

## TOWARD THE 1990's AND BEYOND

It is apparent that the concerns of today's women's groups include a host of "social and moral questions, definitions of rights and obligations, as well as the nature and distribution of power in society."<sup>(11)</sup>

During the early part of the 20th century men and women were regarded as living in separate worlds. Although women did work outside the home, their entry into the labour market was -- then as it often is today -- a matter of economic necessity.

However, as more women entered the paid labour force, they sought greater equality of opportunity and the right to be equal participants in all facets of society. In order to have a public life, women found it necessary to pursue their efforts for better day care facilities, educational opportunities, counselling services and other types of programs that would help eliminate employment barriers.

There also is a consensus among women's groups on the basic goals of the women's movement. That is, on the need to eliminate gender-based discrimination, the need for accessible child care, equal employment opportunities and protection against violence. The Committee also heard that women who have chosen to stay at home should be recognized for their contribution to society.

However, the women's movement has changed considerably in the past 15 years. Since times are changing, and the women's movement is constantly evolving, the Women's Program cannot remain static. Government needs flexibility in its funding criteria to adapt to the way society views the role of women and to be able to address emerging problems such as those posed by the increasing numbers of single parents.

For the Women's Program to function in the late 1980's and beyond into the 21st century, it must be flexible and reflect the changing needs of women.

### **PART III**

### REVIEW OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM

The Standing Committee on Secretary of State decided in December, 1986, to review the history and purpose of the Women's Program.

At that time, the Secretary of State Department encountered heavy criticism from some women who claimed discrimination in the administration of the Women's Program. The Standing Committee heard allegations of arbitrary and unfair treatment by Program officers in denying funding to women who choose to stay at home; these women perceive there is a bias against them.

Since the Women's Program must be considered for renewal before the end of the 1987-88 fiscal year, the Committee deemed it important to review the Program's funding criteria.