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## Women in Canada

In February 1967 the Canadian government appointed a royal commission to inquire into the status of women in Canada. The commission was to "recommend what steps might be taken by the Federal Government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all respects of Canadian society."

It found plenty to recommend.

When it began the commission called for briefs from organizations and individuals. Half a million copies of a brochure, *"What Do You Have To Say About the Status of Women?"* were distributed across the country in supermarkets, libraries, associations, and through the mass media.

In April 1968 the seven commissioners, headed by Mrs. Florence Bird (also known as Anne Francis in her career as a broadcaster on national and international affairs), began a series of public hearings that took them to all the provinces and territories of Canada to try to get the picture of problems facing women. Hearings were held day and night, and in several cities hotlines were set up so women could talk directly to a commissioner. Camera crews filmed the proceedings for television, an unusual occurrence for royal commissions. The commission's work cost close to \$2 million, including 40 studies by experts in labor, economics, sociology, taxation, law, and other fields.

While the national policy may be no distinction in rights and freedoms between men and women, the national practice, like that of the U.S., is crushing discrimination. In the economic sector, the educational, the psychological — at all levels of activity the norm is discrimination. The monu-

mental research of the commission speaks eloquently about this:

One out of every five Canadians is poor; a large percentage of the poor are women.

Women still do not have control over their own bodies.

Fewer than five per cent of the graduates of law schools are women.

Women receive only twenty per cent of the national income.

Neither the Federal Government nor any provincial government has passed legislation giving working women maternity leave with pay. Only the Federal public service and two provincial governments provide maternity leave without pay.

These are just a few of the facts that leap off the report's 488 pages. Added together, the effect is staggering.

A clear and vivid picture of the situation is drawn by Mrs. Bird, interviewed late last month.

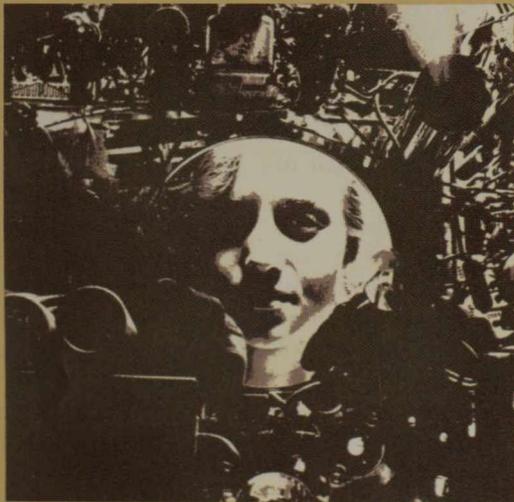
**Mrs. Bird, do you think the status of women is different in Canada than here in the U.S.?**

No, not really, although American women have

slightly more job opportunities than Canadian women.

**Do you think the appointment of the commission was a response to the newly emergent Canadian women's liberation movement?**

The interesting thing is that it wasn't a response to the newest wave of feminism. There has always been a women's movement in Canada of one kind or another. Years before the recent development in the struggle for women's rights, over 30 women's groups had asked the government to appoint a commission. It was ap-



*This article was written by Betsy Rothman, an American journalist and activist in the women's movement.*

parent to them and eventually to the government that neither Canada nor any other nation can ignore women. When half of a country's human resources are squandered it can only work against the national interest.

**The report mentions that women are afraid not to conform to the traditional subordinate role. Why do you think this happens?**

Dependency. Women are conditioned at a very early age to be submissive and dependent. Parents, schools, textbooks, law, the mass media — the whole tradition of our society reflects these attitudes. Why up until the middle of the last century married women could not manage their own property. We couldn't even keep the money we earned.

Parliament gave us the right to vote in 1920, which meant that women could be elected to the House of Commons and hold public office. In Canada Senators are appointed by the cabinet. When women's organizations asked the government to appoint women senators, the government doubted if women were eligible since under the British North America Act, the written part of Canada's constitution, only "persons" are eligible to sit in the upper house. The Supreme Court upheld that attitude, but the judicial committee of the Privy Council in London, then the final court of appeal, reversed the Supreme Court and in 1929 declared women were persons under the law. The first Senator was appointed in 1930.

**How are the schools responsible for much of this conformity?**

The whole system perpetuates the subordinate role. Many counsellors are part of the system which forces girls into traditional "female" occupations. Young girls are still taught to dream as unrealistically about marriage as girls were 40 years ago.

**Do you think girls would get a more positive self-image in sex-segregated schools?**

I feel this would be a retrograde step. Women are going to have to live with men all their lives, so they should be educated with men. But there has to be more emphasis in the schools on the art of family living — biologically and philosophically. This should begin in kindergarten. We have to move away from the unrealistic and destructive attitudes towards sex that are so much a part of western society. The schools are the place to begin.

**Did the commission uncover surprising facts — things the commissioners had not expected?**

Yes. What we discovered was that in order to understand the problems of women we had to

understand and investigate the problems of poverty — so many Canadian women are poor. The discrimination is overwhelming: women get paid less, they are relegated to low-level jobs, the burden and expense of child care falls on them and they can least afford to bear it. Our worst cases of poverty are to be found among Eskimo and Indian women. How can a poor woman compete for a job, even one of the low-level jobs available to women, if she lacks skill and training? A poor woman doesn't even have the opportunity to learn job skills.

The commissioners were deeply concerned by the large number of poor women, either deserted, divorced, or widowed, who are the sole-support parents of children. The commission is in favor of a guaranteed annual income based on the principle of negative income tax, but we recommended that the government immediately provide a guaranteed annual income for sole-support parents, 90 per cent of whom are women.

**You mentioned child care. This is a burning issue in the U.S. How is it handled in Canada?**

Day care was the subject we heard more about than any other. Canada desperately needs a network of day care centers and this was one of the commission's crucial recommendations. The responsibility for child care falls on the mother. In the commission's opinion, children are the responsibility of the mother, the *father*, and *society*. Currently neither Canada nor the United States has taken responsibility for their children.

**Could you explain the family allowance plan? The U.S. doesn't have this form of social security.**

Since 1944 we've had a family allowance in Canada: \$6 a month for a child under ten, \$8 each for children ten to 16, plus a \$300 and \$500 income tax deduction per child.

The commission recommended that a child care allowance of about \$500 a year for each child — about \$40 a month — be paid by the Federal Government to mothers. This would replace the existing family allowance and tax exemption. The commission believed that in an urbanized society all preschool children should have the advantages of day care centers, which would be paid for on a sliding scale. The allowances would enable working mothers to pay for day care and would compensate mothers who decide to stay home.

**Legalized prostitution is mentioned by some groups in the U.S. as a goal. What do you think of this for Canada?**

Prostitution is not illegal in Canada. What is illegal is being found in a bawdyhouse, soliciting, or vagrancy. Vagrancy is a problem for young people in Canada today because the police can stop you and make you give an account of your-

*continued, page eight*

Justice Ouimet, of the Court of Queen's Bench, last month quashed charges of seditious conspiracy against five well-known

## The Quebec Five [Some Charges Quashed]

Quebecers detained under the War Measures Act. They were accused of seditious conspiracy advocating the overthrow of the Canadian and Quebec governments between January 1, 1968, and October 16, 1970. Mr. Justice Ouimet found the period of time too long and found fault with the wording of the charge. The accused were labor leader Michel Chartrand, lawyer Robert Lemieux, author Pierre

Vallieres, former teacher Charles Gagnon, and broadcasting producer Jacques Larue-Langlois. They are still charged with advocating the policies of the outlawed Front de Libération du Québec.

Of the 497 people arrested under the War Measures Act or Public Order (Temporary Measures) Act, none are still being held without charges. Of the 62 charged, 27 are still in jail, as of March 8. Three have been convicted and 32 released on bail.

Of the 30 or so large and middle-sized universities in Canada, three (Université de Montréal, Quebec, and Laval) teach principally in French. Three (Laurentian, Sherbrooke, and the University of Ottawa) are bilingual. The rest are English.

For the past decade there has been considerable pressure on some of these schools, for academic and cultural reasons, to re-examine their policies. A bilingual university is even more complicated and expensive to run than a regular university. A unilingual university serving a bilingual community is obviously on tender ground.

Last month, special committees at two schools in these positions came up with proposals.

At McGill, for 150 years an English language university in Montreal, the committee suggested the school stay basically English, despite strong pressure from the French community.

The University of Ottawa recommended changes which could make its bilingualism more efficient. Instead of students taking required second language courses in their first two years, all graduates and tenured professors would have to show "minimal bilingualism"—the ability to understand both languages.

Students would have to pass a test before receiving their first degree; faculty members before receiving tenure. (Or new faculty members before they're hired.)

Classes in the upper years could be in French or English, because students presumably could

## University Bilingualism [Two Reactions]

The committee's plan, which is being debated at the university this month, is expected to be implemented next fall. It differs from the proposal of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which recommended that Ottawa become a unilingual French language university.

The McGill report said that bilingual universities where courses are duplicated in each language, such as Louvain in Belgium, have proven "extremely expensive." At bilingual Canadian universities, it said, one of the languages tends to predominate in time.

Only 14.8 per cent of McGill's faculty and 29.8 per cent of the students understand French well, the report said, and "French speaking scholars with appropriate qualifications" might not be found to fill positions now held by English speaking professors. But the report recommended that each faculty be given a measure of independence to determine which of its courses, if any, should be offered in French. There is an existing rule allowing examinations to be written in either language, and the committee recommended that it apply to term papers, too.

Administrators and some other university employees should be tolerable to fluent in French, the committee said.

Last year, professor Benjamin D. Singer and a group of graduate students at the University of Western Ontario made a study of violence, protest, and war in television news—comparing the United States and Canada. A limited number of copies of their analysis is available from this office.

Several years ago ten Canadian scholars were asked to write on different aspects of the Cana-

## Write Fors

dian Confederation, and the articles were made into an informative ten-pamphlet series: *Great Britain and the Confederation; The Maritimes and Confederation; The First Years of Confederation; The U.S. and Confederation; Ontario and Confederation; The West and Confederation; The Great Coalition; The Quebec Conference; French Canada and Confederation*. They're available from Public Archives, Historical Branch, Ottawa. Specify English or French.



**Notre pays est à l'âge des  
premiers jours du monde.  
For us the world is just beginning**

**Anne Hébert**

Design/presentation: Gray Abraham

INFORMATION CANADA

# Whose Idea Was That, Anyway?

*Information Canada, an agency given to saying that it's not nearly so bureaucratic, yet, as some of those others, is a year old April 1. It was born of the discovery by a big task force on government information that half of all Canadians have a very fuzzy idea, at best, of what the Federal Government is about and that the government hadn't done a terribly sharp job of telling them.*

Information Canada is not the voice of government, according to its charter. The government line still comes from individual departments and offices, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Department of External Affairs, or the Prime Minister's Office. Information Canada has three basic functions:

To coordinate information programs of major federal departments and advise them on their job, if they ask;

To initiate information programs which go beyond the interests of individual departments — the poster at left, for example; and

To help Parliament and government listen to the suggestions, hopes, and complaints of Canadians.

To do this, Enquiry Centers are being set up all over the country — places with lounges, reading rooms, screening rooms, computer consoles, and direct phone lines — where people can leave messages for anyone in government (guaranteed delivery) on how they feel or what they want. They can also buy books, government and commercial, and get answers to virtually any factual question about Canada, the government, or government services. The first part is called Information In. The second, Information Out. The hope is for "a new dimension in dialogue," but both Information Canada and Prime Minister Trudeau have taken pains to point out that there is no intention of usurping the job of Parliament.

Recently Information Canada's Director General, Jean-Louis Gagnon, and Deputy Director, R.A.J. Phillips, were interviewed about Informa-

tion Canada's first year. While Information Canada may be the medium for many Canadians, Messrs. Gagnon and Phillips denied that it is the message.

**Has your view of the job changed? Do you find the work has made you spokesmen for the government or ombudsmen for the people?**

Certainly not a spokesman or ombudsman.

**Have you taken a role in the actual information policy of the various departments?**

It depends on what you call policy. When two departments are concerned with the same problem, we come in as the coordinator. We deal not with the substance but with the way it's done. For example, we recently helped prepare a new directive on junk mail. Very briefly, the government is going to stop sending it — Canadians will no longer get press releases and so on unless they ask in writing.

A department may ask to borrow a designer from us; but we'll never have any responsibility for what they say.

**A good deal of the task force report dealt with the workings of government information services before Information Canada. One problem was that information officers often were not very helpful because they weren't privy to policy decisions in their field. Are they better informed now?**

The situation is improving somewhat. Until Information Canada was born, each information officer and each information office was absolutely isolated. Now there is a collective activity amongst information officers and a general assembly of all directors of information. They bring together a certain moral force. They're very much stronger in dealing with administrators.

**Is there a credibility gap between the Federal Government and Canadians?**

I think the people believe what the government is saying, though that's not the kind of thing for Information Canada to deal with.

**What is the purpose of this poster campaign you've launched? Whose idea was it?**

There is a very serious purpose indeed. We

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*< Part of Information Canada's poster series "to communicate with a group impervious to conventional media." Three have been produced so far (turn page for second). A third, ingeniously drawn by Morris Danylewich, quotes Abbé Arthur Maheux: "If one knows his neighbour's tongue, he possesses the key of his house." All are available from Information Canada, Ottawa. Posters one and three are 27 by 40 inches — \$2. Poster two is 27 by 28 — \$1.50. \$5 the set.*

believe you should consider your audience when you are communicating. The task force, though, pointed out that youth is an audience which is impervious to the flow of news that comes from conventional news media. We felt posters were a logical way to try to get across some of the things we think interesting about the nature of our society and government. We produced a few rather significant sayings by Canadians in the past about the nature of the Canadian experiment, and asked our artists to do them in a style that would communicate with youth so they might ponder these things themselves and get a dialogue going. The poster has worked extraordinarily well.

**How?**

In the first month more than a thousand people bought the posters, a very high figure.

Many young people feel negative towards what they consider "outsiders ripping off the culture"

— like advertisers and other outsiders who use hip posters and other paraphernalia of youth culture to sell their product. You've escaped this?

Some people may criticise, but there have been a lot of young people who have taken the trouble of writing saying 'this is fantastic; the government cares about us and wants to talk to us'.

**What else do you have in the works?**

What we hope to be doing in future years is talking a bit more about Canada and the Canadian experiment to the rest of the world. But with the kind of priorities we have in Canada now, we are not going to be able to do very much about this for some months to come.

**Do you still find Canadians as uninformed about the Federal Government as the task force report indicated?**

Certainly. It would take more than a year before they become well-informed citizens.

remember that faith is better than doubt  
and love is better than hate

rappelez-vous que la foi est préférable au doute  
et que l'amour est préférable à la haine

Sir Willford Laurier (1961)



# Great Inducements

[THINGS THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT TRAVEL BUREAU WOULD LIKE YOU TO KNOW]

All manner of airplanes will race from London, England, to Victoria, British Columbia, to celebrate B.C.'s centennial. The first plane in the handicapped race takes off July 1, hoping to get there for prize time July 10. Top prize is \$50,000 in a total purse of \$175,000.

A set of period furniture unmatched in the Louvre, the British Museum, or any museum in North America is on display at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum. "Magnificent examples of the cabinet maker's art," says the ROM: "Highlights even in their own day when they graced the palace of Louis XIV, whose excessive pomp drained the coffers of France and helped precipitate the French Revolution."

The 25th Powder Puff Derby all-woman trans-continental air race leaves Calgary, Alberta, July 5, headed for Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A week of festivities precede it.



"Those native Canadian delicacies, whale meat and muktuk (the inner skin of the whale), are now available by the can in selected delicatessens."

Dark whale meat is not unlike that of other animals. While muktuk has a nutty flavor, the consistency of tongue.

News for hikers: Trails in Western Canada's Banff, Jasper, Yoho, and Kootenay National Parks are being connected to form a new 360-mile Great Divide Trail. By 1975 they will be linked to the U.S. Great Divide Trail to form a route over the highest part of the continent. Overnight shelters are being built every eight miles, and there'll be loop trails for short and intermediate trips. You won't have to be an experienced mountaineer to make the trip, but access to more difficult areas will be provided. Travel light, but you might take a book for the customs men.

"Every year from now on" a prize of \$1,649 will be awarded for the best job of historical research on 17th century Canadian History. The contest for the Sainte-Marie Prize is open to scholars of all nations. For information write Mr. John Sloan, Director, Huronia Historical Parks, Sainte-Marie among the Hurons, Midland, Ontario, Canada.

You missed it: In January a snowmobile carried Canada's Centennial Flame 2,403 miles from Parliament Hill in Ottawa to Saskatoon, Sask. And last month in Witaskiwin, Alberta, a \$70,000 purse was paid in a snowmobile race.

A magnificent 4,000-foot-long cavern has been discovered in the Port Alberni area of Vancouver Island. The exact location is a secret until government supervision is organized this summer. Then guided tours will be held. It's called Euclataws Cave.



At Midland, Ontario, is a restored 17th century community. A 64-year-old Indian named William Parker lives there and makes terra cotta

vases and pipes so accurately he has to sign them so scholars can tell they were not made by ancient Huron, Ojibway, and Algonquin Indians.

The Province of Saskatchewan is having a contest. You can win a lot with cabin and boat on Lac La Ronge; vacations in Saskatoon and Kenosee Lake; camping gear; goose, duck, and moose hunts; fishing trips; and other prizes. You have to "discover at least six Saskatchewan vacation treasures and submit photographs." Rule book from P.O. Box 7171, Regina, Sask., Canada.



As well as Louis XIV's furniture, the Royal Ontario Museum has acquired what is considered the most important exhibit of New Guinea head-hunting artifacts in the world. Although it has been illegal for a long time, some of the pieces indicate it must still have been practiced privately in the past ten years.

The first all-weather route into the Arctic Circle — which will open the shores of the Arctic Ocean to tourists — is slated for completion by 1974. You'll be able to drive the 450 mile gravel topped Dempster Highway from Vancouver, B.C., or Edmonton, Alberta, to Inuvik, Northwest Territories, via the Ogilvy Mountains, the Eagle Plains, the Richardson Mountains, Fort McPherson, and the Arctic Red River.

*continued from page two*

self, and if they don't think it's sufficient they can and do charge you with vagrancy. So many of our young people travel these days, and the commission recommended a network of hotels for girls. The boys already have them. We did not think brothels should be licensed. They are degrading to women, ruinous to their health, and usually lead to complete degradation. Incidentally, there are male as well as female prostitutes.

**Why was there no mention of lesbians in the report, a group of women who face tremendous discrimination at all levels in the U.S.?**

While the commission was being set up, the Canadian federal government amended the criminal code so that homosexuality is no longer illegal between consenting adults. We heard no briefs from people concerning lesbians.

**What is the status of abortion in Canada?**

The Canadian Criminal Code was changed in 1969 to allow a qualified medical practitioner in an approved hospital to procure a miscarriage if a majority of the hospital's therapeutic abortion committee certifies in writing that the pregnancy would endanger the life or health of the woman.

This change made little or no difference to women. Illegal abortions continue. Thousands of women still submit to the ministrations of the back street butcher. If a woman is rich she can go to New York, England, or Scandanavia and have a legal abortion. A poor woman has no choice. The commission has recommended that

the criminal code be amended to permit abortion by a qualified practitioner on the sole request of any woman who has been pregnant for 12 weeks or less. No law is a good law which is broken constantly, and the abortion laws are broken constantly.

**What recommendation upset people the most?**

The recommendation that "in certain areas women will for an interim period require special treatment to overcome the adverse effects of discriminatory practices." We felt that once the degree of discrimination against women and its adverse effects on society are understood, this recommendation will be seen for what it is — a positive effort to remove discrimination in the shortest possible time. When women are actually equal such a measure will be unnecessary.

**Why did the report avoid such words as chauvinism, oppression, exploitation, and self-determination — words currently in use in the women's liberation movement?**

We wanted this report to be acceptable to policy makers. We deliberately took a cool, calm, unemotional approach.

**Has any action been taken by the Federal Government on the recommendations?**

The report was tabled in the House of Commons on December 7, and the Government is still studying it. The commission is publishing ten supplementary studies. We are confident that the report will have a profound effect on our whole society.

# CANADA

*Today/D' Aujourd'hui*

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