

the male majority.

"We will never improve the status of women unless more get involved" she stresses. "The women who consider themselves totally feminist and stay away from partisan politics — I think they're naive."

Irene Swindells, President of the Progressive Conservative Womens' Association of Nova Scotia, maintains that she has

movement is not addressing the needs of the majority of women and uses the recent growth of R.E.A.L. Women chapters across Canada as an example of many women's dissatisfaction with methods employed by the movement to change the status quo. "There's all those wives out there who don't want to wave the flag."

She feels that reforms will come about when women learn how to lobby effectively, by becoming politically-educated and present-

more women within the women's movement to run for politics, and to use the power structure to their advantage rather than trying to exclude it from their lives. "They've got to turn to other women, not just turn into themselves," she says. "If we leave politics entirely to men we're creating a dangerous situation for ourselves... women desperately need to support each other."

Maureen Vine, the Nova Scotia representative for the NDP's Participation of Women Committee would agree that there is a great need for women to become political within parties, but feels that the current structure of other parties discourages women interested primarily in women's issues from joining.

In the NDP, every woman with a party membership automatically becomes a member of the Women's Rights Committee within the party. Vine explains, "Women take on two chores if they have women's interests at heart." While concentrating on basic policies of the party, they are also given the opportunity to closely examine women's issues and initiate reforms that will significantly affect their own lives.

In the Nova Scotia legislature, 49 of the 52 members are men. Ideally, women's groups should be able to affect changes to benefit women by presenting grievances to the legislature. Most men in the Assembly are aware that thousands of women in N.S. are living

never felt any resentment from members of the women's groups. She responds to allegations of complaints from the movement about the direction of partisan politics by saying "I think the majority of women in the movement are NDPers. Maybe because they're the smallest group they're crying the loudest in order to be heard."

Swindells is proud that two out of the three women sitting in the Nova Scotia legislature are PC, and she affirms the party's commitment to hearing the concerns of women. Part of the problem that feminists have with the party, she believes, stems from ignorance concerning current policies. She says that the Progressive Conservative party is eager to hear from women's action groups, but that their concerns must be voiced through proper channels. Encouraging women to direct their complaints at local Members of the Legislative Assembly she says, "That's what he's elected for." She also mentions the Provincial Advisory Committee for the Status of Women as a valuable instrument for reform.

Swindells, who doesn't consider herself a feminist, feels that the women's movement alone cannot affect significant social change in Nova Scotia. "Some of our women's groups have become so militant that the men who make the decisions aren't listening," she explains. "You've got to have (political) leverage — if you're out there with no connections what hope is there?"

She also has concerns that the

ing issues to men in a less aggressive manner. "You have to sell your product," she concludes. "And women are going to have to learn to sell themselves."

Muriel Duckworth is a peace activist, heavily involved in the women's movement. Her political interests do not diminish her conviction that non-partisan pressure groups can effectively initiate change in government policy. She feels that current political arrangements geared towards women are not benefiting the majority of recipients.

"Look what's happened to the Provincial Advisory Committee for the Status of Women," she points out. "It has achieved practically nothing — most of the

"You can still maintain your political equilibrium in high heels."

Presidents have resigned because they weren't getting anywhere with the government."

Duckworth is currently involved in the Nova Scotia ad hoc Women's Action Committee, which she describes as "primarily a lobby group". The group has met several times in the province this year, and the activist believes that its future effectiveness depends in part on the co-operation of women working within political parties.

"You have to have women at all levels to create a good society," she says. Duckworth encourages

on welfare in inadequate housing, struggling to raise children as single parents, and being deprived of equal pay and advancement opportunities in the workplace.

But some men don't like to listen to "women's problems", and the responsibility for reforms falls on the tiny minority of women in partisan politics. The need for more women in government is obvious, but the need for women committed to enhancing the status of their counterparts is seen as even more pressing by the women's movement.

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