

While acknowledging that gains have been made for women's equality, witnesses also gave examples of discrimination.

A Saskatoon group, Alternatives for Single Parent Women, described the barriers hindering low income, single parent women who want training for well-paying jobs. "Women wishing to return to school while raising families often meet with problems such as inadequate funding, limited affordable, accessible child care spaces, rigid training programs with long hours and too few part-time options." (Winnipeg, March 31, 1987)

The Charter of Rights Coalition (Manitoba) stressed the need for job-sharing, flex-time and child care provisions to eliminate barriers to women's entry into and development in the work force. They also cite systemic discrimination in pension provisions. "Lengthy vesting periods and the lack of portability do not take into consideration the reality of women's lives and the fact that women should have the opportunity to take time from their jobs and careers to bear and raise children."

Other witnesses spoke of the problems of doubly disadvantaged women. For example, immigrant women who are members of visible minority ethnic groups face special barriers such as lack of language training opportunities, "exploitation by unscrupulous employers" and "the prejudice of ordinary Canadians." (Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, March 31, 1987)

The Consulting Committee on the Status of Women with Disabilities describes disabled women as being "doubly oppressed." As examples, they state "we as women have to face the oppression of being inferior to men, and we want to be equal to men. But as disabled women, we are at the bottom. We want to be way up here, and we cannot; we have to remove the physical and attitudinal barriers."

The Consulting Committee also stated that:

"When a man becomes disabled, the marriage break-up rate is 50%, but when a woman becomes disabled the figure is 99%. For women with disabilities, the most inescapable reality is poverty, with an unemployment rate of 74%."

The ongoing need to work toward the elimination of all barriers was summarized in the following words:

"As a national priority, we must continue to remove the barriers that have prevented women from participating freely and equitably in the mainstream of Canadian society.

In light of this official commitment (to equality) and in light of the disturbing statistics on poverty among women, violence against women, wage disparities that continue in all work places, including the