

PERSPECTIVE

In Ten years We Have Not Come a Long Way—Maureen McEvoy documents the findings of a report on the implementation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women entitled "Ten Years After". The report concludes that the federal government has made some attempts to act on the easiest recommendation of the commission but have failed to make a concerted effort to rectify basic inequalities in our society.

by Maureen McEvoy

As report cards go it is not that commendable. While it might not result in suspension of telephone privileges or the allowance being cut off it would certainly merit the standard "we know you can do better" parental lecture.

The report card is "Ten years later", an examination of the implementation record of the recommendations of the royal commission on the status of women.

The royal commission on the status of women tabled its report in February 1970, ten years ago this month, and contained 167 recommendations of which 122 fell within federal jurisdiction.

The score card, as prepared by the Canadian advisory council on the status of women (CACSW), lists 43 recommendations implemented; 53 partially implemented; 24 not implemented and 2 no longer applicable.

"It is certainly not a very good record," says Doris Anderson, CACSW president and former editor of Chatelaine. "I would give it a failure as a grade."

Judging the federal government's performance in implementing the royal commission's recommendations cannot be done by only adding up the numbers. Rather one has to examine the scope of the recommendations. Then it becomes very clear that the government has taken the easy way out. Those recommendations that were easy to implement were done quickly, those recommendations that had a number of suggested actions, both easy and difficult, had only the easy part addressed and those recommendations that would mean fundamental change in the status of women in Canada were not addressed at all. And all too often the spirit of the commission's recommendations were interpreted in the narrowest sense by government officials.

Thus a recommendation that sex-typing in federal civil service job advertisements is implemented but a recommendation advocating special efforts to recruit more women applicants into the administrative trainee positions in the federal public service is only partially implemented.

The report says, "although there has not been a special effort to attract more women to the administrative trainee program female participation has increased from less than 20 percent of all trainees in 1969 to slightly over 40 percent in 1978". The commentary adds, "a significant number of women will be eligible for intermediate and senior positions in the near future. However, past analysis of women in the public service has shown that women tend to remain clustered at lower levels of job categories even when their representation in that category increases".

And a recommendation that the federal government introduce programs that will ensure the consideration of secretaries for administrative positions was not implemented. In 1972, a program was created to allow administrative support staff, mostly women, to gain officer level training and on-the-job experience but the program provided no guarantees of appointments and was discontinued in 1977. The report comments, "a recent CACSW review of women in the public service found that while it is theoretically possible for secretaries to attend training and development courses, managers often do not give serious consideration to their requests. Too often the courses they take are not linked to opportunities for job promotion."

That is the flavour of the entire report. Consequently in ten years we have not come a long way.

CACSW research staff used a number of criteria in determining their evaluation of performance. "In many cases action has been taken on a particular recommendation but the original problem remains. In some cases, although the precise action recommended has not been carried out, the spirit of the recommendation has been accomplished—and in such cases, we decided that the recommendation has been fulfilled."

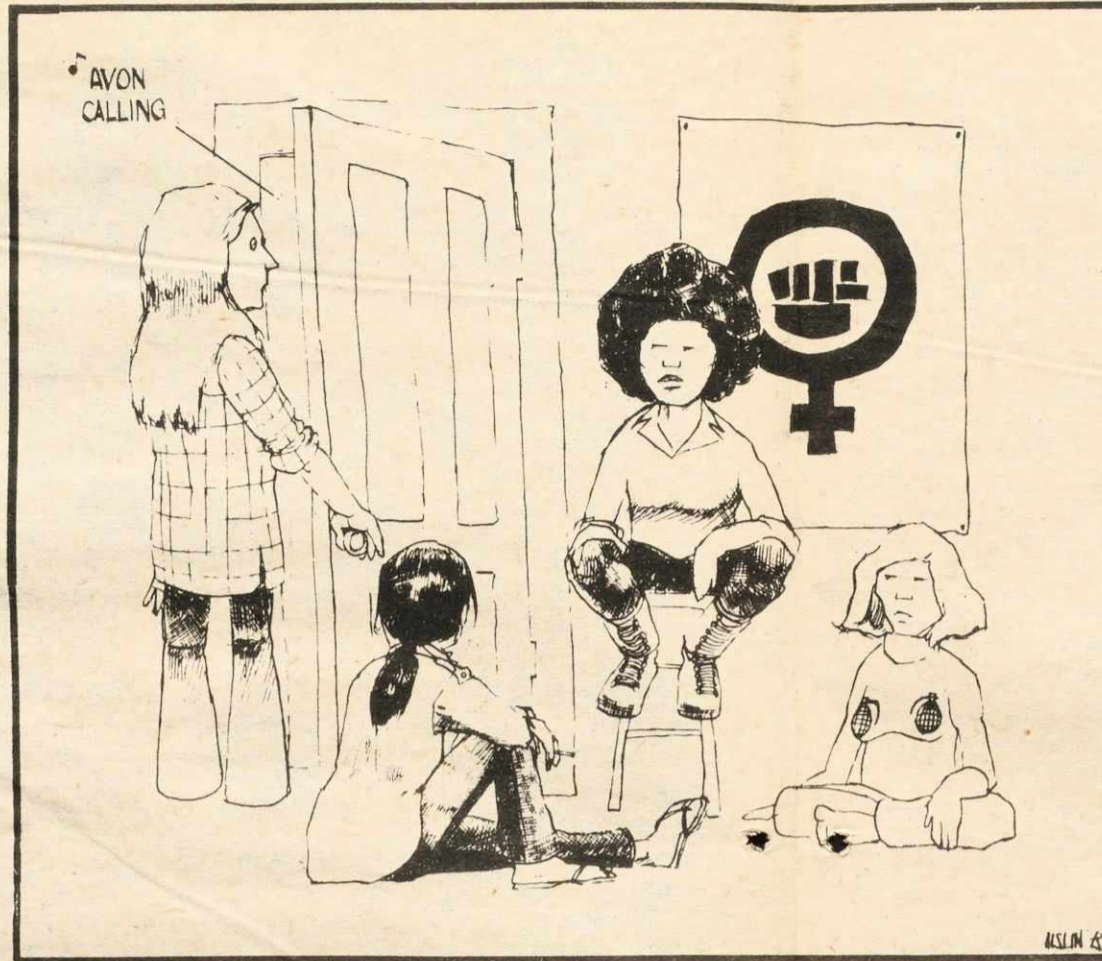
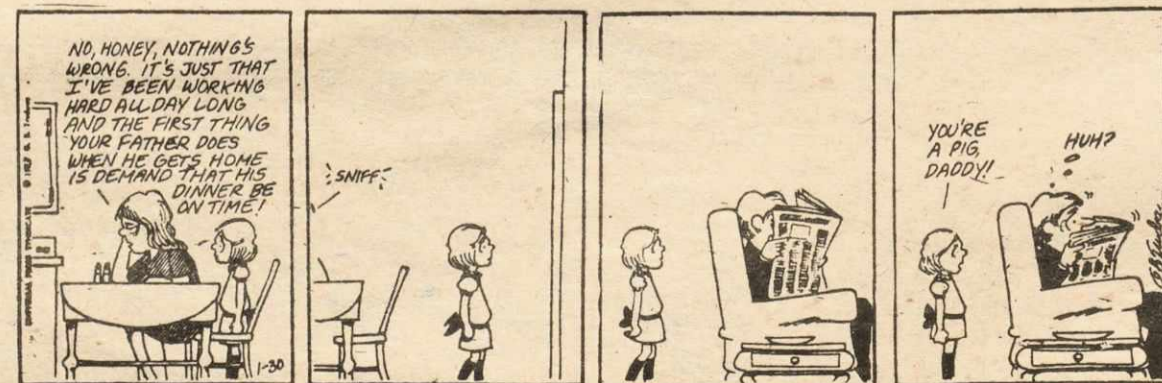
"Many of the recommendations consist of a number of parts or sub-recommendations which need to be assessed on their own. If a recommendation was two-thirds implemented, but one-third not implemented, we assessed the recommendation as "partially implemented".

Anderson said deputy ministers and other government officials were informed of the CACSW's evaluation and given an opportunity to respond. "We took into account their response but we really didn't change our minds very much", she said.

Perhaps the most significant failure in the last ten years has been the slow rate at which women have gained representation on decision making bodies throughout the country.

In 1969 women comprised only 6.3 percent of those appointed to boards of directors of 97 federal agencies, crown corporations and task forces. By 1978 the percentage of women appointed to boards and commissions had only risen to 13.7 percent.

This recommendation could have been accomplished, Anderson maintains, because most of these appointments are federal appointments. "There hasn't been a real push," she said. "If the prime minister said one half of the appointments will be women, it could be done. Otherwise we're going to have tokenism, which is what we've got now."



ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

by Pam Berman

"You've come a long way, baby", so the jingle of a cigarette commercial tells us, but how far has the women's movement really advanced, and how many goals have actually been achieved?

The achievement of women's rights seems to be part of a cyclical phase. Instead of making steady advancement, women are only given priority during times of crisis (such as the Second World War when women were needed as a labour force) or during a good economic climate.

The concessions gained during these periods are usually short-lived, however, so when the crisis passes or an unhealthy economic atmosphere prevails, the priority of women's rights and equality is the first issue to be axed. So it's two steps forward and one step back.

There have been several different women's groups in the movement that have tried to influence society and government since the sixties and

seventies. Three main strands of groups have been prominent and active during this period.

First of all there are the politically mainstream groups who initiated the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in 1970.

Secondly, there is the New Left movement which started within left wing politics of the late sixties and early seventies. This group consists of feminists politically socialist, but fed up with a Marxist movement that still included sexist ideas.

And finally, there is the Radical Feminist group who feel that exploitive sexism, ingrained into the society, should be the main target of the women's movement. The argument here is sexism is something found in all countries no matter what kind of economic system exists and that people should be more worried about the relationship between men and women.

Unfortunately, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, with over half of its policies either not implemented or only partially implemented, has not made for a great breakthrough for women's rights in this country. Sexism and exploitation can still be found in the advertising market, and job discrimination also continues.

Today welfare and social services vital to women, such as daycare, are going through stages of cutbacks. Equal pay for equal work legislation while present federally still has not been achieved either in Nova Scotia or in many other provinces of Canada.

Women's groups feel that more direct action is needed, they are making no progress with government ministers and do not see the government as being terribly concerned about issues pertinent to women.

In Nova Scotia, for example, a provincial advisory board on

the Status of Women was set up instead of a separate department which was asked for originally. There was not much this body could do because it had only advisory powers and consequently there have been several resignations. One resignation came from Susan Ashley who left because proposed property legislation was being ignored.

Women's issues are fairly well known—it is not really a matter of education anymore, it is more a matter of trying to change the present conditions. The problem now is getting from the point of knowledge to the point of action.

It is out of this need for action that a coalition of women's groups in Halifax have organized a march not only to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8th but to try to overcome the mood of discouragement and frustration at the prospects of being put on the back burners once again.

'Poise, Personality and Intelligence'

by Nancy Ross

Lately many people are finally becoming aware of the sexism contained in literature; sexist ads, commercials and magazines.

The Miss Teen Canada was shown Monday, March 3 on ATV. Young women who had won pageants in their areas flocked to Toronto to prepare for this viewing.

The contestants of this pageant are supposedly judged on poise, personality and intelligence. Many people think these words are really a euphemistic cover up for 'beauty'. We have yet to see a frumpish, homely and fat woman acclaimed as Miss Teen Canada.

Poise, personality, intelligence. . . This pageant and others like it teach the women the latest trends in makeup and fashion. Also, never fear, there is always someone to advise you on the most becoming hairstyle. But the contestants are not judged on the way they look.

Really!!!

In these pageants sexism reigns supreme.

Women are portrayed as beautiful dolls with never a hair out of place. . . . We see these young women parading in front of TV cameras yearly, waiting breathlessly to hear the name of the new Miss Teen Canada. The winner parades down the aisle, usually with tears in her eyes and a disbelieving smile, wearing a crown of all things. The crown, I guess symbolizes she is the queen of the poised and intelligent with a superior personality to boot. The lovely attendants to the winner, the ones who didn't quite make it, gush enviously around her with phony congratulatory hugs.

Liberated women want to be judged on their ability. Such useless facades as the Miss Teen Canada pageant present an 'Achilles heel' to Feminists movements, and really are a waste of money.



sustaining women as second class citizens...as the property of men.

corporations did not heed the federal government invitation.

In addition, at least two of the corporations, the Bank of Canada and the Federal Business Development Bank have different pension plans for their male and female employees.

The usual defense was that there were not enough qualified women available for these positions—a myth Anderson debunked.

"That is less of an excuse every day," she said. "We have increasingly higher numbers of qualified women all the time."

Law is an example. Since 1970, women, as a proportion of law graduates, have increased from 7.3 percent to 27.7 percent in 1978. "But we still have to get a woman on the Supreme Court."

Politics and business are the last male bastions, according to Anderson.

A 1977 Conference board in Canada report showed that women held less than one percent of all Canadian directorships. In non-manufacturing areas the percentage was between one and two percent but in manufacturing areas it was less than .5 percent.

Anderson said the Ten Years After report will probably be the last time the council refers back to the recommendations of the royal commission. "It is useful as a benchmark but it is about time that we stopped using it as the only measure of progress."

"It is good that we remind ourselves of where we have come but we must get on with other things."

Canada may just have the dubious honour of holding the worst record for participation of women in public life. There are only 10 women senators in a house of 104 and although both the royal commission and the final report of the special joint committee recommended abolition of the requirement that senators hold property qualifications of \$4,000 it has not yet been implemented.

"Our record is terribly low compared to

other western, democratic countries," Anderson said. "We have the highest, best educated women in the world but we don't use them."

"Other countries are not so short-sighted."

She said that women have been making significant gains in the municipal level of politics—more mayors and alderpersons—but are still under-represented on the provincial and federal levels. Women make up slightly more than 50 percent of the Canadian population.

"We're advocating greater participation not just for the good of women but for the rest of society, so we can use the talents and brains of these women."

DOONESBURY

