

Action Urged

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women in Canada urges action in four areas:

1. Equal pay for work of equal value;
2. Child care;
3. Family planning and removal of abortion laws from the criminal code;
4. Matrimonial property and family law.

The NAC's Board of Management offers these supporting observations:

1. Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value. In 1972, after consulting with all the provinces, Canada ratified the International Labour Organization's Convention (No. 100), calling for "equal pay for work of equal value." Yet formal endorsement of this principle appears to have had little effect on the wage differential between women and men in the Canadian labour force. There continues to be no recourse in law for large numbers of women employed in female "job ghettos" — in clerical, service, sales and certain manufacturing occupations — where the pay is low. Clearly governments must respond vigorously with improved legislation in order to rectify entrenched injustices.

2. A Choice in Child Care. In 1973, less than 2% of the children of working mothers had access to formal day care arrangements of any kind (including lunch and after-school programs).

In 1975 there is still an enormous need for service. And yet, even where programs are available, the cost can be prohibitive; in a Canadian urban centre it can cost \$1,500 a year to place a child in full-day care — more than twice the cost to a family for full tuition for a student at a university.

3. Birth Control Services for All Who Need Them. Birth control counselling and services must be freely available to all who want and need them. While governments should take an active lead in disseminating information, counselling services should be offered through a wide variety of agencies, including hospitals, health units, churches, schools, social service and voluntary organizations. The question of access to birth control help for minors should be seriously examined.

4. Equal Partnership in Marriage. The Governments of Canada should be strongly urged to follow up studies in law reform with new legislation designed to secure equitable rights to property for both partners in a marriage (both during the currency of marriage and at marriage breakdown). While recognition should be accorded the matrimonial home as an important asset (so that equal rights be guaranteed in it to both spouses), law reform efforts should also ensure that other property be fairly divided.

For those who are interested in contacting the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, this is an abbreviated list of regional contacts; there are scores more.

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