have reprinted their presentations in this issue of SWAG News.

The coup of the conference was decidedly the Vant affair. Lesbians and gay men joined forces to deal specifically with Commissioner Rev. Neil Vant. His position had been that prejudice against gay people was justified in certain quarters and that gays were prone to raping children. At the close of the Sexual Orientation Seminar Vant went on record to say that he supported the resolutions put forward by that seminar and would be personally responsible for having them acted upon by the Commission! Bouquets to those people who stayed on his case.

A large number of resolutions were endorsed by the seminar groups and there was no intention by the planning committee that resolutions be voted on at plenary. However one resolution was forwarded by seven out of nine seminar groups and the plenary participants insisted that it be voted on. The resolution, reprinted here is its entirety, passed easily.

RESOLUTION:

That the present government of British Columbia and the former Minister of Labour be condemned for appointing to the Human Rights Commission people without adequate experience in positive action on Human Rights; and for the appointment of persons who are publicly known to have opposed the implementation of sections of the Human Rights Code. That the Human Rights Commission be censured for public comments violating the spirit of the Code or for having sat silent while those remarks were being made by members of the Commission.

Be it further resolved that the present Commission take positive steps, beyond expressing good intentions, to:

- (a) state publicly what amendments to the Human Rights Code that it will propose to the Minister of Labour for the upcoming legislative session; and
- (b) state publicly educational programmes it is endorsing, and its priorities regarding those programmes.

It was not until Sunday that commission members presented themselves to conference participants and then only in a reluctant response to constant pressure. They wanted to avoid a question period reminding plenary repeatedly of the time factor.

Only seven of the twelve commissioners were committed enough to the conference to even be there on Sunday morning. Those seven spoke evasively about committee work and seemed primarily concerned with lack of money, lack of staff and difficulty of meeting together.

The direction of the conference participants was clear. We realized after two days that we must educate the commission on human rights issues. We must demand public input be solicited through well advertised public meetings. We know that bureaucracy has an insatiable ability to absorb and co-opt the energy of dissenters. The commission could easily accept direction to the extent that it becomes very active "doing things," keeping us pacified and making no significant changes. We must constantly monitor and evaluate the work of this commission. Their mandate is to educate the public and promote human rights in British Columbia. Will they do it?

Statement to Attending Delegates and Members to Conference on Human Rights for British Columbians

BCFW

We, as you may be also, are wondering why this conference is taking place. Its stated rationale is to get us out of our isolation and unify us as groups. We are told there has been progress in each area where groups have focused in depth on their own issues, covering different areas of interest. We are being blamed for the few advances and little activity in formulation of human rights legislation. These are puzzling statements to behold. The isolation alluded to must be that of government in its inability to see the big picture, since groups have funnelled their knowledge, energy, lobbying into government, in search of simple human rights and enforcement of legislation.

We at BCFW feel there has not been any disunity among the groups -- francophones, handicapped, native Indians, seniors, lesbians and homosexuals, visible minorities, women, and their beleaguered quest for some very simple rights and/or the enforcement of legislation.

On the contrary, it is quite obvious that disunity on human rights issues, their focus and approach has been exemplified by the very commission that is putting on this do. It is also striking that minority groups which have been forced into inadequate, low budgets are being levied \$15 per ticket to attend a posh conference. Groups always have joined forces to support each other, but we have had to hold our gatherings in parks, in barns, in the street, where it doesn't cost a lot. It seems that a \$15 per head exhibit as to the commission's intention to receive input is a high-priced ticket on a satirical play.

If the purpose of this conference is also to educate people on human rights, which is part of the mandate of the commission, then we question its co-sponsorship, which determines at least 50 percent of its credibility. This may seem a benign question, but how can we believe in the sincerity of this workshop when the very attitudes as shown by the commission lends itself to conclude the commission is perhaps better suited to take a basic human rights course than co-sponsor a forum on such.

The Human Rights Subcommittee of BCFW has followed the commission with much interest.

The last commission, in its December 1977 third annual report, requested that the government take very seriously its role as an educator in the human rights field, and its special responsibility of stewardship with regard to the rights of minorities and the handicapped. It was hoped that with the initiative, leadership and example of the government, the present legislation would have been continuously updated and that British Columbia would stay in the forefront with respect to human rights in Canada. This is not so.

We observed such leadership and example when the present commission was recorded in its views on women, Jews, Blacks, francophones, homosexuals, with their public statement on these minorities.

Further, we charge that this commission has tried to erode the human rights code with harassment of the enforcement body for human rights, which is the Branch. Last spring, the commission undertook to

take over control of the Human Rights Branch. This bid was foiled when exposed and created political embarrassment at the last provincial election, when it became publicly obvious that the present commission and government are intricately intertwined. It is also on record that the Commission tried further to undermine enforcement of the code by publicly likening the Branch to the Gestapo.

We have been informed that one of the goals of this conference is for the commission to secure input towards possible changes in the human rights code. While we are more than willing to again offer our basic recommendations, may we suggest that a workshop educating the commission on supporting the enforcement of the current code is in order.

In BCFW's research, it has also been found that the last commission was deeply concerned that the Minister of Labour's other responsibilities are in direct conflict with the fundamental principle that human rights complaints should be judged by an independent tribunal. Among other tasks, the Minister of Labour is responsible for maintaining good labour relations in the province and developing harmonious relationship with both management and labour. The Minister is then charged through the code to decide whether to appoint boards of inquiry to hear complaints against government and the private sector. The code must be amended to provide for an independent body to appoint boards of inquiry. Sections 4 and 5 of the code discriminate against persons with children. Such an exclusion causes hardship to low income and single parent families, most of which are headed by women. The majority of complaints dealing with sexual discrimination are against women in employment. For data, please refer to latest Ministry of Labour report. For our recommendations to amendments to the code, please refer to our brief on the code which is available to you at this conference.

Prepared by Working Women Unite

In 1952 the International Labour organization of the United Nations passed a resolution, Convention 100, which outlined and endorsed the principle of Equal

Pay for Work of Equal Value. This principle was ratified in Canada in 1972 and we are still waiting for it to become a reality in the working lives of Canadian Women.

While 47% of all women between the ages of 16 - 60 work full-time in the home with no pay and no opportunities for benefits such as Canada Pension Plan, Workers' Compensation, UIC, or paid holiday leave, 53% do work outside the home in waged occupations. This figure represents well over one third of the paid Canadian Labour force. And while this is an enormous increase over the last 20 years, it has not been accompanied by changes in the kinds of work women do for pay. Such work usually relates to women's traditional role in the home, including jobs of a "caring" nature such as nursing, teaching and social work, as well as "servicing" jobs such as waitressing, secretarial and clerical work. Over 60% of all working women are concentrated in clerical and service work and this percentage is increasing. The specific industries and occupations women are slotted into are characterized by low pay, poor working conditions, few benefits and low prospects for advancement. And because of the attitude that women work simply for pin money or to supplement the family's income, they are seen as the most expendable sector of the work force. Since women's primary role is still seen to be in the home and whatever she does outside of the home is seen as secondary, employers can lay off large numbers of women without any general outcry, and then draw them back into the work force when needed. This astonishing manipulation of women into and out of the work force for the sake of economic convenience is even more incredible in the light of the fact that over 40% of all women who work are divorced, separated, widowed or single and mothers. Women do not work for fun, they work to eat.

Not only is the ghettoization of women's work becoming more evident but the wage gap between men and women is increasing as well. At present women earn on an average of 57% of male wages. Even in predominantly female jobs, the few men who do work in these occupations are paid more. For example in clerical jobs the average male

wage is \$12,656 as opposed to the average female wage which is \$7,852. Many employers will give a job a certain wage according to the sex of the person expected to fill it. Low salaries are assigned to such jobs as secretaries and seamstresses simply because they will be filled by women.

At present the B. C. Human Rights Code covers only that work which is "similar or substantially similar." This is not enough. The concept of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value means that not only would jobs with the same function be compared but that predominantly female jobs would be compared to predominantly male jobs and evaluated in terms of skill, responsibility, effort and working conditions. And this would still not be enough. To fairly evaluate the kind of work women do would necessitate an entire reassessment of the value placed on female skills. Typing, for example, requires a vast degree of mental concentration, manual dexterity, accuracy, training and it represents an occupational hazard in that sedentary workers run six times the risk of a heart attack as do other workers. All of these factors would have to be included in any evaluation of work of equal value.

Without the inclusion of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value in the Human Rights Code and strong methods of implementing and enforcing such a concept, women are left with no recourse to address these discriminatory job situations. Since only 22% of working women are unionized and the vast majority of these are organized in predominantly male unions, there has been little contractual support for these issues.

When women do break out of the female work ghetto and find jobs in non-traditional occupations, the obstacles facing them are enormous. In many cases, non-traditional jobs are unionized and often the unions themselves are not particularly interested in seeing more women in these fields. Even in cases where unions have policies against job discrimination, the female applicant has still to deal with height and weight restrictions which are built right into the job descriptions and which ensure that the successful applicant is male.

We know of no lesbian groups who have ever received support or funding from the B.C. Human Rights Commission. The money being spent by them on this conference alone is more than our organizations have had to work with in the last five years.

Although we do not believe that the B.C. Human Rights Commission is capable of helping us at this time, due to their own bias and bigotry we intend to keep working. We will continue our educational programmes until all women can see that our male-oriented society depends on women absorbing the myths and fear about lesbians. These myths and fears are used as a control device, to keep all women in their traditional roles of reproduction service and maintenance. The freedom of all women will only come when we have destroyed the patriarchy's power to divide us. The acceptance of lesbianism is an integral part of that fight for Freedom.

Prepared by Women in Focus and
presented to Media Forum

We are here to discuss the media in which we include all written and visual materials; books, magazines, newspapers, radio, records, photographs, art, television, film and any other process that symbolically represents information and ideas.

Our presentation today is based upon knowledge that has been gained through our experience in working in many areas of the media, both in production and theory.

In order to talk about the media we must understand that it is part of the ideological process; those that work within it have the power to define and mold as well as the power to reproduce. By this we mean that ideas are formed by all people, gained from their sensory experiences of the world. Of these ideas, only some are selected as acceptable by those who hold power -- Men. These ideas are then processed into symbolic presentations such as books, magazines, newspapers, radio, records, photographs, art, television and film and are distributed throughout the world as knowledge, the way things are!

Language and imagery are common forms of thought representations. Through the

meaning attached to words and images comes the interpretation and validation of our everyday world. Women do not have input or power over the processes that make up today's media. Therefore, our lives and experiences are reported by men who are in power of these processes and not by ourselves. We are neither the authors nor the producers of the many forms of the media. We have been withheld from the mental and technical skills that would allow us to produce a media that starts from a woman's experience of her life.

Those who have the power to select and define the ideas that form the dominant ideology of society have a great deal of control over the value system accepted by the population. As women we play very little part in this process. We are only the receivers of the images that represent our lives, images presented to us via a male interpretation.

Women's contribution to history has been ignored. The media stereotypes us into the roles of middle-class nurturers, mindless caretakers, and sex objects. These roles have no reflection upon the reality of the situations of our lives. When topics that manifest women's oppression are presented through the media they are used for financial gain and for the reiteration of a patriarchal value system as seen in the glorification of motherhood, rape, wife abuse, pornography and the use of children as sex objects.

Our oppression through the media results in multi-billion dollar profits for those who control consumer goods, from make-up to mufflers, tampons to telephones, television programming, and sales and distribution.

A current example of this process at work is the growth and acceptance of pornography and the objectification of women.

As women we define pornography as the ideological basis for the systematic persecution of women by men as a means of social control. Pornography is the deliberate devaluation of women through obscene, distorted depictions. It is not and never can be sexual freedom. Women's bodies are being stripped, exposed and contorted for the purpose of ridicule to

to bolster the male ego and provide monetary profit for the capitalist system and its sub systems. Men are rewarded with a senses of power for viewing women as anonymous playthings, adult dehumanized toys to be used and abused, broken and discarded. Pornography is hate propaganda against women. It is presented and defended by the media under the guise of freedom of speech, expression and sexuality. THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN ARE VIOLATED THROUGH THE PUBLICATION OF PORNOGRAPHIC MATERIALS!

The Human Rights Code of B. C., section 2, Discriminatory practices, does not, as presently written, protect women from hate literature. In fact, section 2 part 2 by its very wording, "any person may, by speech or in writing, freely express his opinions on any subject," has the potential to protect the producers of pornography.

Administration section 11 (4) states the function of the commission is:

- (c) to develop and conduct educational programmes designed to eliminate discriminatory practices; and
- (d) to encourage and coordinate programmes and activities promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We call upon the Human Rights Commission to take up this issue of pornography as hate propaganda to fulfill their duties to the women of B. C. by concretely supporting women and women's organizations to:

- (a) continue the work of educating the public on the media's role in the oppression of women,
- (b) raise consciousness in order to have public outcry against sexist and violent content in all forms of the media, and
- (c) provide alternative feminist media productions, and by
- (d) encouraging the appointment of feminist women in positions of power and authority in government, industry and institutions.

We also call upon the Commission to take whatever steps are necessary to make changes in section 2 of the Human Rights Code to include the protection of the human rights of women as denied by the publication and distribution of pornography.

We do not feel it was the intent and purpose of the Act to exclude us in any way and changes must be implemented to correct this error.

Only by the enforcement of these recommendations will we be able to become the authors and producers of the images that present our lives.

* Press Release following Conference *

The B.C. Federation of Women states that this conference has proven our fears correct. This was nothing but a public relations event.

We hope that the next few months will prove this statement false.

The B.C.F.W. condemns the present government of B. C. and the former Minister of Labour for appointing a Human Rights Commission of people with limited experience in positive actions on Human Rights. Further that the appointment of persons who are publicly known to have opposed the implementation of sections of the code is appalling. Spokeswoman Prabha reinforced this by stating that "members of the Commission have subsequently made public comments violating the spirit of the Human Rights Code or sat silent while remarks were being made."

B.C.F.W. calls for the present Commission to take positive steps beyond expressing good intentions to:

- (a) State publicly amendments to the Human Rights Code that it will propose to the Ministry of Labour prior to the opening of the Legislative session,
- (b) State publicly educational programmes it is endorsing and its priorities regarding those programmes.

EVERYWOMANS BOOKS

641 Johnson St.

We do not feel it was the intent and purpose of the Act to exclude us in any way and changes must be implemented to correct this error. We are disappointed in this regard. Only by the enforcement of these laws will we be able to become the authors and producers of the images that present our lives. We do not feel it was the intent and purpose of the Act to exclude us in any way and changes must be implemented to correct this error. We are disappointed in this regard. Only by the enforcement of these laws will we be able to become the authors and producers of the images that present our lives.

The Human Rights Code of B.C., section 2, Discriminatory practices, does not as presently written protect women from hate literature. In fact, section 2, part 1, by the very wording, "any person may, by speech or in writing, freely express his or her opinion on any subject," has the potential to protect the producers of pornography and to regulate the content of pornography. (A) The function of the commission is: (c) to develop and conduct educational programs designed to eliminate discriminatory practices and to assist the function of the commission in: (d) to encourage and assist in the development of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We call upon the Human Rights Commission to take up the issue of pornography as part of its mandate to fulfill its duties to the women of B.C. by concretely, as an organization, supporting women and women's organizations.

My philosophy is and has always been, that until all of us have made it, none of us has made it.

Rosemary Brown

B.C.V.W. calls for the present Commission to take positive steps beyond expressing good intentions but without any state publicly amendments to the Human Rights Code that it will propose to the Ministry of Labour prior to the opening of the legislative session. It is endorsing and its priority regarding these programs, as well as its incorporation of laws that will be by the end of the year. (a) continue the work of educating the public on the woman's role in the oppression of women. (b) raise consciousness in order to have public outcry against sexist and violent content in all forms of the media, and (c) provide alternative legislative proposals and (d) encouraging the appointment of women in positions of power and authority in government, industry and institutional. We also call upon the Commission to take whatever steps are necessary to make changes in section 2 of the Human Rights Code to include the protection of the human rights of women as defined by the publication and distribution of pornography to assist in securing the protection of

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