

International Women's Year

CANADA

TODAY / D'AUJOURD'HUI

DOC
CA1
EA980
C17
ENG
v. 5
no. 6
June
1975
c. 2

Are Canadian Women Equal?

It is a difficult question. It suggests the joke in which the first chauvinist says: How's your wife? and the second says: Compared to what?

Canadian women, in the cold, clear eyes of the law, are now almost equal to Canadian men. They are probably — a difficult measurement — as free as women in the United States. But they are still encumbered. In practical terms there are very few women foresters or plumbers, very few engineers, very few members of the ordained clergy, very few surgeons and not many attorneys. Florence Bird, the head of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, put it this way: They are "paid less (and) they are relegated to low-level jobs." It is a fact that most working women are in service or clerical jobs, and those

Janet Gardner, 19, goes dancing Saturday night and plays hockey with the Point Edward Ontario Supremes on Sunday morning.

doing the same work as men get less for doing it; the average man motor vehicle operator, for example, makes some 48 per cent more than the average woman operator.

There are other, less obvious forms of discrimination; many men (and some women) do not pay full, serious attention to the opinions of women — on politics, on economics, on religion, on art, on science, on culture and on peace and war. A woman who wishes to be accepted as a thinking, creative adult has often had to focus all her energies in that pursuit, forgoing marriage and children. Agnes Macphail, the first woman member of the House of Commons, once asked hundreds of "fine, alert and very capable women in business, the professions and the arts" why

