

Statute Law Amendment Act

more prohibitive than providing new uniforms to the Armed Forces. So many of the casualties in war are civilian. They include women, men and children. So the notion of keeping women out of the Armed Forces in peacetime, when jobs could be provided for women, seems to be unreasonable.

• (1110)

Only very near the end of the discussion do we reach the nitty-gritty. The exclusion of women from combat related roles prevents their promotion. The discussion paper asks, "Can some alternative method be found to provide that opportunity?" That question does not need to be asked. Of course, some alternative way should be found. If it is decided that they should be excluded, obviously, it is only justice that other means be found to give them opportunities for promotion.

This Section ends with a threat. It is in the driest possible language but it is a threat. I quote from page 33:

A concomitant question is whether equal access in peace time means equal liability for compulsory combat duty in war.

What the discussion paper is saying to Canadian women is, "If you want jobs in the army, you are going to be in for a lot of trouble so perhaps you should not be seeking equality because you are really going to get it". It does not raise the real problem, that women are the child bearers and, for the most part, the child rearers. That does not even get discussed and that might be a good reason for keeping women out of combat roles. Both men and women are child rearers and army life is not very good on families. That problem is not addressed.

The very significant question of women wanting to be in combat roles because of their involvement in the peace movement is another matter which is simply excluded, although, frankly, I do not see that there is a contradiction with respect to an army which is going to be engaged in conventional defence measures and in peace-keeping roles. I would note that women are excluded even from peace-keeping roles in the Canadian army, jobs which require alertness, tact and diplomacy rather than physical strength, and I believe this is something where women's abilities could be very well used.

The discussion paper notes with respect to the Canada Elections Act that there is a form of discrimination in that spouses of Armed Forces electors are denied the opportunity to choose a place of residence for voting. It does not raise similar problems for spouses of civilian employees engaged abroad. It seems to me very reasonable, when a family moves, that the spouse and any adult children should have the opportunity to vote. The family unity is important, and other members of the family, apart from the bread-winner, should not be denied their opportunity to vote. Yet this is a form of discrimination which the paper does not even recognize.

Family allowance is one of the most scandalous discussion areas in the discussion paper. It refers to two-parent families and whether the family allowance is paid to the "female parent". Again, we do not hear of mothers or fathers; it is the "female parent." This betrays an enormous amount of ignorance as to how hard the woman's movement fought to have

the role of mothers recognized so that they would get the family allowance, because overwhelmingly it is the women, the mothers, who are doing the work of raising the children. Let me quote from page 33 of this very foolish discussion paper:

The assumption behind this sex-based distinction appears to be that female parents are the primary care givers.

Appears to be? The Department of Justice does not know who looks after the children.

Mr. Boudria: Where has it been?

Ms. McDonald: Where, indeed, has it been?

This, therefore, excludes males from control over Family Allowance money unless they have custody of the children.

Poor fathers are being excluded. This is absolutely preposterous. In many families the family allowance cheque is the only money to which the mother of the family has direct access and we know that women have access to very little money. Full-time workers who are women receive only 60 per cent of what male full-time workers receive. On average women are only earning half as much as men. Yet the Department of Justice wants to take more money away from women, the small amount in the family allowance cheque, and see that it goes to the main bread-winner of the family. Let me quote again from page 33:

Both parents have an obligation in law to care for and support their children, and payment to the female parent disregards the sharing of this obligation.

The Department of Justice cannot distinguish between a legal obligation, which indeed is there, and reality. In fact, overwhelmingly the women do the child care work and deserve to get the family allowance. They should not have to fight for it.

We know that 10 per cent of Canadian wives are beaten in any one year, according to statistics gathered in a recent survey. Should these women have to negotiate to get the family allowance cheque? These are women who are at home raising their children and who are economically dependent on their husbands. I quote from Page 33 of the paper again:

Should the state take the responsibility of selecting one of the two parents on an arbitrary basis when there are undoubtedly other selection mechanisms available?

It is not arbitrary. Women in reality, in real life, are doing this work, and the Department of Justice does not know it because it is incompetent and should not have been writing this paper. People who know something about how Canadians really live ought to have been writing the paper.

• (1115)

Let me give another example of the stupidity in this paper. In the Criminal Code it is an offence for a male to have sexual intercourse with a female under 14 not his wife. That is statutory rape. It is not an offence, this discussion paper points out, for a woman to have sexual intercourse with a male under 14. What a preposterous problem to raise. How many boys under the age of 14 have become pregnant or received venereal disease as a result of the activities of Canadian women? This is absolutely outrageous. There is a physical difference between