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A RESPONSE TO  
CHALLENGES AND CHOICES

SUBMITTED  
TO

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE ECONOMIC  
UNION AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS FOR  
CANADA

BY

THE CANADIAN CONGRESS FOR LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR WOMEN

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## A RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES AND CHOICES

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## Foreword

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) is a national, non-profit, voluntary organization concerned with the provision of learning opportunities for women in Canada. CCLOW defines a learning opportunity as any formal or informal means through which women may develop personally, socially, economically and politically. The objectives of CCLOW are to:

- \* promote networking of individuals and organizations involved with learning opportunities for women;
- \* identify barriers to learning and promote change;
- \* support and encourage learning and training for women;
- \* investigate unmet needs in adult education programs and services;
- \* assess and promote innovative learning programs for women;
- \* publicize critical issues in women's learning through briefs and position papers.

CCLOW welcomes the interim report of the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, and is pleased to present its response to this report.

## INTRODUCTION

The Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada is one of the many mechanisms for citizen participation in the policy-making process of government. Since our presentation to the Commission last fall, we have looked forward to the Commission's summation and analysis of the views of Canadians on the main issues facing us as a nation in the coming years. CLOW, therefore, considers it both a responsibility and a pleasure to respond to the interim report of the Commission.

The interim report has identified the question of major importance to many Canadians; the basic norm underlying the submissions made to the Commission; the main values and aspirations of Canadians; and the challenges and choices with which Canadians must deal in the next decade. There is in the report, a general recognition of the inter-relationships among the issues raised during the Commission's travel across Canada. The tone of the report is very general and very scant attention has been paid to distinct interest groups such as, for example, women, visible minorities and native peoples. It is, therefore, imperative that such groups define and examine the questions, aspirations, challenges and choices articulated by the Commission, from the perspective of their constituents.

Our response to the Commission's report will begin with an examination of the Commission's stated view of the nature of Canada. This will be followed by a discussion of the "basic constant" during the hearings. This discussion links two major aspirations of Canadians, self-reliance and equality of opportunity, to the liberal democratic foundation of Canadian society and the demands of women as persons in this society. From the perspective that Canada is a liberal democratic society and that self-reliance and equality of opportunity are two major values and demands of women in Canada, we respond to the Commission's statement of challenges and choices in the following areas:

- Jobs
- Education and Training
- Social Support
- National Institutions

When competition is valued, differences are emphasized and similarities and common purposes are overlooked. Individualism and self-reliance are emphasized and community, sharing and co-operation ignored. It is no coincidence that the Commission placed self-reliance at the top of its list of the main aspirations of Canadians. This is not to say that individualism and self-reliance must not be valued in our society. However, an emphasis on self-reliance must be balanced with an equal emphasis on co-operation - Canadians working together to achieve self-reliance as individuals and as a collective.

It is difficult to respond to the document of a Commission that regards competition as the

base of Canadian society, and the nature of Canadian national institutions as "deliberately adversarial". (3) It is difficult, because CLOW is of the view that co-operation not competition should be the basis of Canadian society, both domestically and internationally.

When co-operation is the basis of society, peace, not conflict, is regarded as natural to the social order, and the purpose of social order being to maintain this peace. Not coincidentally, "peace" is not listed by the Commission as an aspiration of Canadians.

### THE COMMISSION' S VIEW OF THE NATURE OF CANADIAN SOCIETY.

The Commission has expressed an opinion of the nature of Canadian society, that is reflected in its omission of "peace" as an aspiration of Canadians.

We also live in a society that, like other successful societies, values competition and, indeed, relies upon it for basic protection: our judicial, electoral, parliamentary and economic systems are all based on competition, and in large measure, are deliberately adversarial. (1)

Canada, then, in the view of the Commission, is a competitive society with adversarial national institutions as opposed to a collaborative society. From this perspective of Canadian society, conflict is a natural part of the social order, something to be accommodated within the social structure. This perspective rationalizes conflicts between races, between cultural groups, between labour and management, and between women and men, as natural or to be expected. As one textbook on organizations states "the critical issue is not conflict itself, but rather how it is managed". (2)

The management of conflict is an exercise in the art of compromise. In the pursuit of compromise and thereby management of the level of conflict in Canada, the Royal Commission has sought the opinions of various interest groups in Canada, summarized these opinions in the form of an interim report appropriately entitled, Challenges and Choices, and invited responses to this report, responses which will supposedly influence the Commission in its production of its final report.

The language used by the Commission reflects this particular perspective of Canadian society and expresses it accordingly: "Challenges", full employment versus stable prices and costs, economic efficiency versus social equity.

## THE BASIC NORM OF CANADIANS

The Commission reported a factor common to the submissions it received, a factor that is reflective of the liberal democratic foundation of Canadian society:

The basic constant is that human concerns need to be central to our response to future change. (4)

This constant is actually a norm in our society. It derives from the philosophy of liberalism in which the highest value is the individual human being. It is sometimes important to remind those charged with policy making tasks, of the liberal foundation of our society.

Liberalism, in the words of C. Wright Mills, (1971) "is at once the main line of our intellectual heritage and our official political philosophy". (5) Within this philosophy is the idea of the individual as a master less and autonomous being whose strength is her reason and whose law is her conscience. She alone is responsible for her well-being; and, being the master less, reasoning creature, is free to respond to her needs (perceived or otherwise) in any way that her reason suggests and her conscience dictates. In this scheme, the State becomes an instrument for the realization of the will of the individual in society. Hallowell (1954) describes this relation between the individual and the State in the following way:

The only basis of civil society which the liberal could conceive was a contract The State is regarded not as a necessity arising out of men's needs and social nature with a purpose transcending the subjective wills of individuals, but as an artificial instrumentality based upon the claims of individuals. The State exists to satisfy men's claims and to reflect their interest. (6)

Some important values of liberalism are:

- \* the individual is the highest unit of value in society;
- \* the individual is the measure of all things;
- \* the individual is responsible for, and should control her fate;
- \* the individual has the right to be dealt with in accordance with rational and understandable laws to which all power is also subject;
- \* there are rational ways to acquiring knowledge;

- \* the individual, through her innate reason can acquire knowledge;
- \* education is the key to the progress of the individual;
- \* the State exists to serve the individual;
- \* all individuals are equal before the State, and as such, equally entitled to opportunities provided by the State.

In a society where the individual is responsible for her well being, self-reliance must be a major aspiration. The State, as an instrument of the individual must provide the latter with opportunities through which the individual can work toward becoming self-reliant. Moreover, if each individual is to have a fair chance of becoming self-reliant, she must have equal access with others to these opportunities, not only in law but in actual everyday life. Equality of opportunity is a necessary means for self-reliance.

In 1929, women in Canada became persons. This was a legal event with wide-ranging social and economic ramifications. On February 14, 1981, the status of women as persons with the right to equal opportunities in all areas of society, was firmly entrenched in the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

When women became persons in Canada, they ceased being (legal) dependents of husbands, fathers and other male "guardians". They ceased being nonentities, legally speaking. They became individuals responsible for their well-being, and thereby, individuals who must work toward becoming self-reliant. They became individuals with the same rights to State-provided opportunities as men.

Today, while women have in law, equal rights as men, they do not have these rights in their everyday lives, for the patriarchal, institutional barriers to their full participation in society, persist. Until these barriers are removed, women cannot be self-reliant persons, for these barriers are barriers to equal opportunities for women.

## CHALLENGES AND CHOICES

### JOBS: Full Employment

In present day society, the major route to self-reliance for the majority of individuals, is via paid employment. From this standpoint, the primary responsibility of the State is to provide opportunities and encourage the private sector to provide opportunities, for full employment of those individuals who are willing and able to work. There cannot be, therefore, in a liberal democratic society - where the individual is the highest unit of value, and where the individual is responsible for her well-being - a choice between full employment and economic efficiency. Full employment is economically efficient when individuals are responsible for their well-being.

There can be a choice among the means for achieving full employment. It is in the discussion of these means that the value of economic efficiency can be used. Of the four choices put forward by the Commission, two are congruent with the role of the State in liberal societies. Job creation schemes developed by government is a direct action of the latter for providing individuals with opportunities through which they can work toward becoming self-reliant. Direct intervention of government in the private sector and the labour establishment to encourage the creation of jobs and the protection of existing ones, is also in keeping with the primary function of government - serving the interests of individuals.

Essential for the achievement of full employment is the development of a comprehensive employment strategy. This strategy should be people-centered and not business-centered. The welfare of the individual human being should be the cornerstone of such a strategy.

A comprehensive, people-centered employment strategy should focus on the employment needs of individuals and disadvantaged groups. More specifically, such a strategy should be functionally linked to the education and training needs of workers and the special supports that would facilitate productivity in the workplace.

A comprehensive, people-centered employment strategy must address the employment and related needs of women. Sixty percent of women work because they are living alone, single parents or married to someone who earns less than \$10,000.00 a year. (7) Two-thirds of the people entering the labour force in the next decade will be women. (8) The Dodge Report predicted that by the year 2,000, the female labour force participation rate is expected to approach that of the male labour force. (Some of the implications of this demographic factor will be discussed later under "Education and Training" and "Social Support".)

Women's struggle toward becoming self-reliant individuals via paid employment has been very difficult. It is now common knowledge that working women earn 60 percent of working men's salaries, and that the demand for traditionally female jobs is declining due mainly to automotive technology. In this economic context, women are financially dependent upon men and will continue to be so unless they gain access to a wider variety of occupations, especially traditionally male occupations, which are better paid. Yet, there are several institutional and attitudinal barriers to women's entry into such occupations. A comprehensive employment strategy should contain: measures to eliminate the barriers, target goals and time lines for woman's employment in these occupations. Most important, such a strategy should address the issue of equitable wages for women and men, commonly referred to as equal pay for work of equal value".

Acknowledgement of part-time work as a significant part of the economy and correction of the inequities associated with such work, should also be a major component of the employment strategy. By the end of the century, part-time workers will comprise between 15 and 19 percent of the labour force. (9) The present majority of part-time workers are women (72 percent). (10)

Part-time workers are generally not paid fringe benefits; have very few chances for promotion, and are in the least unionized occupations and thus most vulnerable to exploitation. Yet, many women must work in part-time jobs because of their family responsibilities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is most unfortunate that the Commission's interim report does not address specifically the issues of primary concern to Canadian women. Consequently, CLOW strongly feels that it must reiterate its recommendations given earlier to the Commission.

Given the fact that women are persons in Canada, and as such are responsible for their own well-being, and that paid employment is a major means of self-reliance, CLOW recommends:

That full employment be the primary goal of governments in Canada.

- a. To achieve this goal there should be developed a comprehensive, people- centered employment strategy:
  - This strategy should be coordinated with educational, training and social support programs designed to improve the access and income as well as productivity of workers;
  - The strategy should include provisions for granting the same benefits and protection given to full time workers, to part- time workers.
- b. Specific employment needs of women should be addressed within this strategy:
  - equal pay for work of equal value should be legislated for both the public and private sectors;
  - Equal opportunity legislated to provide the umbrella for implementing affirmative action programs for both the private and public sectors. Contract compliance would be a major tool to ensure implementation;
  - Incentives be given to business and individuals for increased participation of women in non-traditional occupations.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A comprehensive, people-centered employment strategy aimed at achieving full employment, demands that the education and training systems of this country be re-examined and re-structured to meet the skill needs of individuals and the economy.

### Basic Education

Changes are occurring in the communications systems of our society "that are affecting our traditional view of the "educated" person, and; ultimately, our basic skills for participation in the every day activities of society, namely the ability to read and write. As Toffler's Future Shock and McLuhan's Global Village have helped us to understand, the mass media, the computer and highly sophisticated systems and networks are no longer peripheral but central to daily social existence. Very soon, it will be insufficient to be literate only in print media. Computer literacy will become necessary for participation in the communications systems of society. The view of the educated person as one who can read and write will have to be expanded to include those who can operate and program computers.

The jobs for which demand is growing are mainly technical jobs (Dodge 1981; Allmand, 1981; Economic Council of Canada, 1982). These jobs require not only functional literacy skills in print media, but also technical literacy, that is, basic knowledge of mathematics and science.

These changes in the communications and economic systems of Canadian society imply that a basic education to which all Canadians must have access, should include more than the three r's. It must include basic training in mathematics and science.

Women are at a tremendous disadvantage with respect to economic participation in society in the coming decade. First, as women, they are provided with a basic education that de-emphasizes mathematics and science, and indeed, any type of technical training. Secondly, they are provided with skills and values for traditionally female occupations (mostly non-technical occupations).

If women are to successfully participate in the communications system: of future Canadian society, and enter traditionally male (technical and science- related) occupations, they must be provided with basic training in mathematics and science. Ideally, this training should begin in kindergarten and continue through the post-secondary educational system. At present, adult women who, as victims of systemic sexual discrimination in the educational system have not been provided with a basic knowledge of mathematics and science, desperately need opportunities to acquire this

knowledge and to get specific training for entry into non-traditional occupations. A functional pre-requisite for entry into many of the training programs offered by the federal government is prior knowledge of mathematics and physics. Consequently, the National Training Program with its emphasis on job-specific skills training for technical occupations is failing to meet the basic training needs of women.

Among the goals of the National Training Program is a 42 percent overall participation rate for female trainees, and a 30 percent participation rate for female trainees in non-traditional areas. (11) However, given the lack of emphasis on scientific training in the education of women and systemic sexual discrimination in all areas of society, these goals are not being met. Moreover, the number and proportion of women trainees have declined in all areas of institutional and industrial training. In institutional training programs, the participation rate for women trainees has declined from 29.1 percent in 1981/82 to 25.7 percent in 1982/83. (12) In the industrial training programs, the number of women trainees has declined from 27.1 percent in 1981/82 to 22.7 percent in 1982/83. Furthermore, the number of women in WINTO (Women In Non-Traditional Occupations) programs has declined in every province from 1981 to 1983. In 1981/82 there was a total of 2,192 trainees in the WINTO programs. By 1983 this figure had dropped to 1,226. (13)

In her examination of the National Training Program, Henderson (1984) found that:

. . . . although women generally do not enter the national training program with less education than men, they generally tend to lack in those areas of expertise most needed to get a non-traditional job, e.g. maths and science credits for computer technology, or practical experience with simple mechanics, tools, etc.. (14)

Henderson subsequently concluded that there is a need for "bridging" programs for women, particularly in the areas of pre-trades and pre-tech programs in which women can acquire at least some training in basic mathematics and science, particularly in physics.

### Paid Skills Development Leave

Life-long learning is not a luxury but an economic necessity. As such, it should be encouraged and financed by all parties that can benefit from it: employers, workers and government. Given the rapid production of information in present day society and the functional relationship between information processing and productivity, it is essential that measures be put into place for workers to update their skills and knowledge. Adult women especially need paid skills development leave in order to upgrade their education in technical areas, such as mathematics, physics, computer programming, to mention but a few. This work-related learning that is essential for maintenance and enhancement of economic productivity must be available to all workers and should be financed by all beneficiaries of such productivity, employers, workers and government.

## Education and Equality of Opportunity

Essential to women's struggle for self-reliance is a change in the basic attitudes toward women in society, attitudes in which women are regarded as subordinate to men, not capable of technical or scientific competence, weak, (and so on). A major role of our education system, apart from providing members of society with work related skills, is to provide them with the attitudes and values that are supportive of the fundamental ideals of our society, and compatible with equitable participation in the economy. Equality of opportunity is a fundamental ideal of Canadian society, an ideal that should be reflected in the content, form and process of the curriculum, the structure of the school and indeed, all educational institutions.

On a more basic level, equality of opportunity for women in the field of education means equal access to all parts of the curriculum, especially the science and technical training components of the latter. It also means equal access to all job opportunities in the education system, particularly those in decision-making areas.

The education system, however, is but one of many systems in society. Equality of opportunity in this system does not necessarily guarantee the same in other systems, especially in the economic system where equality of opportunity for women will increase the labour costs of businesses. It, therefore, becomes necessary to develop and implement measures to ensure equality of opportunity for women in all systems of society. Legislated equal opportunity and affirmative action programs in both the public and private spheres are some of these measures.

## National Goals and Standards for Education

CCLOW agrees with the Commission that education should be the responsibility of provincial governments to implement. We believe though, that a serious need has emerged for the development of National Goals and Standards for the education of Canadians. The development of national goals and standards could then facilitate the solution of some of the critical educational and economic problems facing this country. Among these problems are a huge functionally illiterate population - 23.7 percent of the out-of-school population; and the large scale mismatch of skills now needed in the labour force and the present education and skills of workers. The present 'band-aid' approach to, and jurisdictional wrangling over the responsibility for, solutions to these problems, is dysfunctional. The establishment of national goals and standards with active citizen participation in their development, would provide a framework within which these and other problems could be addressed.

Of particular concern to CCLOW and many other organizations, is that National Standards for Access to Education be a component of national goals and standards. Standards for access would include the right to enter and utilize the education system; would ensure that the education system be organized in such a way that it would have a quality of being easy to approach or enter; and that the means of entering would be easily available. Equality of opportunity in education and training must be a primary goal of

education in Canada.

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission recommend a mechanism, including active citizen participation, to begin the development of National Goals and Standards for Education for Canadians.

## SOCIAL SUPPORT

### The Choice Between Economic Efficiency and Social Equity

When the individual is the highest unit of value in society, the choice between economic efficiency and social equity must always be social equity. Economic efficiency must always be regarded as a means for achieving maximum well-being for individuals. Consequently, the role and purpose of policies and spending for social security must always be for the improvement of the well-being of individuals in society. The underlying principle of such policies and spending must be universal, equal access of all individuals to the opportunities provided by government.

When economic efficiency becomes the primary aim of government policies and spending, the economic system replaces the individual as the highest unit of value in society. The economic system with its dominant goal of efficiency, is at all times a means created by individuals for the achievement of human ends. The latter must never be compromised for the former.

### Child Care Services

If women are to achieve self-reliance via paid employment, then they cannot be expected to be responsible for the full time care of children. Accessible, high quality and affordable child care services are, therefore, an important social support for working women. The productivity of these women depends heavily upon such a social support program. Lack of adequate child care services is an obstacle to women's quest for excellence in their work in the public sphere.

Achievement of excellence requires heavy investment of mental and physical energy. Women's dual responsibilities in the paid labour force and in the home make it extremely difficult for them to put this kind of effort into their jobs.

## THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN THE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Self-reliance pertains not only to individuals in society but to groups of individuals as well. The voluntary sector in Canada is a tribute to this ideal of our society. It consists of

private citizens working together to help themselves and others. These groups should be invited and funded by government to increase their present delivery of social and community services. The voluntary sector is also a sector with many specializations. Government can utilize the expertise and community base of voluntary organizations in the delivery of social services.

There is, however, another side to the role of the voluntary sector in the delivery of social services. This side must be attended to if the voluntary sector is to remain an active and vital part of our society. It is a well known fact that the present majority of volunteers in Canada are women. However, if the forecasts which say that an increasing number of women are entering the labour force and that by the 1990's the female labour force participation rate will be equal to that of men, are correct, then the voluntary sector will suffer from a serious shortage of workers, and will have to cutback on its delivery of social and community services. If this implication of the increasing female labour force is to be avoided, the voluntary sector must receive assistance with respect to its labour needs. This assistance can come from government which, in the interest of achieving full employment for Canadians, can provide voluntary organizations with the financial means for hiring paid workers. The political and organizational implications of such assistance are many and controversial. These must be articulated and addressed before the voluntary sector experiences a withdrawal of women from its labour force into the paid labour force.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the role and purpose of government policies and spending be the improvement of the well-being of individual Canadians;
- that social equity be the primary value and goal of government policies and spending;
- that increased funding be available for accessible, high quality, affordable child care services;
- that voluntary organizations play an integral role in the delivery of social services;
- that government provide voluntary organizations with more financial assistance for hiring paid staff;
- that voluntary organizations be consulted in the development and implementation of social policies and programs;
- that special funding be made available to voluntary organizations for consultations with government.

## NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### Citizen Participation in Government

In a liberal, democratic society such as Canada, the citizens are individuals who are responsible for their own well-being, and as such, are obliged for the sake of their own interests, to participate in the making of decisions (government decisions and otherwise) that may have consequences for their well-being. From this perspective, responsibility of the members of society does not mean that these persons passively accept the policies made for society as a whole, by the elected governmental representatives. Rather, it means that the individuals actively engage in the decision-making process of government that produces public policies for the members of society as a whole. It means being informed about policy problems and the various alternatives available for solving these problems. It means expressing preferences for social policies to government. Indeed, the citizens of a democratic society would not be acting responsibly if they did not participate in the decision or policy-making process of their government.

The liberal argument for citizen participation in the government's decision-making process stresses the psychological, educational and political benefits of such participation to citizens, and to some extent, the government.

### Psychological benefits to citizens

Participation serves an integrative function for the citizen. . . . it increases the feeling among individual citizens that they belong in their community. . . . this experience attaches the individual to his society and is instrumental in developing it into a true community. (15)

### Educational benefits to citizens

As a result of participating in decision-making, the individual is educated to distinguish between his own impulses and desires. He learns to be a public as well as a private citizen. . . . through this educative process the individual will eventually come to feel little or no conflict between the demands of the public and private spheres. (16)

### Political Benefit to Government

Citizen participation in the decision-making process of government helps the latter to reduce the potential for political conflict and instability that may arise as a result of its policies. This is based on the premises: (17)

- a. people respect more those laws on which they have been consulted;

- b. people identify strongly with programs they have helped to plan;
- c. people perform better in projects they have assisted in setting up;
- d. services planned by the people who need them are more likely to meet their needs effectively.

After outlining the humanistic and political benefits of citizen participation in government, as described above, one may be tempted to conclude that citizen participation in government is an end in itself. It is not. In a paper entitled "The Ideology and Practice of Citizen Participation", Wilson Head of York University cautions the zealous advocate of citizen participation to remember that such participation is not an end in itself but a means to effect social change and to build a sense of community among the individual members of society.

Citizen participation is not an end in itself. In the final analysis it must be evaluated on two levels. First, citizen participation is concerned with social change and must be evaluated in terms of its accomplishments in this area. Second, citizen participation must be evaluated in terms of its ability to recapture the spirit of participatory democracy or community involvement. It must enable the citizen to involve himself meaningfully in his society, making his voice and aspirations heard and understood in community decision-making. (18 )

#### The Role of Special Interest Groups in Government

The Commission has accurately noted that the participation of special interest groups in government has a long history in Canada and its mother country, Britain. This history is a noble one and must be continued if individuals are to exert control over their government. CLOW, as a special interest group, has studied the history and function of interest groups in Canada. CLOW is strongly convinced that the participation of interest groups in the policy-making process of government is essential for improved government response to the needs of citizens, and for greater accountability of government to the electorate.

Special interest groups are an inherent and important part of a modern, democratic society in which the membership is not homogeneous and where there are powerful competing interests. Voluntary interest groups can be seen as mechanisms designed to facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations in the policy-making process of government, and thereby, as providing opportunities for dialogue and negotiation between government and citizens.

The purpose of this dialogue is mainly to achieve an accommodation of the interests of both government and private citizens. Such accommodation when achieved, contributes to social and political stability, a state that is necessary for economic productivity and development.

## Representation in National Institutions

If Canada is to be a truly participatory democracy, then citizens representing all the different interests in this country must be given opportunities to participate meaningfully in national institutions. Several new and politically active interest groups have come into being since World War II, women, ethnic and racial minorities, the elderly, to mention but a few. These groups represent large proportions of the Canadian population. Their needs must be recognized and met by government. Unfortunately, these same groups represent some of the poorest citizens of our society. Participation in the policy-making process of government is, in this modern era, financially expensive. Consultations with government require much research, correspondence and travel. If these groups that represent disadvantaged individuals are to adequately express their concerns to government, they must be financially but unconditionally assisted by government.

It is not sufficient, however, to merely invite representatives of different groups in Canada to participate in the decision-making process of government. These representatives should also be consulted with respect to governmental appointments of individuals to decision-making offices and positions in national institutions. Such consultation is important for the acceptance of governmental decisions, policies and programs, by the people of Canada.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That concrete efforts be made by government to facilitate an increase in truly representative citizen participation in the policy-making process;
- that women be equally involved in each national institution and at every stage of the policy-making process;
- that the government increase its financial assistance to women's organizations mainly to enable them to participate more often and more vigorously in the decision-making process of government;
- that special interest groups and voluntary organizations be consulted with respect to government appointments.

## CONCLUSION

Canada is a liberal democratic society, a society in which the highest unit of value is the individual human being. This value should be the foundation of all government policies for the future. It should also be the fundamental assumption of the Commission's final report. Self-reliance and equality of opportunity arise naturally from this value as aspirations of each individual and ultimately, of the State which exists to serve the interests of individuals. These aspirations of Canadians must guide policy-makers when

they make decisions that will affect the people of Canada.

It is most unfortunate that women as "persons" in Canada have to demand of the government what is rightfully theirs, equality of opportunity. It is incumbent upon the government to ensure that women have equal opportunity in all parts of the social system, for without such opportunity, women cannot achieve self-reliance. Without the latter, women are persons only in law but not in their actual lives and relationships. As a servant of all persons in Canada, the government must serve the interests of women and redress the discrimination women experience. The government must guarantee the rights of women as persons, in every part of society, including the private and public sectors. A government that fails or that is hesitant to do this, is not a government of the people for the people. It is a government that is undemocratic, oppressive and patriarchal.

CLOW urges the Commission to remind the government of its democratic origins and foundations, and of its obligations to women as persons in Canada. CLOW looks forward to the final report of the Commission.

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