

# Lost in the shuffle Task force gives 20 priorities for women

Last March, prime minister Pierre Trudeau stated, "I pledge the full support of the Liberal government to the removal of discrimination and the provision of opportunities to women in all the fields of Canadian life."

At that time, he appointed a three woman task force on the status of women in Canada. York psychology professor Esther Greenglass, Ontario Liberal party executive vice-president Jan Steele, and Marie Gibeault, president of the National Federation of Liberal Women of Canada travelled across Canada this summer compiling information on the reaction to the Royal Report on the Status of Women.

This is the main body of the report, released last week to the Consultative Council of the Liberal party. Greenglass, when asked about reactions to the document, said, "it got lost in the shuffle. A lot of people don't even know it's out."

This is perhaps due to the mild tone of the report. Many of the items could have been strongly reinforced with statistics as evidence of the discrimination against women in the fabric of Canadian life. The report does not go far enough in criticizing existing situations and pressing for needed reform. The report will serve as a guideline for future government action in the field of women and law reform.

By ESTHER GREENGLASS

The main function of the task force was to tell people about the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. We were to find out what people thought of the recommendations in that report and then submit a report to the Consultative Council of the Liberal party of Canada setting forth the recommendations the people of Canada felt were priorities and demanding of immediate attention by the government of Canada.

After receiving the policy recommendations from the Consultative Council on the basis of this report, we shall draft a final report based on those recommendations for submission to the government of Canada.

The Royal Commission Report contains 167 recommendations to eliminate discrimination against women in all areas of Canadian life.

To consult with as many people as possible, we visited 12 cities across Canada and held both public and private meetings in each city we visited. Attendance at the meetings ranged from 50 to 200 people and about 80 per cent of them were women.

## 20 recommendations

Besides members of the Liberal party, there were members of several other voluntary associations in Canada present. These groups represent thousands of other Canadians. We appeared on many radio and television programs. Considerable space was allocated to the meetings by local newspapers. The issues were indeed regarded as critical by those who met with us as well as by the media.

1) People we talked with and listened to found several areas of concern. There was, for example, the treatment of women in the Canadian economy. There was serious discussion about the need for greater equality of opportunity and employment and in career promotions.

2) It was suggested that jobs should be made available on a part-time basis so that mothers of young children who choose to, could continue their work and their careers. We are

280 Help Wanted, female

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256 Help wanted, male

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pleased to report that one of the areas of discussion, namely the need for maternity leave and unemployment insurance benefits during this leave has already been enacted by the Parliament of Canada.

3) There is widespread agreement that the present laws need to be more specific in stating just what discrimination is against women and it is suggested that penalties be severe for those who break the law.

4) There was a further expression of opinion that sex typing of occupations be avoided in the media and in text of illustrations of all government publications.

by the provincial government, by the federal government or by some combination of the above.

Some of the advantages of daycare centres are that they create jobs, free the parent to look for employment as well as give the assurance that children are looked after by qualified personnel.

10) It was felt by most that birth control information should be freely available to everyone and that family planning clinics should be established in all areas.

11) There was much controversy about the subject of abortion legislation. The Liberal

### Percentage Distribution of Individuals by Income Groups and Sex in Ontario

Income Group	Male o/o	Female o/o
Under \$1,999	19.3	59.5
\$2,000-2,999	7.8	14.4
3,000-3,999	10.6	13.6
4,000-4,999	14.3	7.5
5,000-5,999	15.6	2.7
6,000-6,999	11.0	1.2
7,000-7,999	6.8	0.4
8,000-9,999	8.1	0.6
\$10,000+	6.3	0.3
	100.0	100.0
Average Income	\$5,094	\$1,952
Median Income	\$4,856	\$1,391

5) There was some feeling that a housewife should be able if she so wishes to contribute to the Canada Pension Plan as a self-employed worker or to be credited with a portion of her husband's contributions to the same pension plan.

6) There was strong feeling expressed that government and other agencies should include volunteer work as valid work experience for a job.

7) There was considerable sentiment that they should be paid a guaranteed annual income by the government.

### Family changes

During the hearings, a great deal of interest in the whole area of the changing role of the Canadian family was evident.

8) For example, since there could be no question of mothers of small children having equal opportunity without daycare centres, as well as widowed fathers left with small children, there was virtual unanimity for the establishment of daycare centres in Canada.

9) There was some question as to how they should be funded, by the parents of children,

party in its 1970 National Convention came out in favor of the resolutions that abortion should be a private matter between the woman and her physician.

### Housewife pay

A substantial body of opinion, which manifested itself at our meetings, suggested that abortion should not be allowed under any circumstances. Another large segment of equally strong opinion was that the decision to abort should be a private one and has no place in the Criminal Code of our country. Clearly, there was no consensus on this vital issue.

12) Housewives who want to go back to school on a part-time basis can't get a student loan. Most people agreed that these women should be eligible for a student loan to pursue their education.

13) When applying for a training allowance, a woman finds that her work in the home is not accepted as valid work experience, which would make her eligible for such a loan.

14) There was no question that Indian women, in particular, suffer from discrimination even more severely than others. When an Indian

man marries a non-Indian woman, he does not lose his Indian status and the benefits associated with it; however, when an Indian woman marries a non-Indian man, she loses her Indian status and so do her children. It was unanimously felt that this discrimination should be removed from our Canadian laws.

15) It was the general feeling that there were not enough women in public life. People at our meeting agreed with the prime minister's statement "It can be said with certainty that our society would not be as it is if in the course of the last half century, women had occupied a large number of positions of influence and decision in government and industry."

### Women politicians

Steps, therefore, must be taken to ensure that qualified women are encouraged to run as candidates.

16) One of the reasons given for the small number of women in politics was the cost of running a campaign. It was suggested that campaigns be financed either by party or public money.

17) There was a great deal of controversy concerning the idea of having a quota of women either in the Senate, as judges or generally in any appointed positions. Specific women's organizations within the structures of political parties generally channel women's talents and energies away from the political mainstream of the party.

The men make the decisions and the women make the sandwiches. At our meetings, there was a general agreement that women's political associations should be integrated into the main political body.

18) In the Canadian economy, it is necessary to amend the Bill of Rights to include sex discrimination as an offence.

19) We need a Human Rights Commission responsible to government and charged with responsibility of making sure that the laws forbidding discrimination are enforced.

### Census form unacceptable

Many times during our meetings, it was brought to light that 1971 census form was totally unacceptable because of its discrimination against women.

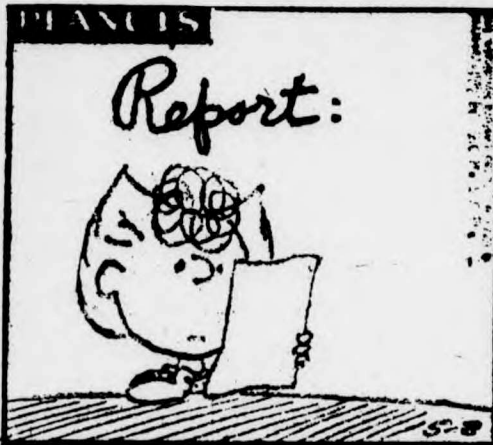
For one thing, the census form recognizes only men as the head of the household. Since about 340,000 Canadian families are headed by women, it is a mistake to assume that only men can occupy this role.

Moreover, housework was specifically excluded as work on the census form. This assumption completely neglects the principle that marriage should, in fact, be a partnership.

No allowance is made on the census form for adopted children since women are simply asked to report the number of births they have had. Illegitimate children who are adopted are probably not recognized since it is unlikely that the natural mother, in most cases a single woman, would report the birth.

20) The Canadian government is urged to revise the census form to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

We hope that once the results are in and the recommendations are forwarded to the Canadian government, that this Liberal party task force on the status of women will have made a contribution to ending discrimination towards women in Canadian society.



Merry Christmas to everyone from the Excalibur staff  
Our last issue of 1971 will be on Monday  
Staff meeting today at 2 pm