

NEWSLETTER

NCWC NEWS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

These are not happy times. At the time of writing, war is in the air; it seems unavoidable sooner or later. We are headed into war and no one can tell what the human costs will be, though we know from past experience that it is the costs for re-building that do not ever seem to be considered.

National Council of Women of Canada has written to our government repeatedly expressing members' concerns, and reiterating Council's policy that Canada should work to find a peaceful solution and, failing that, should participate only as part of a United Nations' action. Many of us are not convinced by the arguments that have been advanced to justify this war.

It is deplorable that for more than six months, there has been an unrelenting pressure maintained about the necessity of going to war, supposedly to restore respect for human rights in Iraq. It seems hypocritical to many that the government of Iraq was armed by American and European businesses. Iraq has been allowed to ride roughshod over the human rights of some of its citizens for years without any effective protests or interventions from the governments that now demand action, claiming they are acting in defence of Iraqis' human rights.

However, the new technologies that have permitted production of so many super-weapons for super powers to use have also produced the World Wide Web. Thanks to that super means of communication, it was possible to organize, at extremely short notice, a world-wide demonstration for peace. It would appear that the sheer size and scope of the demonstrations have had a restraining effect on governments around the world. For once, the voice of the people was heard. This would not have been possible if governments had possessed the power to interdict the free flow of messages. World-wide freedom of speech must be preserved even though there are many uses of the Internet that are questionable and, in some cases, criminal. Citizens must be careful that their governments do not enact legislation that curtails this freedom to communicate in their efforts to tackle the threat of terrorism.

What is also regrettable is that this fascination with "waging war" has crowded so much other important news off the pages of our newspapers and other popular media outlets. For example, the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to rage across Africa and is certainly spreading in other countries, including Canada. Warfare, so-called small



Catharine Laidlaw-Sly

wars, is being waged ruthlessly in many countries. Women and children are always the chief victims. Where are the news reports? And what is being done to stop this low-tech warfare? How can countries develop into modern states when such human disasters just keep happening, and no one has the will to intervene in order to stop the madness?

Ever since the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, the government of the United States has declared a war on terrorism, warning

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that it would be a long drawn-out affair, and that the enemy was not visible. Human security in North America has become a fixation of our governments. Laws are being brought into effect that permit and justify abrogation of human rights as a necessity. Common sense should help us to realize that eternal vigilance is necessary to maintain the rights and freedoms of the Canadian Charter. We must continue to ensure that human rights provisions are not superceded except in the most extreme cases. In warfare, the rights of women are always attacked or ignored.

The human rights convention for women is the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); and Canadian women are particularly fortunate. Our government has not only signed and but also ratified CEDAW last year. Canada ratified the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, a framework which permits a woman to take her case to the UN Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) if she has exhausted all legal approaches for justice in Canada without success.¹ This is not an option that works for women in countries destroyed by war. Where the gun is the civil authority, there can be no respect for human rights.

We are all familiar with the plea that governments cannot afford the services women ask for. Surely Canadians are entitled to know what their participation in a war against Iraq would cost, even approximately. More importantly, what are the projected costs of re-construction in a war-devastated land? We read that there seems to be a lack of political will to pay for and ensure that the re-building necessary in Afghanistan for example actually happens. What happens when the reconstruction does not take place? What might happen in Iraq?

For women, this is particularly serious. It shows just how easily governments can overlook and neglect the needed social reconstruction necessary to ensure even a token observance of the human rights of women, who are half of the population. Thanks to the Internet, we can link up with other women on a world-wide basis for information. We do not have to rely on the news agencies with their self-imposed or government-directed priorities. However, women living without education, without the right to paid work, without the right to own property, in a country without reliable infrastructure, cannot easily be part of this working alliance.

While we work in Canada to improve the conditions of life for women living in poverty here, especially our Aboriginal sisters, we also must insist that all the costs of waging war including reconstruction costs be part of the debate about going to war. Why should women, their

children and the enfeebled always be expected to pay the long-term costs of warfare? Peace may be costly, but if we had all the costs of waging war published, peace might be the best bargain of all.

¹A concise summary of UN CSW’s Response to Canada’s Fifth Report to CEDAW will be sent to all members of NCWC. It will also be available on the NCWC Web site www.ncwc.ca.

Catharine Laidlaw-Sly

From Your Editor

Carol Schweitzer

It looks like an exciting time is planned for all at the NCWC Annual General Meeting and Conference that will be taking place at the end of May in Windsor. Apart from the usual business of the AGM, all will have a good opportunity to “make new friends and [renew] the old, one is silver and the other gold” (as the Guiding song goes) while taking in a tour of the town and a winery. Everyone is looking forward to the occasion!

In the Fall, there will be a new Editor for the *NCWC Newsletter*. I have very much enjoyed the challenging job of producing a paper which shares the news from the Councils, Federates and Conveners and which offers articles on topics of interest and concern to all members. I expect to provide an NCWC Update for distribution at the AGM; it will contain news that is received by the Editor in the coming weeks. Certainly, I do appreciate the comments that I have received during my tenure and I wish my successor fun, pleasure and accolades.

Amy Williams and Mary Potter have been the Editorial Consultants this year. Words cannot express the gratitude that I have for their excellent, prompt, and supportive aid and I thank them most sincerely.

I also am most appreciative of the excellent work and cooperation of the staff of the Bonanza Printing and Copying Centre, particularly Tony Diorio. Also, the NCWC Office Staff has always been most cooperative and helpful. Their assistance in producing the newsletter has been most welcome.

Articles for the next newsletter can be sent anytime by email to editor@ncwc.ca, by fax or mail to the National Office. However the deadline for submission of articles for the Fall issue of the *NCWC Newsletter* is September 15, 2003.

News From NCWC Conveners

Proposed Changes to the Canadian Divorce Law

Lori Isinger, NCWC Justice and Legislation Convener

Under the present Constitution, jurisdiction over Family Law is divided between the Federal and Provincial governments. Laws dealing with marriage and divorce are under federal jurisdiction and the provincial governments makes laws dealing with the division of property when marriages end in separation, with some custody matters, with maintenance orders and with the solemnization of marriages.

For years the two levels of government have been negotiating a more unified approach to Family Law. Provinces are anxious to assume nearly total control over all aspects leaving a limited responsibility to the Federal Government of devising a set of guidelines by which the validity of divorces granted under different jurisdictions, such as Nevada, Mexico, etc. could be tested. Lawyers, counsellors, and court officials feel that this could result in:

1. shopping around for an easier provincial court in which to seek a divorce
2. a patchwork of settlements
3. more child-napping
4. more difficulty in enforcing custody/maintenance orders.

Three years ago, the two levels of governments had stated they were working towards child-focussed amendments (Federal-Provincial-Territories News Release Dec. 3, 1999). Reforms aimed at putting children first in divorce were also mentioned in the October 1999 Speech From the Throne. The 2000-01 Report on Plans and Priorities of the Department of Justice stated that the government has endorsed reforms in the area of custody and access. This includes a shift away from parental "rights" to parental "responsibilities", a less adversarial and more flexible approach to custody and access issues and a framework for managing disputes between parents. The words "custody" and "access" have been replaced with "parenting orders" as the words "access" and "custody" have come to connote winners and losers.

Ottawa will also funnel more money into counselling programs and push for more mediation rather than courtroom battles in order to protect children from the rigours of parental hostility. A U.S. 2002 study showed that when parents sought counselling soon after the marriage was dissolved, they could assist children avoid problems of depression, drug use and lowered academic achievement.

Stats Canada 2002 data released in December 2002 state that national divorce figures are up .03% from 1999

and up 3% from 1998, with 37.2% of custody battles settled with joint custody, 53.5% with custody awarded to the mother and 9.1% to the father. In 1983 following major amendments to the Act, mothers "won" custody 75% of the time and fathers "won" 15% of the cases, with joint custody and other arrangements making up the other 10%.

Social Welfare

Gisele Saurette Roch, NCWC Social Welfare Convener

At the writing of this article, on the eve of the federal budget, we can only speculate but many Canadians are hoping that the Minister of Finance will allocate adequate sums to the provinces in order that they fund Health Services. Many of us are hoping that special attention will be directed to the establishment of a national Home Care program. Adjustments to the Employment Insurance Program are warranted to bring greater equity, transparency and justice to the program. We at NCWC are very pleased with the fact that Prime Minister Chrétien has signed and ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on Person's Day (October 18 2002). Federal Government programs and policies need to be reviewed to ensure that they meet the gender-based analysis.

As we listen and read the news, we are cognizant of the high levels of family violence in this country and around the world. Children and their mothers, older women, young women and youth continue to be at risk in our societies. Parents continue to need supports for the education of their children, even more so, if the children have special needs. Thankfully, important strides have been achieved to curb sexual exploitation of children and youth through the Internet. Authorities are asking for more tools to enable them to do more to take paedophiles to justice.

Millenium Development Goals had been set for the year 2000. Since they have not been met for the most part, Nation States of the United Nations decided to reformulate them and re-commit to achieving them by the year 2015, for example: halving extreme poverty, providing basic education to all children. In fact, I had the privilege of attending the launch of the 2003 Social Watch Report, an International Citizens' Progress Report on Poverty Eradication and Gender Equality. The report has as its title the Poor and the Market. Its publication has been subsidized by the Dutch Agency for Cooperative Development Ford Foundation (NOVIB), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

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News From Local Councils

Montreal Council Of Women



Jeanne Maranda, Sophie Economides and Georgie Crawford

In November, Montreal Council of Women held its annual Woman of the Year luncheon. This year the theme was Cultural Initiatives in the Community and the Shirley Giles and Georgie Crawford as joint recipients of the award. The education of people about slavery in Canada and the initiation of children's choirs in the schools of the former Protestant School Board were the topics of their speeches.

Council meetings have continued to centre around the theme of the "Immigrants' Situation in Montreal." A professor of French Literature spoke in November about immigrant writers from the 30's to the present day. In 2003, 45% of Quebec residents are immigrants, with 158 languages other than English and French, leading into the topic of January's meeting of the importance of integrating immigrant children into the Quebec school system. In February, at the last minute, a McGill professor who is a nurse, researcher and consultant came to discuss the project that she had done in the early 90s working with the Thai Nurses Association to improve the care for the elderly in Thailand. NCWC Resolutions are on the agenda for March with an "international lunch" of foods from around the world.

Regina Council of Women

To commemorate International Women's Day, the Regina Council of Women hosted a special screening of the acclaimed PBS program, Women of Wisdom and Power. The film was shown at the Regina Public Library and members were invited to join with women in their community to watch thinkers such as Gloria Steinem and Naomi Wolf share their insights on critical issues facing women everywhere.

St. Catharines and District Council of Women

In November, 2002, Donald Ziraldo, Co-founder and president of Inniskillin Wines, spoke on the urgent need to preserve Niagara's fruitlands and how a successful Napa Valley Reserve Plan could be the solution to the steady and incremental loss of these unique lands.

"Melding Traditional Native Ways and Healing with the Modern World" was the title of an address in January given by Jackie Labonte, Healing and Wellness Coordinator of the Niagara Regional Native Centre.

Both meetings were sponsored by the twenty-three Federates of the St. Catharines and District Council of Women.

Toronto and Area Council of Women

The February meeting of the Toronto and Area Council of Women featured two speakers. A volunteer from the Arthritis Society, who was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis at age twenty-five, showed a variety of exercises and aids to make living with arthritis a little easier. The Director of Policy and Research for the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario discussed the Romanow Report and suggested actions Council members could take to ensure the report is implemented as intended.

Council of Women of Winnipeg

The Council of Women of Winnipeg reports that, for fifty hours one day in September, 2002, due to a broken valve, raw sewage emptied into the Red River. Unfortunately, a November conference planned by Council on the city's sewer system had to be cancelled. However, in January, the Council presented a brief, based on a recent CWW resolution, to the Clean Environment Commission. It stated that the scope of the studies was too narrow, an expanded monitoring system was needed, the nutrients (nitrogen and oxygen) needed to be removed from the effluent, and "floatables" needed to be removed from the sewer overflows. Council recommended prompt remedial action be taken.

"Action on Strengthening our Health Care System" was the topic of February's Council meeting.

Saskatoon Council of Women

An interesting guided tour of Tamara's House, followed by a lively and exciting talk by NCWC President, Catharine Laidlaw-Sly, started the meetings in the Autumn. In October, two women were inducted into SCW's Women's Hall of Fame and the luncheon was very well attended.

The Council held a joint meeting in February with one of its Federates and the topic was "Beyond Romanow" - A Critique of the Romanow Report." In the same month, the regular Council meeting dealt with "Pesticides: Let's Reduce their Use!"

The Women's Hall of Fame display was installed at the Heritage Festival in early February. Many people stopped to look at the display and so participation in the event provided a very good opportunity to talk about the role of the Council of Women.

On March 8th Council members participated in the celebrations for International Women's Day; the theme was "Building Understanding: A Focus on Lives of Women around the World" and activities included music and entertainment with an international flare. NCWC Resolutions packages have been distributed in preparation for the Council Meeting later in March.

Ottawa Council of Women



Ruth Brown and Marlene Catterall, MP

The Council's annual Christmas dinner was held in early December. It was made more special this year with the presentation of the Commemorative Medal for the Queen's Golden Jubilee to Ruth Brown. Marlene Catterall, MP, presented Ruth with the medal.

In January, Jodie Golden, Executive disrector of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa, spoke on "Women and the Justice System." The "Future of Health Care in Canada" was the topic for February's Council Meeting.

Council members sent congratulations to Marianne Wilkinson on being selected as the Provincial Liberal Party's candidate in the Lanark-Carleton riding.

Prince Albert Council of Women

The highlight for the PACW in the Autumn was the inspirational and motivational visit from our NCWC President Catherine Laidlaw-Sly. The topics discussed included access to sports for all children, "Response to the Romanow Report," and Person's Day celebrations.

Issues raised at our Person's Day celebration included desperately needed funding for the YWCA, changes to social services, lack of programming for female inmates, accessibility of sports, child exploitation, and the effects of gambling on families and communities.

The PACW participated in a Silent March on December 6th to commemorate Canada's National Day of Remembrance and End of Violence Against Women.

On February 15th the Council members participated in a Peace Rally, speaking in "Reaffirming the stance to stick with the United Nations."

On March 8th PACW will host an evening of entertainment and "herstories." In addition, the Council will launch the PACW-sponsored Women's Hall of Fame, following the guidelines set out by the Saskatoon Council of Women. The city was very receptive to the idea and the PACW is receiving a lot of publicity because of the initiative. The first induction will take place March 8th, 2004.

Victoria and Area Council of Women

Members of the Victoria Council of Women enjoyed their annual Christmas luncheon in December.

The Council's Common Program meeting will be held in March. Catherine Van Mossel, of the University of Victoria, will speak on the "Future of health Care in British Columbia and Canada and the Impacts of the Proposed Changes."

From the NCWC FLASH SHEET of September 1989

Pearl Dobson, Editor 1989 NCWC Flash Sheet

"NCWC President Doreen Kissick visits Iraq. Doreen represented NCWC at a women's conference in Baghdad, sponsored by the Iraqi government, in September 1989. We look forward to hearing about this exciting opportunity and learning about the women's groups in Iraq."

As Executive Secretary of NCWC, Pearl Dobson recalls going to the Iraqi Embassy Office in Ottawa to make arrangements for Doreen's visit. At that time the Israeli government would also sometimes fund a trip to their country by our National President.

News From Nationally Organized Societies

The new Girl Guide cookie- a great recipe for growing girls

Girl Guide of Canada-Guides du Canada

Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada launched its 2003 cookie fundraiser in Toronto on January 15th. After much anticipation and over a year of intensive product development, the new chocolate and vanilla Girl Guide cookies are ready and taste better than ever.

Girl Guides across the country will be selling their cookies throughout the spring. Dates vary by province and are available on the Girl Guide website: www.girlguides.ca. The public can also call 1-800-565-8111 or the local Girl Guide office to find out where to buy the cookies. Funds raised through cookie sales remain within each Province/Territory.

"We're really excited about our new Girl Guide cookies. We believe Canadians will love them. They have a great new taste, a bold new look and bright new packaging that reflect the spirit of Guiding," says Ann Harbridge, volunteer President of the Management Board of Girl Guides of Canada. "We really appreciate the public's support of Girl Guide cookies. The money we raise from this activity is our most important source of funding. It is the vital resource that allows Girl Guides to continue offering exciting, valuable experiences that let girls and women discover and develop the best within themselves. Canadians contribute to a strong future for women in Canada every time they buy Girl Guide cookies."

The new chocolate and vanilla Girl Guides cookies are

baked by Canadian-owned Dare Foods Limited in a nut-free facility, as will the tasty chocolatey mint cookies that will be available this fall.

"Girl Guides and their cookies are well-loved Canadian traditions," said Bryan Dare, Co-Chairman of Dare Foods Limited, "so we are very proud that Girl Guides of Canada chose Dare as the new baker for their popular fundraising cookies. We are confident that, together with the Girl Guides, we have made the already great cookies even better. It is very gratifying for the people at Dare to be able to put our experience to work for an organization that does so much to help girls and women."

Girl Guides of Canada is an exciting movement that cares passionately about the future of girls and women. It is led by volunteers who are young at heart. With over 170,000 members in Canada, Girl Guides of Canada is the largest organization for girls and women in the country and is part of the largest network of women and girls in the world.

The fun and active Guiding programs constantly evolve to meet the needs of today's girls and women. From sports and science to camping, crafts, community projects and international travel, there is a little of something for everyone. Through this diverse mix Guiding encourages girls and women to reach their potential, be independent, confident and caring while

exposing them to new things and the opportunity to make fulfilling friendships at any age.

There has never been a better time to join Girl Guides. And there has never been a better time for Canadians to support and enjoy Girl Guide cookies.



*A moment to treasure:
BC Brownie presents flowers
to the Queen
Royal Visit, Victoria, BC*

News From Provincial Councils

Provincial Council of Women of Quebec

The Provincial Council of Women of Quebec and the Montreal Council of Women held an awards ceremony honouring three women awarded the Commemorative Medal for the Queen's Golden Jubilee: Georgie Crawford, Sophie Economides, and Jeanne Maranda. President Catharine Laidlaw-Sly presented the awards.

The two Councils are also involved in a "Securing Our

Future" project. Working together with Quebec Guiding leaders and a financial advisor, Committee members are excited about developing programs tailored for each of the age levels in the Girl Guide structure. The program will consist of age appropriate activities leading to badges. Challenges will deal with the principles and techniques of financial planning and responsibility, using activities that deal with real-life situations. Pilot units will test the program in Spring 2003.

"Cherishing Our Heritage" is the theme of the Annual General Meeting of the PCWQ which will be held in May 3, 2003.

THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE MEDALS

The commemorative medal was created to mark 50 years of Queen Elizabeth's reign in Canada and was organized by the Department of Canadian Heritage. Approximately 46,000 Canadians will receive the medal chosen by 200 different organizations including the National Council of Women of Canada. Recipients are Canadian citizens who have made an outstanding and exemplary contribution to the community or to Canada as a whole. The National Council of Women of Canada was allotted 20 medals and they invited nominations from Local and Provincial Councils for worthy recipients in their Councils. It should be noted that a number of NCWC members have received the commemorative medal through other organizations. The following people have been awarded the medal by their Councils:

MARGARET ANDRUSIAK – New Westminster Council of Women

Margaret Andrusiak, a school teacher for 30 years, has spent a lifetime helping others and working for her community. Beginning in the 1930s, she has worked with the League Against War and Fascism, was a secretary for the federal NDP, and was a member of the Crime Prevention Committee. She was a founding member of the Burnaby and New Westminster Teacher's Associations and also a founding member of Planned Parenthood. She served as President of the Provincial Council of Women of British Columbia in 2000.

JOAN ASHCROFT – St. Catharines & District Council of Women

In the 1960s Joan Ashcroft worked as an Anglican Church missionary in western Canada. Joan has led fund-raising campaigns for St. Barnabus Anglican Church, the Resource Association for Teens, and for sending underprivileged children to YWCA camp. She has also been a member of the Board for the Social Planning and Research Council of St. Catharines and Thorold and a member of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society. Joan volunteers at an elementary school helping Grade 2 students to read.

RUTH BROWN – Ottawa Council of Women

Ruth Brown has served in several positions in both the Ottawa Council of Women and the National Council of Women being President of the latter from 1992 to 1995. In 1995 she spear-headed a national symposium on Women as Family Caregivers. Recently, as NCWC Health Convener, Ruth prepared a submission to the Romanow Commission on health care and appeared before the Commission. She has served on several boards such as her church, Good Companions which is a senior's

organization, International Social Service Canada, and the Ontario Association of Social Workers.

GEORGIE CRAWFORD – Montreal Council of Women

Georgie Crawford has spent most of her life working with school choirs. From 1991 to 1999, Georgie shepherded several Montreal choral groups in international competition. Recently she has initiated a program of reading called "Born to Read/ Le gout de lire" for children in economically disadvantaged families. Georgie has served in several positions in the Montreal Council of Women including President and was instrumental in starting the Montreal Council of Women Choir. She also helped to create the Provincial Council of Women of Quebec and serves on the Board.

PEARL DOBSON – Toronto and Area Council of Women

Pearl Dobson was the chief executive officer of the National Council of Women for 17 years mostly on a voluntary basis without any office staff. She produced regular publications, and formulated projects and programmes for NCWC. Other organizations that she has volunteered for include Grace General Hospital in Ottawa, Boy Scouts Women's Auxiliary, her church, and the Ontario Senior's Club.

SOPHIE ECONOMIDES – Montreal Council of Women

Sophie Economides volunteered in several areas during World War II such as welcoming children evacuated from England. She then became Chair of Volunteers on the Children's Ward at Royal Victoria Hospital. She has also been involved with the Hellenic Ladies Benevolent Society, the Boy Scouts, and her church group. She has volunteered with the Red Cross, the Montreal Children's Library, the Chateau Ramsay Museum, Hellenic Family Services of Quebec, the Kidney Foundation, and Alzheimer's Society. She has served in several positions in the Montreal Council of Women including Conference Co-ordinator for the NCWC AGM held in Montreal in 1985.

EIRA FRIESEN – Council of Women of Winnipeg

"Babs" Friesen currently sits on the Board of Directors for both the Council of Women of Winnipeg and the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba. Babs has been a volunteer with the Women's Resource Centre for the YWCA, Boy Scouts Parent Council, United Way, and MATCH International of Canada. She is also active in the University Women's Club, Westminster United Church and is currently a Deputy Area Commissioner for the Girl Guides in Winnipeg. She is on the UNPAC Coordinating Committee and has attended the UN conferences in Beijing and Nairobi.

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RUTH HINKLEY – Ottawa Council of Women

Ruth Hinkley was a member of the NCWC Executive from 1972 to 1976 and became President of NCWC in 1976, serving until 1979. In the 1980s Ruth chaired a committee of the National Council that produced a new Handbook and Policy Manual. After leaving Ottawa in 1985 she moved to the retirement village of Wilmot Creek where she gave advice to the developers on behalf of the other residents. Ruth was Treasurer for the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario for several years and is currently Constitution Convener.

GRACIA JANES – St. Catharines & District Council of Women

Gracia Janes was a founding member of the Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society and has held all positions including President. In her work with the Social Planning and Research Council of St. Catharines & Thorold she was instrumental in the formation of the Housing Help Centre and chaired the Social Assistance Review Committee. In the St. Catharines & District Council of Women she has been involved in the Environment, Housing and Land Use, and Publicity besides serving as its President. With the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario, she has served on the Board and was President from 1999 to 2002. She has served two different terms on the Board of NCWC and from 1992 to 1994 co-ordinated a cross-county Energy Conservation Project.

SUE KENT – Local Council of Women of Halifax

Sue Kent was President of LCW of Halifax Council for three years. She taught school for 34 years and is now the Secretary of the Teachers’ College Alumni and Vice-President of the Ladies Retired Teachers Group. In her church she is in charge of refreshments and taught Sunday School for many years. Sue is also a volunteer with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and canvasses for a number of other organizations.

MARGARET MACGEE – London and Area Council of Women

Margaret MacGee was the first Chairperson and a founding member of the London, Ontario, and National Block Parent Programs. She has volunteered on the City of London Safety Committee, the John Howard Society, two non-profit housing groups, and London Council for Seniors. Margaret has been President of the London and Area Council of Women, Provincial Council of Women of Ontario and the National Council of Women of Canada. Since 1999 she has been chairing the NCWC “Securing Our Future” project. Margaret held positions in the

International Council of Women from 1988 to 2001. In 1989-90 she was a member of the Federal Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women.

JEANNE MARANDA – Provincial Council of Women of Quebec

Jeanne Maranda has been active in the PCWQ and Montreal Council of Women including a term as President of the latter. Jeanne was instrumental in the creation of the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University. In 1978 she co-authored the first annotated bibliography of feminist writing in Quebec. She is the French Language Editor for the “Canadian Women’s Studies/les cahiers de la femme” magazine, a well-known feminist publication. She works constantly to eliminate sexist advertising by giving talks in schools and other community groups and organizing letter campaigns.

LILIAN MONEY – Victoria Council of Women

Lilian Money was a member of the Sooke Parent Teacher Association and was instrumental in setting up its bursaries program. She has been actively involved in a couple of environmental projects and lobbied the federal government to help purchase a property and is still lobbying to have it turned into a park. Lilian has also been active with the Sooke Museum, Sooke Garden Club and Knox Presbyterian Church.

LORETTA NORTON – New Burnaby Study Group

Loretta Norton has worked for many years in church related groups. She has also volunteered with Cubs and Boy Scouts. Loretta was President of Burnaby Council of Women in 1975, has been on the Safety and Housing Committee for PCWBC and was Safety Convener for NCWC. She is currently Vice-President of the New Burnaby Study Group and a Vice-President for PCWBC.

EVELYN RENTON – Vancouver Council of Women

Evelyn Renton worked with the Federal Department of the Environment from 1962 until her retirement in 1974. Evelyn has been active in the Vancouver Business and Professional Women’s Club including serving a term as president. She was president of the Vancouver Council of Women from 1984 to 1986 and is currently serving as president again. She is currently a member of the Federal Superannuates, Vancouver Pioneers, Vancouver Citizenship Council and West End Senior’s Network.

RUTH ROBINSON – Saskatoon Council of Women

Ruth Robinson has held several offices on the Saskatoon Council of Women and is currently Environment Convener. In the NCWC, she served as Public Safety Convener. Ruth is also active in the

Canadian Federation of University Women/Saskatoon. She is a founding member of the Saskatoon Women's Coalition which organizes annual events such as Take Back the Night. Ruth is on the boards of the Saskatoon Heritage Society and Crocus Co-op (an organization of mental health patients). In the mid-eighties she was Chairman of the National Consumers Association of Canada and has served on the Canadian and Saskatchewan Safety Councils.

PAT RUSTAD – Local Council of Women of Halifax

Pat Rustad is a board member of the Victoria General Hospital and the YWCA – Halifax. She volunteers at the Planned Parenthood Federation Clinic and is a participant in the Maritime Centre of Excellence in Women's Health. She is also a member of Feminists for a Just and Equitable Public Policy. In the Halifax Council, Pat is Treasurer and Convener of Membership and Program.

ANNE SINCLAIR – Toronto and Area Council of Women

Anne Sinclair has been on a number of committees in the Toronto and Area Council of Women and was Treasurer of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario for several years and has served as its President. On the National Council of Women of Canada she has served for many years as the representative on the board of the Canadian National Exhibition and was a Vice-President of NCWC in 1998/99. Anne assists seniors with their income tax forms and organized the serving of Christmas dinner to the lonely and elderly for several years.

SHEILA VEITCH – New Burnaby Study Group

Sheila Veitch has been President of the Burnaby Council of Women for three different terms. She has also been Treasurer of the Provincial Council of Women of BC and a Vice-President of the NCWC. She is on the Board for the College for the Retired, the Burnaby Voters Association, Vancouver College, and Fair Haven United Church Homes. Sheila is also a member of the British Columbia Board of Parole and has been involved with several service clubs. Her municipal involvement includes the Burnaby School Board from 1981 to 1985 and a Burnaby Councillor from 1985 to 1987.

DONNA MAE YEO – Council of Women of Winnipeg

Donna Mae Yeo served as President of the Council of Women of Winnipeg from 1981 to 1983 and served in several positions of the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba. Donna Mae was a founding member of the Altrusa Club in 1959, which is a women's service club. In conjunction with this organization she founded the Take-Out Toy Service which is a toy lending service for children with special needs, and helped found the Language Bank of Winnipeg which is a 24-hour emergency translation service. Donna Mae was also a

founding member of the Student Society of Interior Designers in 1949, which became the Professional Interior Designers Institute of Manitoba. She has also been active in several resident advisory groups in Winnipeg. From 1980 to 1990 she was appointed by Winnipeg City Council to the Civic Charities Endorsement Bureau.

CONGRATULATIONS:

To All Recipients of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal

On the occasion of the presentation of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medals, may I extend congratulations to the recipients of the medals.

National Council of Women of Canada was proud to be chosen as one of the organizations eligible to honour its members in this Golden Jubilee year for their long and devoted service in their communities. Just as Queen Elizabeth II has dedicated herself to her duties, so have many members of all the organizations that make up NCWC's federation dedicated themselves to work in their communities to better the conditions of life for women and their families.

Historically, NCWC marked the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria by founding the Victorian Order of Nurses. This was an action taken to fill a glaring hole in the health care available to citizens at the time. You will be interested to learn that when NCWC made its presentation to the Romanow Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, a family physician working in rural Canada paid tribute to the service of the VON. To quote her words, "Heaven help the sick and enfeebled in rural settings if the VON ever ceases to exist." It has become a lasting legacy from the members of NCWC to all Canadians.

It is my hope that each and every recipient may know that in wearing this medal, she witnesses to the service, unpaid and unsung, that she and so many women have given to their greater family, their communities. And I pray that the next generation honours their lifetimes of service by taking up the torch eagerly.

Catharine Laidlaw-Sly, President



What's New on the Net?

Mary Scott, Web Site Coordinator

The National Council of Women of Canada's web site continues to grow and attract users, not only from Canada and the United States, but also from Europe, Australia, and Africa. During the month of January, for example, the site had 4,822 individual sessions, with the "About Us" section drawing the most traffic, followed by the "Policy/Resolutions" and "What's New." The "Famous Five" section continues to bring traffic. Google, Yahoo, and Geocities are the most frequently used referring search engines to our site.

New material is always being added - briefs, correspondence, newsletter, resolutions. Material about the AGM in Windsor, including the registration package and the agenda is posted for interested individuals to download and print.

There are a few areas where material can be added - descriptions of Local and Provincial Councils, for example. If members are interested in having some content about their Council posted, please let Mary Scott know at <web@ncwc.ca>.

One suggestion for adding interest to the site is to have a brief story about National Council of Canada's history posted on a regular basis. It could be material from NCWC archives for example, or from The Splendid Vision (Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1993). Mary would love to hear from any members who would be interested in helping with this project.

If anyone is having problems with accessing information at the NCWC site or has suggestions, please contact Mary. Any photographs that could be featured would be appreciated. They can be from a regular camera, not digital. Please mail them to Mary or to the NCWC office; they will be returned to the sender.

Mary Scott looks forward to hearing from visitors to NCWC's web site. Contact her at <web@ncwc.ca>.

World-Wide Women (WWW): Surfing the Digital Revolution!

"World-Wide Women (WWW): Surfing the Digital Revolution!" is the 2003 Canadian theme for International Women's Day (IWD)/International Women's Week (IWW). In the Status of Women's press release of March 1, 2003, the Honourable Jean Augustine, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women) stated:

The advent of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as the Internet, has revolutionized the way people communicate, access information, create networks and develop business opportunities. While it brings important economic and

social benefits, this revolution also poses challenges and risks. This theme encourages Canadians to take a closer look at the impact of ICTs on women and, in particular, the Internet applications, and their use as a tool for the empowerment of women and the promotion of women's equality.

Additional information on March 8th, International Women's Day, can be found on the Status of Women's web site <<http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca>> Included are a Fact Sheet on the theme of ICTs and an Organizer's Tool Kit that gives ideas that can be used when planning activities for next year's IWW.

We are committed to peace.

St. Catharines and District Council of Women

St. Catharines and District is blessed by being a multi-cultural mosaic. As we get to know more of our new citizens we appreciate the hardships that have brought them to our country. We recognize that positive change at a local level has a ripple effect that can ultimately bring a common good to the global community. We continue to work toward changes that will enhance and improve the societal conditions within our community.

There is so much that one takes for granted. If you woke up this morning with more health than illness, you are more fortunate than 575,000 people who will not survive this week. If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the fear of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pain of starvation, then you're ahead of 500 million people in this world. If you can attend your

local Council meeting or any meeting of your faith or viewpoint without fear of harassment, arrest or death, you're more blessed than 3 billion people in this world. If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back and a place to sleep tonight, you're better off than 70% of this world. If you have any money in the bank, in your wallet or spare change in a dish somewhere, you're among the top 8% of this world. If you can face this day with a smile and a will to make a change, then you're fortunate indeed because the majority of people in this world can make a change but don't or won't.

In closing, if you can read this article, then you've been given an additional blessing because, in this new millennium, there are over two billion people in this world who cannot read at all.

Canada Needs Gun Control

Mavis Moore, Saskatoon Council of Women, and Past President, Canadian Federation of University Women

On December 6, 1989, the Montreal Massacre was a wake-up call for the whole country. Canada needed laws to control weapons, to know where they were and who possessed them.

Many thought the passing of Bill C-68 would solve the problem. On January 1, 2003, every gun owner was to be licensed and registered. It should have been simple. However, people did not count on the virulent opposition of the gun lobby and the finances available to it for fighting the law. The gun lobby's court challenges all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada were very costly, and it lost at each level. The critics of the law and the gun lobby will never be satisfied until the whole gun control law is dismantled.

In December, 2002, the Auditor General of Canada attacked the poor management and lack of transparency of the department in charge of gun registration. However it should be noted that the law itself was not attacked. Nevertheless, since then, the media and the gun lobby have focused on costs, totally ignoring the public safety aspect of the situation. Six separate inquests across the country (Yeo, Smith, Kassonde, May, Vernon, OC Transpo) have recommended the licensing and registration of firearms. The system is working since 90% of gun owners are licensed and 75% of guns are registered.

After the Auditor General's report and the bombardment by the media, Justice Minister Cauchon set up the Hession Commission to investigate the whole system. The Hession Report, by former Deputy Minister Raymond Hession, does contain a number of useful suggestions for reorganizing the system and strengthening accountability and transparency, as well as improving the program's management and efficiency.

However, the Hession Report also contains recommendations that will have a significant impact upon public safety. Of grave concern is the apparent attempt to address costs, efficiency, transparency and accountability of the firearms program in such a way so as to appease critics of the law. This may well have the unintended consequence of compromising public safety.. Furthermore, there was no consultation with public health experts, police representatives, crime victim advocates, women's groups in arriving at the recommendations.

The Hession Report recommends:

1. passing Bill C-10, which introduces a number of regulatory changes including an extension of the renewal period up to nine years.
2. the allowance of the submission of licensing and registration applications via the Internet. This would completely defeat the purpose of many screening and

risk management features, aimed at reducing the risk of dangerous individuals obtaining firearms. The same reason that Canadians cannot apply for passports on line applies to firearms license applications. The inclusion of references and photo guarantors to attest to the accuracy of the information, and the identity of the photo on the form are critical to the process. On line submissions simply don't provide these protections. The signatures of the guarantors confirm that "they know of no reason why the individual (in question) might pose a threat to themselves or others."

3. the implementation of the Canadian Firearms Program's continuous improvement plan for 2003, which involves significant legislative and regulatory changes. However, no public safety organization, such as the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs, the Canadian Public Health Association, or the Coalition for Gun Control, has been consulted in the process of developing these plans. Incredibly, among the proposed changes in these plans is the removal of key requirements that exist at the present time, namely the removal of the requirements

- a. for obtaining authorization to transport restricted and prohibited weapons, a key component of gun control legislation for over 30 years!
- b. for needing to provide a purpose for acquiring a restricted or prohibited firearm, such as assault weapons!
- c. for mandatory submission to a firearms verification, unless requested by a registrar.
- d. for obtaining the approval of shooting clubs and ranges.

Everyone concerned with public safety and with gun control should take a careful look at these proposed recommendations of the Hession Report. It is vital that people contact their Members of Parliament and Federal Cabinet Ministers, as well as community organizations which share this concern about gun control, to voice their opinions in order to **stop the erosion of the gun control law.**

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of the National Council of Women of Canada, its members or federates.

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“The Splendid Vision”

Have you read the history of the National Council of Women of Canada? Written by N.E.S. Griffiths, *“The Splendid Vision”* chronicles the good work done by NCWC during its first hundred years of operation. What follows are quotes from the book (thanks to Mary Potter!) - a taster to whet your appetite for more! The book is available through the NCWC Office; please see page 16 for more details.

Ishbel Aberdeen, wife of the Governor General of Canada, was “a brilliant political hostess and an intelligent, if occasionally partisan, diplomat. ...[S]he considered women a great unused civilizing force for the world.” (p.17)

The founding meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada was “held on 27 October 1893 in the Horticultural Pavilion in Toronto, a mass gathering of some fifteen hundred women and a few men... As the *Globe* noted ‘It was a meeting of women, for women, managed by women.’ The report took pains to point that nearly every women’s association was represented and that ‘it was an audience not of sharp-featured man-haters, denouncing mankind and scolding the course of civilization’ but of ‘pleasant-faced women’ representative of ‘motherly womanliness’... It was above all a gathering of people concerned to find ways to promote effective action by women.” (p.21)

“Religious partisanship was, along with its political counterpart, to be a major concern for the Council at both the local and national levels for many years. That it could be overcome at all in the local councils is both a testimony to the ideals proposed, and to the importance attributed to the work of the council by those who joined.” A basic principle of Council is that a difference of opinion on one question does not prevent them from working together in those on which they can agree. (p.29)

One of the important achievements of NCWC in the early years was the establishment of the Victorian Order of Nurses. “The resolution establishing the Order was passed at the meeting of the National Council in Halifax, in July 1897, as an effective way of honouring Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee... In the speech proposing the resolution Lady Aberdeen listed five main aims for the Order:

1. to provide skilled nurses in sparsely settled and outlying country districts;
2. to provide skilled nurses to attend the sick poor in their own homes in cities;
3. to provide skilled nurses to attend cases in cities at fixed charges for persons of small income, the charges being paid to the funds of the Order;

4. to provide small lying-in rooms or wards in cottage hospitals or homes;

5. to provide trained nurses thoroughly qualified to carry out these objects.” p.69)

“In 1907, a resolution was carried to the effect ‘that all institutions of learning and professional instruction (in the best interests of humanity) be as freely open to women as to men; that opportunities for industrial training be as generally and as liberally provided for one sex as for the other, and that all avocations in which both men and women engage equal wages shall be paid for equal work.’” (p. 105)

Miss C. E. Carmichael was able to institute the first “formal meetings between members of the Executive of the NCWC and members of the federal Cabinet including the Prime Minister” because of social connections. “This first ‘official’ meeting developed over ensuing decades into formal presentations of Council’s program to the Prime Minister and senior federal Cabinet ministers.” (p. 172)

During the Depression, the Council of Women was active in the relief effort. “In 1933, for example, Ottawa’s mayor requested that the Local Council of Women take over the collection, repairing, purchasing and distribution of clothing to approximately 4000 families... Many councils also followed the example of Toronto which, throughout the depression, canned fruit and vegetables for distribution through welfare agencies, producing in 1933 alone 20,000 jars.” (p. 202)

In 1943 a Special Committee of Council on Reconstruction put together a ‘Program for Post-War Planning’ Section XI was titled ‘Women in the Post-War World.’ As well “there were seven requests presented:

1. A greater share (for women) in the responsibilities of government through election to local, provincial and Dominion governing bodies, and representation on administrative boards;
2. Appointment of well-qualified women on bodies concerned with peace terms and post-war reconstruction;
3. Gradual demobilization after the war of women employed in war industries;
4. Resistance to a policy of shutting women out of employment in industries and occupations they entered during the war;
5. Adoption of the principle of equal pay for equal work;
6. Opposition to discrimination against women in various lines of employment and against the employment of married women;
7. The right of women to retain or acquire citizenship without regard to their marital status.” (p.231)

“During the fifties and sixties, the Prime Minister of the

day and a number of Cabinet Ministers met annually with Council no matter which party was in power. In his diary Lester Pearson recorded the meeting as follows:

Today at 12:00 o'clock the cabinet, or part of them (some of my male colleagues must have been frightened), received a delegation from the National Council of Women, who wished to present resolutions to the Government. They were a strange bag – I mean the resolutions, not the ladies – notably particularly for the relatively inconsequential things that some of them dealt with, while a lot of important developments or possible developments, were ignored. There was nothing about peace, the United Nations, or international affairs, but something on race track betting and sex offenses. The P.M. was at his best with the ladies and by the end of the hour they were practically on his neck.” (p. 248)

“In 1951, the Council had asked for consideration of a revision of the Minimum Wage Act, in order to have the minimum raised, and in 1952 it brought forward the issue of compulsory retirement as something to be discussed and reconsidered, with the recommendation that men and women should have the same retirement age and that ‘if any variance is to be made as to the age limit it should be in favour of the women as they possess a longer life expectancy’.” (p. 264)

“There was no comprehension among bureaucrats or politicians that women had any real complaints about their status in society, or were even able to articulate such dissatisfactions as they might imagine they had . . . [I]n 1965 the Prime Minister of the day, Lester Pearson [turned] down Pauline Jewett for cabinet appointment because Judy LaMarsh was already a Minister. It never occurred to him that women really were ordinary human beings and that there could be more than one woman in cabinet... The Honorable Judy LaMarsh who succeeded Ellen Fairclough as the second solitary woman in the cabinet, testified during her period as Minister, any attempt to secure the appointment of women to public boards was a bitter and thankless task. She very much doubted, she wrote in her autobiography, whether at the time of the establishment of the Royal Commission, ‘any of the twenty-nine members of Cabinet or the thirty or forty senior public servants’ who advised on appointments even remembered that women existed.” (p. 289)

“One of the projects Council was engaged in [to celebrate Canada’s Centennial] was the establishment of the Lady Aberdeen Library collections at the University of Waterloo... In 1967 a considerable quantity of material, including some 2000 books and a number of cartons of primary sources would be shipped to the University, and a grant of \$2000 was raised by council to help it establish proper quarters for this gift. The donation provided the basis for the establishment, at the University of Waterloo, of a rare book and archive collection devoted specifically to women’s history. (p. 298)

“Prime Minister [Trudeau] was much more

forthcoming about his opinions of women in general and the National Council of Women in particular, than any of his predecessors.” In the meeting between the Council of Women and the cabinet in 1969, “Trudeau opened the meeting by ‘speaking in general about the position of women in society and the long distance still to progress in the whole area of women’s rights’. He stated... in unequivocal terms that in a properly balanced society there would be adequate use of woman power. He commented upon the use of the creative skills of women in other countries and mentioned particularly the large number of women in the medical profession in Russia. He stated that in an age where skill is more important than muscle there is more scope for the talents of women.” (p. 305)

During the presentation of the annual brief of NCWC to the federal government in 1987, “the place of the National Council within the spectrum of women’s organizations was debated” with the Hon. Barbara McDougall, then Minister responsible for the Status of Women. “An application for government funding by the National Council had been recently turned down by the

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In Memoriam

The members of the Montreal Council of Women were saddened to hear of the passing of Jacqueline Béique and Robert Yusha Anthony Arculli. Mme Béique was for many years an Honorary Councillor of MCW. She was one of the women that worked with Thérèse Casgrain to gain the vote for women in Quebec, and she was a winner of the Person’s Award from the Federal Government. Robert Arculli was the husband of Carolyn Chung, a long-time member of MCW.

Condolences were sent by the Ottawa Council of Women to Maria Neil on the death of Neil Morrison and to the family of Shirley Carson who passed on in December.

From a letter of condolences sent February 10, 2003, to Margaret Kee’s son, John, by Mary MacLaren, NCWC Archivist, on behalf of President, Catharine Laidlaw-Sly:

As always, there is a certain sadness on reading of the death of a friend; many long-time members of NCWC knew your mother as a member of both Local and National Councils.

I can remember delivering an occasional report to her home just off the Driveway – that was in the days when saving postage was a vital concern! And well into the 1990s, the name Margaret Kee appears among the list of sustaining members of National. An organization as old as NCWC owes its long life and reputation to the support and efforts of women like your mother; their contributions are remembered.

World Summit on the Information Society

Mary Scott, NCWC Vice-President

The last newsletter briefly mentioned the planning and preparation for this important World Summit which is to take place in two phases: Geneva, December 2003, and Tunisia in 2005. Much has been happening here and around the world in preparation for this important World Forum.

The internet has become such a powerful and widespread communication tool, particularly with the convergence of existing communication media and the new communication technologies. Access to the Internet has increased, in spite of the continued exclusion of marginalized communities and many people in the developing world. At the same time, it has become subject to increasing commercialization, corporate ownership and control. There have now been a number of regional meetings, experts meetings and prepcom meetings and there is a dynamic debate on a number of important issues. The players include governments, including Canada, the private sector and NGO and community groups.

The Association for Progressive Communications (APC) describes seven themes that are important issues to consider.

1. The Right to Communicate: The right to communicate is a fundamental human right. Here we find discussion related to access and the use of the Internet and electronic communication infrastructure. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) must be made available to all. Also the right to communicate would include inclusiveness – ensuring access for marginalised groups. Gender equity and affordability are also important to consider. Internet infrastructure should be used with a view to creating more equalitarian societies, and providing support for education, health and local business development.

2. Freedom of expression and information exchange: The potential of the Internet to allow public participation in governance processes, at international, national and local levels, should be utilised to its fullest. At the same time, there should be mechanisms in the public domain to challenge the publication of content that is harmful to women, children and other vulnerable groups.

3. Diversity of content, ownership and control

4. The licensing and control of Intellectual Property: Many are now urging Open Source software and operating systems like linux which are in the public domain.

5. Privacy: Personal information held by private or public bodies should be protected from any unauthorised disclosure. Groups that feel their privacy is threatened by internet based content such as trafficking in women and children should be able to access mechanisms to take action against the producers and publishers of such content.

6. Global, regional, national governance of the Internet: The development of standards related to the control and operation of the Internet increasingly gives undue weight to market influences.

7. Rights awareness and realization of rights: Internet policies need to be developed taking into account their ability to be implemented. This includes public education to inform people.

Interested in finding out more about WSIS? The best place is on the net – some suggested sites are:

- Home Page for the World Summit - <http://www.itu.int/wsiv/>
- UNESCO portal has lots of information on the WSIS – you can also sign up for an online discussion – <http://portal.unesco.org/>
- Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID) has some excellent content on gender equality and new technologies. An online discussion group created by women’s groups is offered at <http://www.awid.org/index.pl?section=gentech>
- Closer to home, Womenspace has been leading the consultation here in Canada, and has a report from women’s experiences at one of the Experts Meetings, facilitated by DAW (Division for the Advancement of Women). You will find more at: <http://consult.womenspace.ca/>

Mary Scott will try to keep members updated and will write more about what Canada’s position is regarding WSIS in future editions of the NCWC Newsletter. She will also provide updated links at the NCWC’s links and resources section (International Links) of NCWC’s home page; so members can check it out there.

Bill C-7, First Nations Governance Act: Briefs to House of Commons Standing Committee

Elizabeth Fleming, Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba

At its November meeting, the National Council of Women of Canada Board of Directors gave its full support to Vice-President Mary Scott to proceed with preparing an NCWC Brief in tandem with a Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba Brief on Bill C-7, First Nations Governance Act. It is to be presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development at public hearings in Winnipeg, March 19, 2003.

The Minister of Indian Affairs Canada, Hon. Robert Nault, asked the Standing Committee to hold public hearings on Bill C-7 between first and second reading. This means that the all-party Committee can advise the Minister to make significant amendments if members are persuaded that the draft legislation needs to be changed. Bill C-7 is controversial among Aboriginal People. Several First Nations Chiefs say the process and consultation are fundamentally flawed. Some have called for a boycott of the legislation. The Native Women's Association of Canada and the National Aboriginal Women's Association have different positions on Bill C-7 but both agree that Section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA) should be removed so that human rights complaints lodged by Aboriginal women and men under the Indian Act can be investigated.

A small drafting committee in Winnipeg is:

- listening to the advice of aboriginal women, including two PCWM federates, Original Women's Network and IKWE Women's Shelter, and of women who have gone to the HRC Commission for help with human rights cases and been turned away;
- interviewing a number of Manitoba Members of Parliament who sit on the Standing Committee, namely Pat Martin (NDP), Anita Neville (Liberal), Brian Pallister (Alliance) and Inky Mark (PC), to discuss their views;
- discussing the legislation with senior Indian Affairs and CHR Commission staff; following the Standing Committee public hearings on the CPAC channel and on the Government of Canada web-site at www.gc.ca
- sending iterations of the draft to National Council women for their feedback.

The NCWC Brief supports the work and the Brief of the PCWM. The primary basis is the 2002 NCWC Resolution, Protection of Human Rights of Aboriginal People in Canada, and urges the Government of Canada to proceed quickly to strike Section 67 of the CHRA to allow Aboriginal people recourse to the CHR Commission for the first time. The human rights of Aboriginal people would then be better protected until such time as an Aboriginal Human Rights Code could be approved and would replace the CHRA. The final NCWC Brief will be posted on the www.ncwc.ca web-site.

The PCWM Brief will be primarily focused on the experience and observations of the Council with the Dakota Tipi and other First Nations in Manitoba.

Both the Indian Act and the CHRA are being opened up for the first time in about twenty-five years. NCWC is pressing for an amendment to the CHRA to preclude elimination of discrimination on the grounds of political belief. Most other national and provincial human rights legislation include such grounds. NCWC is also asking that the Indian Act does not discriminate at the same time as Section 67 is removed and for a thorough Gender Based Analysis of Bill C-7 and the ramifications that its implementation might have on existing legislation.

Many thanks to the aboriginal women who have waited so long and to Mary Scott, the drafting committee and all who contributed. The process has been consultative and provided a learning opportunity about very important issues for Council members.

“The Splendid Vision” continued from page 13

Women's Program on the grounds that the Council was not a status of women organization. As President, Margaret MacGee asserted that the mandate of the Women's Program, when it was established, had been:

to promote the full participation of women in all aspects of Canadian society and to increase the capacity and effectiveness of women's groups working to improve economic and social conditions for women.

She went on to argue, successfully, that such a mandate obviously encompassed the work of Council, which fell perfectly within the characterization of women's issues given by the Hon. Barbara McDougall: ‘social issues, family issues, societal issues and social justice issues. Following up on this meeting, Margaret MacGee, as President of the Council, together with Vice-President Estelle Matthews, managed to obtain a grant of \$45,000 to Council for the operation of the national office.’ (p. 374)

“The essence of Council action lies in the fact that its membership is made up of women involved in volunteer work, women convinced of their right to comment upon the public life of their communities and their country, and committed to accepting responsibility for the improvement of that life.” (p. 404)

“Social Welfare”
continued from page 3

Please visit the web-site <www.socialwatch.org/> to view the national statistics and “Progress Report.” One can also order copies. Charts denote the level of progress, stagnation, or regression on the following axis: Basic Education, Children’s Health, Food Security and Child Nutrition, Reproductive Health, Health and Life Expectancy, Safe Water and Sanitation. The report describes and analyses the transfer of resources from South to North. It also denounces the threats inherent in the privatization of public services, including water services, as part of World Bank and IMF Structural Adjustments Plans for countries which find themselves in the vulnerable position of requesting a loan.

Please note that there will be a Summit on Water in March 2003 in Europe and a WTO meeting in September 2003 in Cancun, Mexico. I invite you to inform yourselves on the issues and express your views and possibly your Federate’s position on these matters to your respective MPs. The outcomes of the decisions taken there will have an important impact on the daily lives of regular citizens with even more dramatic effects for the citizens of the South.

As we have witnessed in the Peace Marches against a War on Iraq, building solidarity on issues of social justice can be a very effective strategy to shape government policies. “Another World is Possible” and we can do our part to make it a reality sooner than later.

ITEM	COST	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
Subscription	\$15.00		
Yearbook	\$25.00		
A Splendid Vision	\$35.00		
*Donation	Amount		

*Donations to the NCWC are not tax deductible at this time.

Total:

Comments and Suggestions:

Address:

Items for Sale

Annual subscriptions to the *NCWC Newsletter* cost \$15.00, and to the *NCWC Yearbook*, \$25.00. *A Splendid Vision*, a history of the National Council of Women of Canada costs \$35.00. Postage and handling is included. Please make cheques or money orders payable to the National Council of Women of Canada. Cut out and use the attached order form. Please be sure to include your mailing address. Thank you.

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