

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

The Government of Canada is actively dedicated to the principle and to the practice of equality between women and men in all aspects of Canadian life. With this in mind, we have formulated extensive action plans for 1975. These plans include the creation of a national, general awareness campaign to make both women and men sensitive to the need for equality; co-ordinating

various projects coming from other federal departments as well as individuals and organizations in the private sector; sponsoring one national and four regional conferences which will be oriented to problem solving. Extra monies have been made available to fund a wide variety of projects and programmes.

We believe that 1975 should be looked upon only as a beginning for all of us.

It is the year to look at what we have done or haven't done; to assess where we are now; where we should be going. It might be described as the launch-pad year. It might be Vista '75—where we set national and international goals both short and long range—to give women and men not only equal rights of choice but also equal opportunity for the attainment of such choices.

The above are extracts from a speech by Mr. Allan J. Maceachen, Secretary of State for External Affairs, Canada, at the opening of the United Nations International Women's Year seminar in Canada.

The Canadian Concern

A Secretariat for International Women's Year, with Mrs. Mary Gusella as Director, is looking after Canada's programme for 1975 and coordinating the activities of government departments to mark the year. Broadly speaking, the plans for the year include:

- * a national educational and promotional media campaign aimed at influencing attitudes;
- * regional and national conferences designed to create an awareness of the changing attitudes towards women;
- * removal of barriers to equality in existing legislation and regulations;
- * make funds available to organizations for projects relating to women's year;
- * implementation by government departments and agencies of special programmes promoting equal opportunity for women.

There are now some three million working women in Canada. Between 1962 and 1972 the percentage of women entering the labour force increased dramatically, rising from one-quarter of the total working population to one-third. Although less than half of all working-age women are at present in the labour force, there has been an increase of well over one million in the last decade alone.

Early in 1967, the federal government set up a Royal Commission to inquire into a number of matters relating to the status of women.

Within the Canadian system, such Commissions are independent bodies, with certain statutory powers. They are funded by the government but are completely independent in carrying out their work.

After an extensive study of the matter from all angles, it was recommended by the Royal Commission that an Advisory Council, made up of citizens from all over the country, be appointed by the federal government to report, to the government and to the public, on matters of interest and concern with regard to the status of women. The recommendation was accepted, and a 30-members Advisory Council on the Status of Women was appointed on May 31, 1973. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are full-time appointments. The council meets four times a year and its specific terms of reference are:

Women's Press

Last year some resolute women from Saskatoon published a libertarian calendar called *Herstory 1974*. It featured a great many snippets of information about Canadian women who have fought for women's rights. It sold out in February. The 1975 calendar is now available, and those who wish to purchase one or more copies should get in touch with Women's Press, 280 Bloor Street West, Suite 305, Toronto, Ontario.

'To advise and consult on matters pertaining to women and report annually on the progress being made in improving the status of women in Canada; to undertake research on matters relevant to the status of women and suggest research topics that can be carried out by governments, private business, universities, and voluntary associations; to establish programmes to correct attitudes and prejudices adversely affecting the status of women; to propose legislation, policies and practices to improve the status of women; to consult systematically with Women's bureaux or similar provincial organizations, and with voluntary associations particularly concerned with the problems of women; and to maintain liaison with the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and such other national and international organizations as may be relevant'.

Obviously, the ultimate objective of equality cannot be achieved by government machinery alone. Nor can the role of non-government organizations be overlooked. Happily, much is being done on all these fronts. It was the women's organizations in the first place that formed the catalyst for the establishment of the Royal Commissions. These original organizations and many new groups across the country continue to be active in forming public opinion in this field.

Especially so this year.