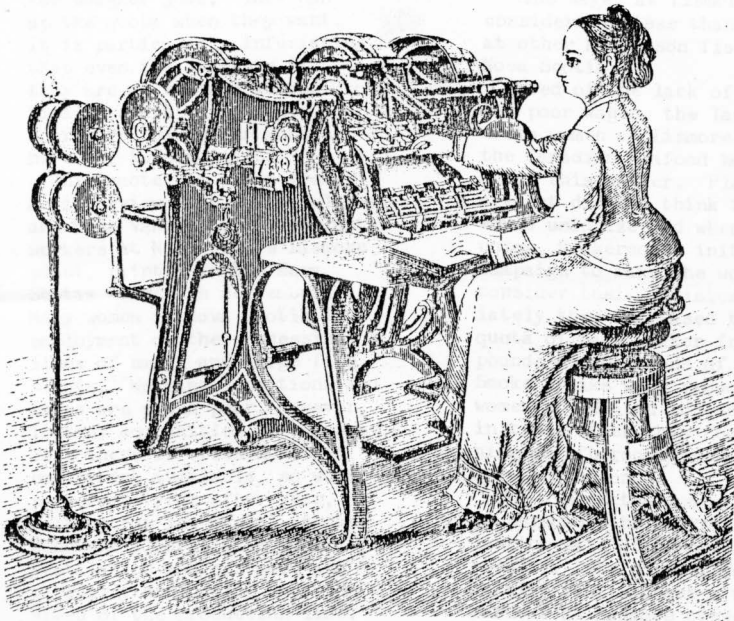


# A WOMAN'S PLACE

429-4063



NEWSLETTER

1980

## WOMEN, WORK AND UNIONS:

### LISMORE FISHPLANT

" The working conditions were bad. Broken pipes, bad facilities, no heaters in the fall, no fans or air conditioning in the summer. There's no wage differential for tougher jobs. They can up the quota when they want. It is particularly infuriating that even the students if they are male would automatically start fifty cents an hour more than women working here for twenty years! "

This quote was taken from an interview with Margo Delaney and Gina Vance, both fishplant workers at Nickerson's Lismore plant, printed in the Nova Scotia Worker in September. Many women in Nova Scotia find employment on the processing lines of small and large fish plants. Working conditions and wages are often poor. However, in many communities in the province there is often no other employment available, so women persevere year after year, working for low wages, on damp concrete floors, with poor ventilation and systems, and virtually no control over the speed of the production line.

Working conditions at Nickerson's Lismore fishplant are particularly bad. There is no lunch room and no change room..

Women must eat their lunches on the wharf or in their cars.

There is no sick leave with pay. If you miss a day, you may need a doctor's certificate to get back into the plant to work. This presents a real problem if you commute 30 miles or more and depend on another employee for a ride to work.

The wages at Lismore are considerably less than those paid at other Nickerson fishplants in Nova Scotia.

Tired of the lack of control, the poor wages, the lack of benefits women at Lismore joined the Canadian Seafood Workers Union this summer. Plant management did not think the workers would unionize and when 80% voted union, Nickerson's initiated a campaign to make the workers reconsider their decision. Immediately they increased the daily quota of each worker from 24 pounds to 40 pounds of crab meat. Smoke breaks were reduced and women who wanted to use the toilet in times other than regular morning or afternoon breaks had to ask permission.

The aim of the company has been to persuade the workers that unionization will bring nothing but trouble. The company fails to mention that without a union the workers at Lismore cannot bargain effectively for higher wages, better working conditions, bereavement leave, sick pay, or pensions. The tactics employed

by Nickersons to discourage unionization constitute unfair labour practices. Complaints have been made to the province's Labour Relations Board and the union is waiting for a hearing.

For too long women have been used as a source of cheap labour. Through unionization and active union participation women will gain strength and power to win back the wages and benefits that are long overdue.

Kathy Kuusisto



#### GENERAL MEETING

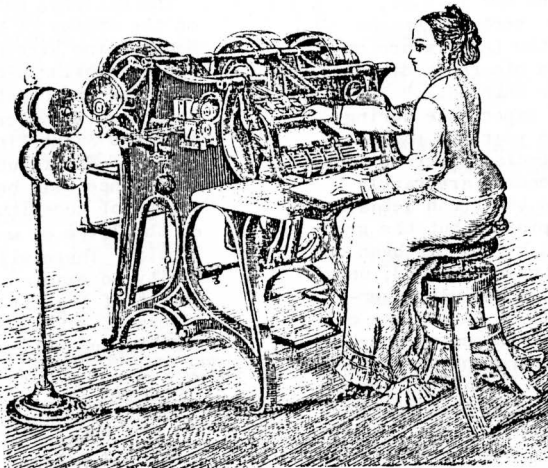
The general meeting of A Woman's Place was held on November 5, 1980. The first business was the election of a new steering committee. The committee members are Pat Dingle, Brenda Bryan, Carol Short, Sandra Lore, Florence D'Leon, Mary Keddy, Cathy Sullivan, Nancy Chipman, Elaine Jacobson, Kathy Kuusisto. The representatives of the YWCA are Pat Langmaid, and Peggy Mahon.

The other business discussed concerned funding. The grant which pays our staff salaries runs out in December. We are negotiating with the city for refunding but it is necessary for to meet certain requirements under cost shared

funding for social services. This requires us to keep some records to prove we serve a low income population. The decision of the meeting was that we would try the following method to see if it would be effective. We will place a book in a prominent place in the centre and ask women who use the centre to identify themselves in some way such as their first name, full name or a pseudonym, and to indicate their personal income exclusive of others in their household. Their income categories would fall in one of the following areas under \$4000, between \$4000 and \$7000, \$7000 and \$10000, or over \$10000. We are hopeful that women will respond and that this will satisfy the requirements of the government.

# Newsletter Layout Workshop

Sponsored by the Women's Calendar Collective



The Women's Calendar Collective is offering a two part workshop on basic printing and layout procedures. The workshop will be taught by Jane Lombard, of Dalhousie Graphics on Saturdays November 15 and 22 at 1:30-4:00 pm at A Woman's Place, 1225 Barrington St.

Workshop I: An overview will be presented of various standard and non-standard printing methods. This first workshop will basically deal with the theoretical aspects of newsletter production.

Workshop II: Paste-up and layout techniques will be taught. Unlike the first part of the workshop, this workshop will teach participants how to implement printing skills.

Pre-registration is required. Phone 429-4063 or drop by A Woman's Place.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE  
WHO NEEDS ENEMIES ?

In June of this year the N.S. Women's Action Committee wrote to Jeremy Akerman, then leader of the NDP in N.S., questioning certain remarks he made in the Legislature on May 8th. In his reply dated June 18th he snarled..." It has been my experience during some fifteen years in public life that special interest lobby groups in general are rarely receptive to the truth let alone an honest opinion, but the group to which you belong has been one of the most narrow minded, unfair self righteous and ultra sensitive of all of them. One of the pleasant prospects of my impending retirement from politics is that I shall no longer have to deal with such people." The NDP party has since apologized but Mr. Akerman has remained dumb.

Although NSWAC's friend Jeremy Akerman expressed relief that his retirement from politics would mean the end of dealing with women's groups, what does his new political appointment mean? We are looking forward to a future relationship with the province's new assistant to the Minister responsible for Intergovernmental Relations. Maybe we should write Jeremy about Nova Scotia's policy on women and constitutional reform?

WOMEN AND CONSTITUTIONAL  
REFORM

NOVEMBER 28 AND 29  
MOUNT SAINT VINCENT U.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women and Mount Saint Vincent University are sponsoring a conference on Women and Constitutional Reform on November 28 and 29 at Mount Saint Vincent University. The focus of the conference will be the implications of constitutional reform on the lives of women in Nova Scotia. There will be an opportunity to examine how the arrangement of federal and provincial powers affect women now, and what future reform might mean.

November 28:

Friday Evening:

The Process of Constitutional Reform

The Pros and Cons of  
Enrichment of Human  
Rights

" Will Women Find Equality  
in the Courts of the  
Parliament?"

November 29:

Saturday:

1 Workshops on Family  
Law; Employment and Economic  
Development; Social Services;  
Health Care, Enrichment of  
Rights, and Politics of Reform.



## WOMEN, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CONSTITUTION... THE NEXT 100 YEARS

The federal government has decided to act to protect certain values in our society — basic rights such as freedom of speech, religion and the right to vote. It proposes to do this by "entrenching" a Charter of Rights and Freedoms in our new constitution. This charter would have authority over all federal and provincial laws and could only be taken away by changing or amending the constitution.

### ARE WOMEN'S RIGHTS INCLUDED IN THIS PROPOSED CHARTER?

The proposed charter contains a section which directly concerns Canadian women. It promises everyone "equality before the law and ... the equal protection of the law without discrimination because of ... sex".

### IS THIS ENOUGH TO PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

No. There are almost identical words in the present CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS and these words have not protected women when they have been tested in Canadian courts. For example, in 1973 the Supreme Court of Canada heard the cases of Jeannette Lavell and Yvonne Bedard, two Indian women who lost their status because they married non-Indians. Section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act states that Indian women who marry non-Indians lose all their claims as Indians, including their homes on the reserves, but this law does not apply to Indian men who marry non-Indians. The Supreme Court decided that the words "before the law" only referred to the *administration* of the law — not to the law itself. Therefore, according to the Supreme Court a law which blatantly discriminated against women was perfectly legal.

In 1978, the Supreme Court considered the case of Stella Bliss who, although not having worked the required time for Unemployment Insurance maternity benefits, was forced to stop work because of her pregnancy. After her baby was born, and she was available for work, she couldn't find a job and applied for regular Unemployment Insurance benefits. Although she met all of the qualifications, her claim for normal benefits was denied because she was still within the fourteen week period during which maternity benefits are *usually* available, even though she couldn't collect them. The Supreme Court upheld this discrimination in the Unemployment Insurance Act because it only resulted in a denial of all benefits to *some* unemployed pregnant women and not to *all* of them.

The Supreme Court decided that discrimination against *some* women on the basis of pregnancy was allowable under the Unemployment Insurance Act as long as *all* pregnant women in Canada did not experience unequal treatment.

Unless the proposed charter is rewritten, these two decisions will stand as precedents for the Supreme Court.

Sponsored by

### The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Complete and detach this coupon and send it to:

The Canadian Advisory Council on  
the Status of Women,  
Box 1541, Station B  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5R5

## WHAT ARE THE BEST WORDS TO PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

The proposed charter should contain words that enable judges to reject laws that deny to some women benefits given to men in similar circumstances. We need a clause which makes it absolutely clear that women are guaranteed full equality. Such a clause might be:

"EVERY INDIVIDUAL SHALL HAVE EQUALITY OF RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW WITHOUT REGARD TO SEX . . ."

## WON'T THE SUPREME COURT PROTECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS?

No. Two changes would have to be made before women could trust the Supreme Court to protect our rights. First, as explained above, the guarantee of rights in the constitution would have to be so strongly and clearly worded that the Court could not distort the intention of the charter. Second, the Court should be representative of the major groups making up Canadian society.

Although women are 51% of the Canadian population, there has never been a woman on the Supreme Court in its 105 year history. In spite of the recommendation to appoint women made by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970, all the eight subsequent appointments — almost an entire court — have been men. The federal government already wants to guarantee at least four judges from the "civil code" tradition of Quebec. We need a guarantee that there will be a fair representation of women on the Supreme Court.

## SHOULDN'T OUR RIGHTS BE DECIDED BY OUR ELECTED GOVERNMENTS RATHER THAN THE SUPREME COURT?

The Supreme Court is now the final interpreter of all Canadian laws, federal or provincial, and it will serve the same function for the proposed charter. But entrenching rights does not mean that the Supreme Court would have the last word since the charter can be changed by amending the constitution. As long as amendments require the consent of Parliament and a majority of the provinces, our elected governments have the final authority. As well, each province will still be free to make its own laws on human rights as long as they do not restrict or contravene rights guaranteed in the constitution.

## WHAT ABOUT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION? WILL THERE BE SPECIAL MEASURES IN THE PROPOSED CHARTER TO HELP WOMEN RECOVER FROM PAST DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND PAY?

Maybe. Special measures to help disadvantaged groups recover from past discrimination would be permitted. But women are not *specifically* mentioned, although we are the largest group in Canada suffering from historical disadvantages in pay and work opportunities. If women are not specifically included, we could face endless court battles in order to prove that we qualify for affirmative action.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP ENSURE THAT RIGHTS FOR ALL WOMEN ARE GUARANTEED IN THE PROPOSED CHARTER?

First, the CACSW urges you to complete the attached coupon and send it to us so that we can inform the government of your views. Contact your federal and provincial MP's by letter or telephone, and form discussion groups among the women you know. One thing is certain — another 100 years is too long to wait. We have to be the "Mothers of Confederation" for our daughters and grand-daughters.

## I BELIEVE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO ENTRENCH A CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN THE CONSTITUTION SHOULD INCLUDE:

- an equality clause which guarantees women "equality of rights under the law without regard to sex . . .";
- specific mention of women among those groups for which "affirmative action" programmes may be allowed;
- directions to remove any law which discriminates on the basis of sex, whether the law discriminates against *all* Canadian women or only *some* of them;
- a clause guaranteeing the appointment of a representative number of women to the Supreme Court of Canada.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

II Women and Constitutional Reform. What do the Liberals, Conservatives and New Democrats have to say?

Political Forum

Walter MacLean, P.C.  
Gerald Regan, Liberal  
Muriel Smith, N.D.P.  
and

Panel Discussion with  
leading Feminists.

The two day event promises to be exciting and challenging. It is an opportunity to learn more about the relationship between women's lives and the division of powers in Canada. For further information contact Susan Clark, M.S.V.U. 443-4450 or Kathy Kussisto, N.A.C. 423-4273

The form on the insert in this newsletter should be mailed to Ottawa before November 30<sup>th</sup>

# SERVICE NUMBERS

ASSAULT:

S.O.S. Project- preventive child  
abuse 423-4380

BYRONY HOUSE - shelter for abused  
women and children 422-7650

HELP LINE - 422-7444

HEALTH:

WELL WOMAN CLINIC - 428-2784

PLANNED PARENTHOOD - counselling  
and information 455-9656

SENIOR CITIZENS:

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL CENTRE  
422-4290 or 422-5852

LEGAL AID:

FORT CITY COUNSELLING - 425-6731

DALHOUSIE LEGAL AID - 423-7197

NOVA SCOTIA LEGAL AID - 423-1291

EMPLOYMENT:

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING  
SERVICE - 422-8023

FAMILY BUDGET - 422-5897



# Tampons may carry warning

OTTAWA (UPC) — The federal government may tighten labelling requirements for tampons to warn women of potential health dangers, a senior health department scientist says.

The possible action by the federal government came after Proctor and Gamble Inc. in Toronto announced Tuesday it was voluntarily taking its "Rely" brand tampon off the market.

The parent firm pulled its product off the United States market Monday following reports that the Rely tampons were linked to fatal cases of toxic shock syndrome.

A multi-million dollar class action suit has been launched against the company in the U.S.

Dr. Alastair Clayton, head of the Canadian Centre for Disease Control, said health officials plan to meet industry representatives to discuss ways to inform women of the dangers of the toxic disease.

"We will be holding meetings with the manufacturers over the next few days and that is one of the options, that we might ask for a warning label," Clayton said. "But we need a lot more evidence just to see how extensive it is."

Last week, the department launched an investigation into four brands of tampons after it was suspected that the Rely brand was linked to 25 deaths in the U.S. Although some 14 cases have been reported in Canada, no deaths have occurred.

## Menstrual Sponges

Menstrual Sponges are a natural convenient, economical, alternative to the manmade sterile deodorized, tampon or pad. Not many stores in the area carry these sponges and a Women's Place would be willing to order them if enough people are interested. There are three different, sponges available: The hardhead sponge, the grass sponge and the silk sponge. Hardhead sponges, are very dense and absorbant because of their tight structure. They are also very durable. The grass sponge is softly textured, very comfortable to use and so soft that a large piece can be used without irritation,. The silk sponge, which is most expensive has the softness of the grass sponge and the denseness of a hardhead sponge. If you are interested in purchasing a sponge call a Woman's Place at 429-4063, for more information.

MEMO: FROM FAMILY BUDGET COUNSELLING  
MEMO: TO: ALL CONSUMERS

BASIC INSURANCE GUIDE

LIFE: The main purpose of life insurance is to provide your dependants with an income should you die. It may also offer other benefits such as retirement income, collateral for loans or low interest loans.

There are 3 main types of life insurance: term, whole life and endowment.

TERM: provides protection for a limited and specified period of time. The company will pay face value to beneficiaries should the applicant die within the period specified by the TERM insurance, however, if the insured is alive within the stated period the policy just expires and no benefits are payable.

PREMIUMS FOR TERM INSURANCE-these are based on the age of the insured and usually these premiums are the lowest. Most TERM policies can be reverted to whole life without the need of a medical.

WHOLE LIFE INSURANCE: This policy provides protection for the rest of your life and protection for your beneficiary.

WHOLE LIFE: also accumulates a cash value which can be used many ways by you-the insured-borrow from the insurance company at low interest rates, use as collateral, take full cost value by cancelling your policy or in installments and provide retirement income or use to purchase a fully paid up policy for a smaller amount. REMEMBER: that when you borrow against your policy you are reducing your coverage by the amount of the loan-so it is always not a wise decision.

PREMIUMS FOR WHOLE LIFE: are based on payments over an average lifetime

"Straight Life" means you pay the same throughout your life. "Limited Payment Life" means you pay a set premium for specified number of years after which the policy is completely paid up and remains in force for your lifetime. The most common forms are "20 pay life" which means premiums are paid for 20 years or "paid up to age 65".

ENDOWMENT INSURANCE: is life insurance with savings which means you pay premiums for a specified period and the amount is paid to your beneficiary should you die, if you are alive at this period and the amount is paid to you-the insured. This is the highest cost value policy you can have and is also very expensive to buy.

A WORD OF CAUTION: Think twice before cancelling your policy-you might be better off converting it-see your agent before you make a decision.

NOTE: Further memos on insurance will be printed periodically by Family Budget Office throughout the year.

If you are thinking of life insurance it is suggested you save the above for future consideration.

FAMILY  
BUDGET  
COUNSELLING  
422-8023

# GETTING BACK INTO THE (paid) WORKFORCE

A WORKSHOP on job hunting  
skills

including: resumes  
interviews  
& where to look  
for jobs

Thursday, November 27 at 1:30 - 4:00  
1225 Barrington St., Halifax

for more information call the Women's Employment Counselling Service  
422-8023

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## WOMEN'S EVENTS CALENDER COLLECTIVE

Anyone interested in being on the mailing list  
of the Calendar Collective please fill in and  
return the form below.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  Group  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  Institution  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  Individual  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ No. of copies required \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

We would like as much information concerning your group and its purposes  
please write or phone us at

A WOMAN'S PLACE,  
1225 BARRINGTON ST.  
Phone 429-4063  
HALIFAX B3J 1Y2

# Information and Referral Service - A Woman's Place

Do you know a good doctor, lawyer, psychologist, psychiatrist,  
let us know. Fill in this form and return to A Woman's place:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor

Address \_\_\_\_\_ **lawyer**

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ **psychologist**

Specialty \_\_\_\_\_ **PSYchiatrist**

Other

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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We need information for our files as women call us regularly for such  
information.

*Services Comm.*

**SUBSCRIBE NOW!!**

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**name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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