WE DID NOT!

OTTAWA (CUP) - The Saskatoon Women's Centre says it is not, as Otto Lang suggested in a letter to Secretary of State Hugh Faulkner, assisting women by referring them, "to a doctor or a committee which is operating on an improper and potentially criminal basis."

Molly McQuarrie, until recently the centre's coordinator, said the centre didn't know of, or believe there were, any doctors or committees operating in such a way.

Lang's accusation was contained in an Oct. 21 letter to Faulkner in which the Justice Minister opposed granting $5,760 to the centre to finance its general administration costs. The centre dispenses birth-control and abortion information and does abortion referral as well as acting as a gathering place for women's groups in Saskatoon.

Lang suggested in his letter to Faulkner that he felt groups counselling women on how to get abortions abroad are not operating within the spirit of the law and should not receive government financing. Lang suggested that the groups should be forced to prove they are not operating outside the spirit of the law.

In the letter he continues, "I would make one further point to you and that is, it is so unseemly and against our political interest to have the federal government involved in financing groups engaged in illegal activity, that no chances of this should be taken and the burden should always be on a group hoping to receive funds, to demonstrate beyond doubt that it is not, in fact, contrary to the Criminal Code or the spirit of that code at home or abroad, whether successful prosecution is possible or not.

"In the particular case, I believe there is adequate evidence that the Saskatoon Women's Centre not only believes in abortion in circumstances not provided for by the Criminal Code, but would assist a woman by referring her to a doctor or a committee which is operating on an improper and potentially criminal basis."

The 1969 Criminal Code amendment permits an abortion to be legally performed in Canada when a hospital abortion committee decides that the continuation of the pregnancy would or would be likely to endanger the life or health of the woman applying for the abortion.

In some U.S. states such as New York and Washington, abortions can be obtained without such committee approval and each year more than 6,000 Canadian women go to them for abortions.

Lang also suggested that Faulkner review other Secretary of State grants, "and see that they meet the test of being beyond suspicion."

He complained in the letter that he was having trouble convincing provincial attorney-generals to prosecute delinquent hospital committees and doctors.

Garrison Project A Danger

OTTAWA (CUP) - The Garrison Diversion Project in North Dakota has come under attack both here and in the United States for environmental and economic reasons.

The project, a $450 million development, is designed to drain more than 200,000 acres of "unusable" land and channel the water for irrigation of about 250,000 arable acres.

The main concern in Canada is that the mineral levels in the Souris River and the Red River, which flow into Manitoba, will render the rivers unsuitable for municipal, industrial and agricultural use without expensive treatement.

Some groups, including the Canadian Wildlife Federation, also say the project will cause massive flooding in Manitoba.

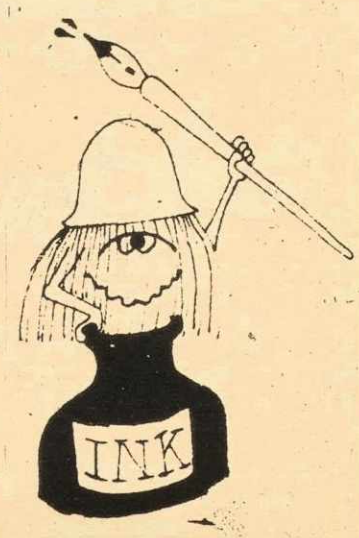
The Wildlife Federation sent a telegram to U.S. President Ford calling for a halt to the project. "We have asked the President to review the potentially devasting effect to Garrison more thoroughly before allowing it to proceed," federation president Orville Erickson said Dec. 3.

"Even if there are benefits to be gained by the state of North Dakota and that in itself is questionable, they would be greatly outweighed by the tragic consequences in the province of Manitoba," Erickson said.

"We cannot allow an arbitrary border like the 49th parallel to determine whose environment should be preserved and whose should be destroyed," he continued.

Last month, the federation ran advertisements in Winnipeg's two daily newspapers and a number of provincial weeklies appealing for funds to fight the project.

The federation, which claims a membership of 200,000 has said it plans to seek an injunction to halt the project.



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