The Women's Web: Networking in Saskatchewan
and The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates Saskatchewan's participation in and reaction to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1967-1970). The commission was established in response to pressure from national women's organizations following decades of lobbying on status issues. It occurred at a time when the United Nations and many other western countries were undertaking similar studies and as frustration with discrimination of the 1960s increased, culminating in the women's movement of the 1970s. In Saskatchewan, the inquiry played a part in this process by inspiring some individuals and established women's clubs who participated in the study to continue the work it had taken on. A number of them went on to build new organizations with the express purpose of pushing for the implementation of the commission's recommendations. By forging networks among moderate members of traditional associations and more radical women's liberationists, these status committees created a new niche of activity within the fledgling women's movement. In doing so they drew strengths from both worlds and ensured that the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was a vision that was not forgotten in Saskatchewan.
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This thesis became a reality due to the encouragement of a number of people. The choice of topic resulted from one of many wonderful late-night conversations with my mother, Dayle. Despite a lack of interest in the status of women at the time, she was persuaded by a friend to attend a meeting in 1971 to discuss the report of the royal commission. As a young mother with a second child on the way (me) she was soon inspired to become involved in efforts to establish better daycare services in Saskatchewan. Her involvement led to her awakening as a feminist and over twenty-five years of activism on a multitude of issues. I was inspired to write about the status of women by her story and by a desire to learn what the commission meant to others in Saskatchewan. Her encouragement of me as a feminist, a writer and an active community volunteer has been invaluable and for it I am extremely thankful.

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INTRODUCTION

An examination of women's rights shows that, on the whole, women in Canada have attained a status which should give them little to complain about; in fact a commission studying the lack of legal rights for women would probably be able to wind up its business in an afternoon.¹

467 formal briefs, more than 1000 letters of opinion, and nearly four years later, participants had effectively demonstrated that a discussion on the status of women would take longer than an afternoon, was about more than just legal rights, and involved a great deal of legitimate complaining. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (hereafter referred to as royal commission or commission or status of women) had its detractors,² but by the time it produced its report in 1970 it had managed to gain credibility amongst many politicians, journalists, and citizens, who had previously been doubtful of its worth. The legislative fate of the report's 167 recommendations may be used as one measurement of the commission's impact on society. Yet the report also included a discussion of women's status, which went far beyond the mandated focus on federal, legal rights. Although certainly not the most radical document to be published about women at the time,³ it nonetheless contained a challenge to Canadian society and motivated women to organize for change. The major impact of the royal commission in Saskatchewan can be

¹ Sheila Kieran, "Do women's rights still have wrongs?" Toronto, Globe and Mail. Jan 26, 1967, 7.


found not in the law books, but in the individuals who came into contact with it, -- the
human faces behind the submissions, many of whom would later continue the
commission's work through the "second wave" Canadian women's movement of the 1970s.

Following its establishment on February 16, 1967, the Royal Commission on the
Status of Women in Canada conducted research, received briefs and letters of opinion,
and listened to presentations at hearings in major cities across the country. The
commissioners also met sixty-five times for official deliberations throughout the duration
of the commission. What they produced, in the Report of the Royal Commission on the
Status of Women in Canada (hereafter referred to as the Report) has been referred to by
historians as "the blueprint for mainstream feminist activism," "a watershed for women's
rights" and "the first success of the second wave of Canadian feminism."4

Despite such accolades, there were few studies of the royal commission until its
anniversary some twenty-five years later. This may be due, in part, to the fact that it was
contemporary history; it may also have been overshadowed by other national debates.
Relegated mainly to the women's pages in the media, the status of women did not become
front page news in the way that the much more well-known and well-funded Bilingualism
and Biculturalism Commission (B&B Commission) did. Certainly, the "two solitudes"
which figured prominently on the national political agenda at the time were the French
and the English divisions in Canada -- not the female and male ones.

Major works on the royal commission share a number of common features. They
are all written by women and can generally be found as sub-sections, chapters or articles

4 Quoted respectively from: Penney Kome, Women of Influence: Canadian Women and Politics
Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1985, 88. Cerise Morris, "Determination and Thoroughness: The
Patterns: Women in Canada, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988, 84.
in texts and anthologies which focus on Canadian women. They are also almost universally feminist in orientation -- including those which are critical of the commission's work. The study seemingly has not been considered to be of importance in the broader "mainstream" of Canadian academic research. Rather than providing refutations of feminist research on the commission, others have apparently shown a complete lack of interest. Challenges would at least spark debate and perhaps provide new perspectives. Again, in contrast to the French/English question in Canada, it seems that women's history -- certainly in this area -- has been entirely left up to the disgruntled party to discuss amongst itself. How much of this oversight stems from the respective factors of ignorance, disinterest or fear of accusations of "expropriating women's voice" is unclear, and in this a parallel may be drawn with similar issues surrounding the study of Native history.

All of the debates in the literature about the royal commission consequently take place within a broadly defined feminist framework and generally follow the lines of theoretical debates common between various "brands" of feminists. Such a restricted approach is not problematic because of some special bias found in feminist research, but

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7 For example, radical, liberal and marxist feminists.

8 It is arguable that all historians or researchers have biases and use various theoretical perspectives, but what is important is that they are not bound by them - that they are recognized and factored in as much as possible so that the best work possible may be produced.
rather because a mix of perspectives is surely beneficial to any area of study, even if to merely prompt more research to intensify and clarify the debate.

Little historical research on the royal commission appeared in the two decades immediately following the release of the commission's report. This silence was in part due to the convention to study only those subjects which are far enough in the past to afford the researcher a semblance of distance and historical perspective. Another factor at work may be the focus of study amongst those most likely to write about the commission: women's historians. In the 1970s and early 1980s, researchers and writers in this newly-active field were interested in "political" and "public" history - areas into which the federal study could easily be fit. But they most often concerned themselves with the history of earlier struggles, figures and events before moving onto those which were more recent.9

Apart from references made in more general texts and overviews, writing on the commission consists of a few theses, reflections in the autobiographies of two major actors and half a dozen articles by scholars in the fields of history, sociology and journalism. Historical discussion of the status of women inquiry first appeared in the form of autobiographies of key figures involved with the study. The first was written before the commission had completed its research and well before it had written its report. Federal cabinet minister Judy LaMarsh's Memoirs of a Bird in a Gilded Cage

understandably deals with much more than her interest in the status of women. Despite her assertion that the commission was the most difficult project she ever worked to get established, she devotes only about ten pages of a 300+ page book to the topic. It could be that this reflects her apparent ambivalence about the issue of women's status. As a woman member of parliament and the only such cabinet member, she frequently found herself at the centre of political discussions about women. Yet she just as regularly spoke of her discomfort with this role and with the feminist analysis of patriarchy: "I cannot say that I have been hindered all my life by the permutation of genes that resulted in me being born a woman" and "[n]o matter how little a suffragette by temperament, circumstances gradually forced me into the role of acting as spokesman and watchdog for women." Yet, as shown by her dogged work to establish the commission, her opinions did fluctuate, and she showed a certain sympathy for the plight of some female citizens. She believed there was no intentional hostility towards women in Canada; rather, her general conclusion was that "men simply are not aware that women exist."

LaMarsh's autobiography is most useful for offering insight into the character of one of the chief actors behind the creation of the royal commission. Because of her retirement from politics in 1968, and the publication of her autobiography during the same year, she did not discuss the work of the commission. Rather, she offers opinions about the government, about women at that time and the need for a royal commission to investigate women's status. Such background information and personal insight into the

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10 Judy LaMarsh was first elected as a Liberal Member of Parliament in 1960, before becoming Minister of National Health and Welfare in 1963 and then Secretary of State in 1965.

11 LaMarsh, Bird in a Gilded Cage, 278.

12 Ibid., 293.

13 Ibid., 280.
issues of the day makes Memoirs a valuable source for the historian even if the book does not contribute significantly to the body of history written about the commission itself.

The chair of the status of women investigation was Florence Bird, a well-known journalist who wrote under the pen name Anne Francis. Her autobiography, Anne Francis: An Autobiography by Florence Bird, was published in 1974 and, unlike LaMarsh's personal reflection, was almost certainly written as a direct result of Bird's role with the commission.14 Anne Francis offers some useful opinions about the personalities and procedure associated with the study and also gives the reader an insight into Bird's personal views. Published after the end of the commission's work, it provides a remarkable contrast to less sympathetic remarks about women made in the early days of her appointment. In 1967, she pointed out to the media that she had never been discriminated against because of her sex and distanced herself from both the work of traditional women's lobbyists and the more radical groups, saying that "[t]he commission has nothing to do with the war between the sexes."15 Yet, in her autobiography, seven years later, she gave some credit to the nascent women's movement and frequently pointed out how she understood her own life in a new light after having worked on the commission.

Although the autobiographies discussed here provide some insight into the inquiry's origins and personalities, no major historical research was done on the commission until 1980. Cerise Morris' article, "Determination and Thoroughness: the

14 Florence Bird, Anne Francis: An Autobiography by Florence Bird. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co, 1974. Bird begins her tale with a description of her appointment to the royal commission and her reflections throughout the book often tie to her experiences with that body.

Movement for a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada," thoughtfully discusses the origins of the study and some early reactions to it. This piece later became part of her dissertation, "No More Than Simple Justice" (1982)\textsuperscript{16}, still the lengthiest and most comprehensive study of the commission. Morris, a sociologist, focusses upon the creation of public policy within government institutions and uses the status of women study to study social problems, social movements, and how they can lead to planned social change. Her investigation centres upon the federal government mechanisms which were set up to deal with women's status issues after the inquiry and how these mechanisms worked for and against social change in the years up to the early 1980s.

As previously mentioned, scant attention is paid to the commission in general studies of Canadian history. Beginning in the mid-1980s, however, mention of it became commonplace in various works relating specifically to women's history in Canada. Drawing primarily from Morris's studies, as well as the Bird and LaMarsh biographies, they all devote space to the "second wave" women's movement and to the royal commission. \textit{Canadian Women: A History}\textsuperscript{17} (1988) and \textit{Quebec Women: A History} (1987), the two standard general texts on Canadian women's history, offer overviews of the establishment of the commission, its proceedings, and its immediate aftermath. Other works discuss the status of women simply in terms of public political change or how the inquiry relates to the history of major women's institutions, such as the National Council


of Women and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.\textsuperscript{18} These works, though providing useful background for the general reader, do not offer anything new about the topic and suffer from the constraints of being national overviews which discuss the commission only in a general way.

In 1990, a new assessment of the commission was produced by its then-executive secretary and former Liberal cabinet minister, Monique Bégin. In "The Royal Commission on the Status of Women: Twenty Years Later," she asserts a one-way vector of influence between the study and the women's movement. She argues that the new activism did not significantly influence the status of women inquiry, but rather that the moderate stance of the commission worked to legitimize the women's movement.\textsuperscript{19} She also addresses the issue of low involvement of Quebec women in what was seen as an English-Canadian project. While those in Quebec gave the commission some support, they generally preferred to pursue other avenues of change.

The twentieth anniversary of the status of women study also prompted the Ottawa Law Review to dedicate an entire issue to the topic. Several of the pieces reflect the major criticisms of the Report, which arose from feminist circles at the time of its publication in 1970. They mirror similar theoretical debates occurring within the women's movement itself\textsuperscript{20} and as such are not unique to the discussion of the commission. Yet,


\textsuperscript{20} These debates include those about the relationship between and relative importance of gender, class and race within the women's movement.
they provide some of the only academic work done that is primarily negative in its view of the study. Therein they make a valuable contribution to the area.\textsuperscript{21}

Erika Abner, Mary Jane Mossman, and Elizabeth Pickett argue that the royal commission's work was seriously restricted by the social/political assumptions it held about the family, men and women in Canada. According to these critics, the Report is lacking in substantive analysis; its failure to question the basic assumptions underlying society's male norms and ideal of the nuclear family led it to shortsighted conclusions. It recommended, for example, equal pay for similar work (such as amongst professionals), yet did not address the deeper issue of why it was women who so often end up in a female ghetto of low-paying jobs. Toni Williams, in "Re-forming 'women's truth': A Critique of the Report of the RCSW," offers a similar and even more forceful indictment of the commission and its work. Her major criticism is the use of the term "women" as a general, nearly monolithic category -- a binary opposite of the category "men," which does not really include the particular experiences of racialized women. In her view, although the commission prompted some needed change it did not go far enough to challenge the interconnected power relations which affect many women, including age, class, heterosexuality and race.

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the commission provided an ideal opportunity for further analysis. Jane Arscott, writing for a special women's issue of the International Journal of Canadian Studies (1995), examines the minutes left from the sixty-five

commissioners' meetings held during the inquiry. Noting that most specialized work on the status of women study focusses upon its inception, immediate responses to its recommendations, or its place in the ideology of liberal feminism, she studies the personal glimpses of the commissioners afforded by the minutes. Though not an extensive piece of work, it is both interesting and helpful in providing a different angle on the topic. Barbara Freeman, writing with a journalist's perspective in 1995, also added to the study of the subject with her excellent work on media coverage and perceptions of the royal commission. Although often mentioned by others in passing, Freeman is the first to properly address the question of the media's reaction to the commission's work.

The other major analyses of the status of women are theses which study the commission as an aspect of liberal feminism. Kimberly Marie Speers and Judith Cumming provide work which backs up commonly held beliefs about the royal commission: that it was useful in laying some groundwork for feminists but that it was severely constrained by the contradictions inherent in liberal feminism. Though the arguments provided concerning liberal feminism are interesting, they do not address new issues.

Overall, the academics who study the Royal Commission on the Status of Women

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generally focus upon three major groups of actors: the Canadian government, the commission and its staff, and the media. The government was naturally involved, although without much enthusiasm, in the creation of the inquiry; it drew up the terms of reference and was also the legislative body largely responsible for responding to the recommendations. The commission itself, including research and administrative staff, took up the task of carrying out the study over nearly four years and was responsible for the research and the final report. The media can be considered as a third party in the discussion; it followed the investigation from its establishment, was a source of publicity to Canadians, and presented information and editorial comment about the study's legitimacy, procedures and results. Historical and related research on the royal commission, as a rule, approaches the topic through one or more of these three actors, though some studies may occasionally delve into the area of intellectual history -- ideology and conceptions of feminism. Certainly, they almost all centre on the "national" picture and Ottawa as the location of both the federal government and the commission itself.

There is another party, however, to the status of women study which, oddly, is often left out of discussion of the subject other than to provide the occasional colourful quote. Who were the people who provided the information which the commissioners used to form recommendations, which the media publicized and which the government was then asked to implement -- without whom there would have been no commission? Where, in all of these studies, are the participants? How were they affected by the inquiry after its conclusion? Without an understanding of the motivation and role played by the (mostly) women and women's organizations behind the briefs, letters and hearings, there cannot be a comprehensive understanding of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.
Most of those who write about the inquiry provide us with a good overview of its work and importance. But, as overviews, they cannot delve into the finer points of the subject. Morris, admitting this limitation, suggests that "[a]nother large study - or ten separate studies - would be necessary to investigate events and processes at the provincial level."25 For this reason, as well as for reasons of economy, this study will address the issue of grassroots participation in the royal commission in a provincial context -- that of Saskatchewan. It is not intended that Saskatchewan be a case of western exceptionalism, that it is necessarily different in experience from that of the "East," but rather that it act as a local case study, a microcosm of the participation in the national inquiry.

To determine the involvement and reaction of participants in Saskatchewan, use was made of the extensive records of the royal commission at the National Archives of Canada and the rich source of women's club papers at the Saskatchewan Archives Board. In addition, for the purpose of determining private views about the study and acquiring a deeper understanding about its effects, personal interviews and instances of written correspondence were conducted with a number of involved individuals from the province. The combination of both archival and oral material provided a much more complete picture of Saskatchewan's relationship to the commission than either could have achieved on its own. While the original records offer critical primary evidence about the events as they occurred, the personal reflections are invaluable for the informational gaps they fill, the connections they draw between events and personalities, and the greater understanding they provide about the overall meaning of the status of women study.

What these sources demonstrate is that the commission's legacy went beyond the limited changes made to federal and provincial legislation. The inquiry also highlighted

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the key role that Saskatchewan women's associations played in the area of women's status concerns. Not only did the clubs publicize the inquiry to their members, they motivated and educated many who became participants in the hearings and then followed up their involvement with further activity in the province on the status of women. Most importantly, the commission and its participants were influential in affecting change within traditional associations and even in creating new organizations to deal with women's concerns within the new context of the 1970s women's movement in the province.

Questions to be addressed by such an investigation are many. Who in Saskatchewan participated in the royal commission's work and in what manner were they involved? What were the motivations of the participants? How were they respectively influenced by national, international, and local concerns? What kind of relationship was there in Saskatchewan between the study and the growing "second wave" women's movement? Do assessments made of commission hearings, briefs, and media coverage based on national and central Canadian sources hold true for the situation in Saskatchewan? How did participation in the commission affect those who were involved? What results did the study have and how did participants respond to the Report and its implications for change? What was the nature of resistance to the commission's plan for reform? Was the status of women inquiry truly the "first success of the second wave of Canadian feminism?" Overall, what did the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada mean for those in Saskatchewan who wrote letters and briefs, attended the hearings and, amongst the clamour of media, politicians and commissioners, attempted to have their voices heard?

CHAPTER ONE
"THE LADIES LOBBY"

The creation of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada in 1967 occurred as a direct result of lobby activity both outside and inside the federal government in the mid-1960s. This movement took place within a global context of change in the demographic, economic, and social lives of women, and an increased recognition of human and civil rights, both of which helped to place status of women concerns on the international political agenda. Yet, the royal commission owed its existence to more than a favourable global climate and the concerted efforts of certain women lobbyists. It was the outcome of decades of requests made by organizations for the removal of discrimination against women in Canadian society. The interaction of these forces prompted the Pearson administration, albeit grudgingly, to establish the nation's 395th public inquiry: the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.¹

When the idea of a commission to study women was first discussed by Canadian women's organizations in the early 1960s, there was no massive "women's movement" as such recognized in western society as there was a decade later. In Saskatchewan, even by the time of the commission's establishment, talk of a new movement was still mainly restricted to stories of isolated radical activities south of the border and was not perceived to be related to any local ventures.² Historians have traditionally assumed that feminist organizing disappeared between the "first wave" of the suffragettes and the "second wave" of women's liberation in Canada. Yet recent studies show that activity continued through


the relatively "dry" years after 1920.\(^3\) Indeed, many of the organizations which were involved in earlier women's rights battles had continued their work to better women's lives throughout the intervening decades -- they just did it in different and usually less public ways than the fight for suffrage had been.\(^4\) Thus, far from being a radical departure from traditional club pursuits, when the status of women lobby began in the 1960s it was little more than a continuation of decades of effort on behalf of women.

Women began organizing in large-scale national associations in Canada in the 1870s, at a time when business, labour, and religious groups were similarly forming alliances to deal with the problems of industrialization, immigration, and urbanization in the newly forged nation.\(^5\) As part of this organizational expansion, women formed unions such as the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Women's Christian Association. Other groups were formed which had a cultural or literary basis, such as library societies. And following the formation of the International Council of Women representing women's groups such as these from nine countries, the National Council of Women of Canada was set up to play a networking role in Canada in 1893. Similar organizing trickled down to the provinces where, in Saskatchewan, groups organized locally and then created provincial associations such as the Homemakers Clubs in 1911 and Provincial Council of Women in 1919.\(^6\)

For "club women," the club was a place to come together with others who had


\(^4\) Ibid.


similar interests and wished to work towards common goals.\textsuperscript{7} Many of these women shared a deep commitment to the overall national movement for moral improvement, and their role as an early form of the "social net" can be seen in their campaigns to end child labour, bring about prohibition and offer aid to the elderly, orphans and poor working girls.\textsuperscript{8} Although local church societies drew their members from a wider cross-section of women, other clubs, which were specifically benevolent in nature or aimed for the improvement of self or society, tended to be comprised of those from the middle class urban elite.\textsuperscript{9} Certainly the nature of the clubs dictated that membership was closely associated with a certain amount of leisure time and the finances necessary to run such charitable projects. As such, club women often drew criticism and were commonly lampooned in cartoons of the day as gossiping, meddlesome ladies who met for tea and overestimated their own importance.\textsuperscript{10}

Many early women's organizations and the national council that represented them were set up to improve society in general, and did not focus particularly upon women's rights. The council, for example, was founded upon the principle that "an organized movement of women will best conserve the highest good of the Family and State."\textsuperscript{11} Yet within this overall aim, there was sometimes an interest shown in more specific struggles

\textsuperscript{7} Griffiths, N.E.S. \textit{The Splendid Vision: The Centennial History of the National Council of Women of Canada} Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1993, 3. "'Club Women' is a general term characterizing women involved in a great variety of feminine collectivities and was regularly use in the period under consideration. Female organizations dealt with educational, political, benevolent, cultural, reform, professional and religious matters. Although different in some respects, all such bodies were formally structured and female in membership." Strong-Boag, \textit{The New Day Recalled}172. (footnote 8)

\textsuperscript{8} Griffiths, \textit{The Splendid Vision}, 3.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid. 3-4.

\textsuperscript{10} See an example of such a cartoon in Alison Prentice et al, \textit{Canadian Women}, Toronto: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1988, 195.

\textsuperscript{11} Griffiths, \textit{The Splendid Vision}, 23.
for women's status. For example, the Dominion Women's Enfranchisement Association was a powerful force behind the campaign for women's suffrage. Such organizations brought their concerns to council and helped to pass club resolutions on sexual discrimination as early as 1906 and women's suffrage in 1910.\textsuperscript{12} As more women entered the labour force and the universities in the early twentieth century, the traditional religious and charitable clubs were joined by newer associations, such as the Women's Press Clubs, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs and the University Women's Clubs. Naturally concerned with issues relating to employment, these organizations frequently led campaigns which arose over fair hiring, equal pay, and other issues of discrimination in the work force.\textsuperscript{13}

Women's organizations, such as those described above, built a longstanding tradition of working within the existing political system in Canada. Believing that the social system was not fundamentally flawed, but, rather needed some alteration, they chose to lobby the government for desired legislative change, rather than pursuing more revolutionary methods. The National Council of Women, for example, began a series of annual official presentations to federal representatives at a meeting in 1924 with Prime Minister Mackenzie King.\textsuperscript{14} As club women were, for the most part, counterparts of the male elites of the nation, it is not surprising that they would choose this avenue for change nor that they would be treated with polite consideration when presenting their concerns.\textsuperscript{15} Past-president Margaret Harris explained that when the government got a

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 105.

\textsuperscript{13} Judi Cumming, "The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs," The Archivist, Jan-Feb 1987, V.14, no.1, 4.

\textsuperscript{14} Griffiths, The Splendid Vision, 173.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 40.
recommendation from the Council of Women, "they listened.... [T]hey knew it was fairly broadly based."\(^{16}\) Despite the fact that not all of these concerns were taken seriously or resulted in legislative change, the ladies of the clubs certainly were seen as a respectable and credible body of lobbyists.

Through the twentieth century, as women's organizations were growing and continuing to petition governments, Canadian women were being affected by significant demographic and social changes. Although some women had always needed to earn wages, more and more women took on paid jobs outside the home after the First World War. At first, these were mostly single women who worked before marriage, but between 1941 and 1961 the percentage of married women working for wages increased from 4% to more than 22%.\(^{17}\) In addition to this ongoing trend of more women entering the paid labour force, the post-Second World War era witnessed more and more women attaining higher education and having fewer children. In keeping with similar changes occurring in other western nations, these patterns resulted from a variety of factors, including increased affluence, leisure time, birth control technology and new job opportunities for women during wartime production.\(^{18}\)

By the 1960s, although it was still years before the sensationalized burning of bras, these significant changes in work and education patterns had laid the foundations for what would become known as the "women's movement" later in the decade. Despite the rising numbers of women in the universities and the public world of work, the popular image

\(^{16}\) Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.


\(^{18}\) Ibid., 5.
of women, here as in America, continued to be that of mom at home with apple pie.  
Although she could earn a degree and even work in a prestigious occupation, a Canadian woman could still find herself restricted by lack of childcare, a lower salary than her male peers, and the humiliation of needing her husband to co-sign a bank loan. The increased sense of grievance among women occurred because legal and social attitudes about the status of women were not changing to keep pace with the new reality and the raised expectations which accompanied it.

It was as a result of this increasing frustration felt by women that lobbyists began asking the government to study women's status in the 1960s. It was not an entirely unique or unexpected request because both Canada and the world community had some experience with inquiries regarding women. In the late 1920s, a smaller provincial study, the Dorion Commission, was set up to study women's civil rights in Quebec. In their efforts to establish this inquiry, Quebec women's groups proved to be influential in pushing their government to address the dated laws, including the lack of electoral franchise, that restricted the rights of women in the province.  

Although a few legal changes resulted from the inquiry, it mainly succeeded in upholding the status quo. The commission's report summed up its view by pointing out that "a woman who marries sacrifices, quite simply, her freedom, her name and her identity" and that "created to be the companion of a man, a woman is still, above all, a wife and a mother."  

Canadian women next came under official study during the Second World War by

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19 A 1970 Gallup Poll found that although respondents were not entirely adverse to the notion of women working outside the home, 80% felt that it was inappropriate for mothers with young children. Canadian Women, 169.


21 Ibid, 259. As quoted from the Dorion report.
a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Reconstruction. Set up in 1943, the Subcommittee on Post-War Problems of Women was instructed to: "examine the problems relating to the re-establishment of women after the war and to make recommendations to the Committee on Reconstruction as to the procedure to deal with the problems and other matters relating to the welfare of women in the period of reconstruction."22 Once again, the initiative for the investigation into women's issues did not come from the government, but, rather from women's organizations. The Committee on Reconstruction was in session for some time before the subcommittee on women was created. The campaign to set up such a body was led by Margaret Wherry, Vice President of the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's clubs (B&P). Not surprisingly, the women who were appointed to the inquiry were mainly club women, representing such groups as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Council of Women, Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), and United Farm Women of Alberta.23

The subcommittee recommended better training of women, equal pay, and improved social security measures, but the suggestions were weakened by time constraints placed on the study group and class prejudices of the members.24 Certainly the assumption was that most women did not have to support themselves through paid employment. Although recognizing that during the war women had "played their full part as responsible citizens and expect[ed] to be treated consistently as such in the coming years," the committee's report nonetheless emphasized that "the normal urge [was] towards


24 Ibid., 239.
marriage and home" and families with stay-at-home moms were identified as the foundation of a democratic country such as Canada.\textsuperscript{25} The reality was that the new roles taken on by women during wartime were seen by most as merely temporary and patriotic; attitudes towards women had not yet changed enough to accept these altered roles as a permanent feature in Canadian society.\textsuperscript{26} Despite the recognition that some women worked due to financial necessity, much of the study, and indeed its very definition of the "Post-War Problems of Women," centred on the need to entice women back into their homes to free up jobs for the returning soldiers. Overall, the report was ignored by a government not committed to changes in the status of women and distracted by its interest in other matters such as demobilization and the new welfare state.

It was after the Second World War, and arguably because of it, that much of the global community became involved in the United Nations and its efforts to focus on human rights, including the status of women. In 1948, this international body produced an official statement on these issues, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The document confirmed a commitment to a number of human rights, including free speech and the right to self-determination, and was signed by all member nations including Canada. The status of women, as a specific topic, had already begun to be addressed in 1946 as part of a larger Human Rights Commission, out of which the United Nations created a Commission on the Status of Women. This standing body of inquiry was subsequently followed up by various protocols, including the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1953 and the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages in 1962.

\textsuperscript{25} Final Report of the Subcommittee on Post-War Problems of Women, 7,15,10.

\textsuperscript{26} Cuthbert-Brandt, "Pigeon-holed and Forgotten," 239.
When women's clubs began to lobby Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to establish a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, they were clearly not acting in a political vacuum. Following the United Nations' precedents in the area, several member nations conducted commissions of their own to inquire into the status of women in their respective societies. American President John F. Kennedy started the trend when he established the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. The United States' example was then followed by West Germany the next year and by eight other western European nations by 1966.\(^{27}\) That some women's concerns were being recognized was demonstrated again in 1967 by the United Nations' statement on women's status, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. By that time it was clear that women had secured themselves a place, if a small one, on the global agenda.

As a member nation of the UN with close ties to the aforementioned westernized nations, it is not surprising that Canada followed the trend and created its own commission in 1967. Yet the struggle over establishing such an inquiry demonstrates that the American and UN precedents were not persuasive enough factors on their own.\(^{28}\) As illustrated by its failure to sign several UN conventions concerning the status of women, the Canadian government did not feel compelled to act in accordance with each and every United Nations precedent. In any case, because of the money required to fund a public

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\(^{27}\) The nations and the establishment of their commissions are as follows: Denmark (1965); France (1966); United Kingdom (1966); Finland (1966); Holland (1966); Austria (1966); Norway (1966); Belgium (1966).

inquiry, each national government needed to have a justifiable reason of its own for such an expenditure; merely following the example of another country was not sufficient. This was particularly true because royal commissions then, as now, generally lacked public support and were commonly cited as sources of wasted government expense. Thus, although external influence upon the Canadian government certainly was a factor in the creation of the royal commission, it seems to have been restricted to the role of setting a precedent and structure for Canada to follow only if it chose to concern itself with the status of women.

In fact, it was domestic, rather than foreign, pressure on the Canadian government which was mainly responsible for the creation of the inquiry. This pressure came from the public sphere through the person of Judy LaMarsh, Minister of Health and Welfare, and from the private sphere through various women's organizations, in particular the Ontario-based umbrella group, the Committee for the Equality of Women (CEW), which was set up in 1966 for this purpose. All of these lobbyists exerted pressure on Lester Pearson and his government, demanding that something be done to improve the situation of women in Canada and that a royal commission be established.

LaMarsh, a long-time Liberal party member and member of parliament since 1960, was one of two women in Parliament in the late 1960s. She began mentioning the

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30 The practice of lobbyists influencing the government to create a royal commission was by no means new. For example, Courtney suggests that at least eight such studies came about largely as the result of pressure group tactics between 1946 and 1962. John Childs Courtney, "Canadian Royal Commissions of Inquiry, 1946 to 1962: An investigation of an executive instrument of inquiry," unpublished PhD Dissertation (Political Science / Public Administration), Duke University, 1964, 26.

31 The other was Grace MacInnis, an NDP member of parliament and strong, though less influential, supporter of women's groups and their demand for a royal commission.
possibility of a Canadian investigation to Pearson soon after taking office, and it became a familiar refrain in her discussions with him and speeches to women's groups. Although she did not personally feel limited in her career as a woman, and by no means considered herself a feminist, she was an avid supporter of equality of opportunity and wished to see discriminatory barriers removed which prevented others from achieving personal success. Her efforts to establish an inquiry increased after the 1965 publication in the United States of American Women: the Report of the President's Commission on the Status of Women and other publications of the Commission. Although reaction was favourable among the women's groups which LaMarsh addressed, it was not as positive amongst her colleagues and the media. In 1968, she pointed out that "[n]othing was so hard to accomplish during all the time [she] was in Cabinet as the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the Status of Women" and that "no one now within government circles ... [was] interested in seeing its recommendations take legislative form. It [was] therefore, up to the women of the country to put on the pressure and keep it up."

That this pressure did materialize was certainly not a response to widespread debate in the country by or about women, as there clearly was no such a phenomenon at that time. Where the increasing unrest did exist was amongst interested parties within

32 Judy LaMarsh, Bird in a Gilded Cage 308-09.

33 On the reaction of women's clubs, see LaMarsh in: NAC, RG 33-89, V.34, f."Press Releases," Text of a Speech prepared for delivery by the Secretary of State, Honourable Judy LaMarsh, to the gala centenary dinner of the Canadian Federation of University Women, Toronto June 1 1967. For negative reactions, see Christina McCall Newman's book column discussing the American Report and LaMarsh's efforts to instigate a commission in Canada: Chatelaine Jan. 1966, 12. LaMarsh also discusses the negative media reaction, Pearson's hesitancy and Premier Lesage's concern about a commission which might infringe upon provincial jurisdiction in her memoir: Judy LaMarsh, Bird in a Gilded Cage, 301.

34 Judy LaMarsh, Bird in a Gilded Cage, 301.

35 Morris, "Determination and Thoroughness," 19.
the national women's organizations. Groups such as the Business and Professional Women's Clubs (B&P clubs) and the Canadian Federation of University Women's Clubs (CFUW), long interested in problems confronting so-called "working women," had been seeking action for some time upon issues such as equal pay and daycare. Both clubs used "status of women" terminology, and the University Women had even established a standing committee to address the topic after the Second World War. Taking their cue from the international political scene, and especially the work of the United Nations, they now had the opportunity to dress up their familiar grievances in the newer framework of human rights issues and the official commissions which studied them. With their history of lobbying the government through briefs and official meetings, it seemed that an investigation into women's status was the obvious way in which discrimination and other evils could be recognized, analyzed, and then rooted out. And although they may not have had a clear idea what would be required to carry out such a plan to its logical end, what was clear by early 1967 was that women's organizations and individuals of various political stripes were in agreement that the necessary first step was a royal commission.36

Although American sister organizations including the Business and Professional Women's Clubs and University Women's Clubs had generally shied away from involvement with their commission on women,37 many Canadian associations passed resolutions and spoke in support of the formation of a royal commission in Canada.

36 A representative example of this mixture is that Laura Sabia was a Conservative, Judy LaMarsh a Liberal and Therese Casgrain a New Democrat. Florence Bird, "Introduction," Ottawa Law Review V.22, no.3, 1990, 547.

Likely one of the critical factors was the passage of time -- what was deemed to be too radical in America in 1961 seemed no longer so to Canadian women six years later. Significantly, the Canadian study took place after Betty Friedan's ground-breaking discussion of the frustrations of middle class women in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), after the start of various civil rights and student protest movements, and after ten prominent western nations had conducted commissions to look into the status of women.

Although representatives of the Canadian government were only periodically members of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, women's volunteer associations were regular observers at the meetings of this body. In 1962, for instance, although the Canadian government was not represented at the commission assembly, the CFUW, YWCA, WCTU, B&P Clubs, Council of Women, and the Catholic Women's League certainly were present.\(^{38}\) And although the work of such United Nations inquiries had an impact on Canadian policy, such as the creation of the 1960 Bill of Rights, they arguably had an equal or greater effect upon the observing women's clubs. Certainly, the international forum kept the groups informed of trends in the area of women's status and the multi-level organizational style of the major clubs allowed key information to be disseminated easily from international and national representatives down to the provincial and local club levels.\(^{39}\)

When the status of women became a prominent club issue in the 1960s, it was mostly a concern expressed by the national women's organizations. The regional

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\(^{38}\) Saskatchewan Archives Board [SAB], Department of Labour, Women's Bureau, R 212, f. 91, "USA Women's Bureaus," Women's Bureau Bulletin no.3, March, 1962.

\(^{39}\) Speers, "The Royal Commission on the Status of Women," 75-77.
associations, such as those in Saskatchewan, were not particularly involved in the lobby for a federal commission. This lack of involvement was partly due to less interest at the local level as well as to the organizational set-up of the clubs themselves. As many of the groups were organized at local, provincial and national levels, many resolutions originated at the local association and were then passed on to the other bodies until national platforms were agreed upon. Not only did the federal groups have the advantage of bringing together many different ideas from across the country, but their members were often much more actively involved in promoting women's issues than their local counterparts. While attending a local club might require one monthly meeting, a nationally involved woman had to have both time and dedication to pursue these interests in her town club as well as travelling around the country to represent its interests on the federal stage.

In addition, each club level focussed upon issues which related to its own jurisdictional interests. For instance, when an appeal came from the John Howard Society for support of a campaign on legal indigents the Saskatoon Council of Women replied "[t]his is a provincial matter & so it was left for Prov. council." So while the national associations were joining the CEW and pushing for a federal study on the status of women, local groups continued to address issues such as the establishment of kindergartens. Although community clubs did discuss many status of women subjects, including ending discrimination against women, their view was that it was not their place

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41 Ibid.
to spearhead national campaigns. As a result, the push for a royal commission came mainly from the ranks of national bodies, which focussed the various local grievances and were the natural spokespersons to demand federal action on women's issues.

In addition to the women's organizations, another major party interested in the status of women commissions in the mid-1960s was the system of women's bureaus located within the government's own Department of Labour. The need for female labour power in the expanding post-war economy and the concerted efforts of women's clubs had led to the creation of the national women's bureau in 1954 and provincial bureaus in Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta by 1966. Although Saskatchewan's bureau had extra powers relating to the enforcement of legislation, its stated purpose was fairly typical of its counterparts, in that it was instructed to "interpret legislation and assist women and employers of women in resolving some of their employment problems" and "provide... a channel of communication between Government, Government Departments and the public."42

The women's bureaus consistently worked in association with major women's groups across the country and played a key role in collecting and disseminating information to them and providing a valuable contact within the government structure. Marion Royce, the first director of the federal bureau, was typical of her provincial counterparts and successors in that she too was a "club woman," being involved with the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the National Council of Women, the YWCA,

and the Canadian Association of Adult Education.\textsuperscript{43} Provincial bureau directors noted with hope as early as 1965 that Royce would soon "be able to give us her comments on the value of the commissions themselves and how the intent of these commissions could be followed up in Canada."\textsuperscript{44} They expressed a cautious optimism about the potential of such a investigation, which was echoed by LaMarsh's comment that despite certain disappointments, the American study "did stimulate similar inquiries in most of the states, and did ensure that there would be a continuing interest in finding solutions to expose inequalities."\textsuperscript{45}

By the mid-1960s, women's associations at the national level, women's bureaus, and several key female politicians were all discussing the status of women and were each separately calling for a royal commission to investigate the matter. In 1966, a number of influential leaders in women's clubs joined together to organize a specific lobby to improve women's status in Canada.\textsuperscript{46} The efforts of Laura Sabia, president of CFUW, June Menzies of CFUW, and Helen Tucker, president of the Voice of Women (VOW), an increasingly radical women's peace group founded in 1960, resulted in the formation of the Committee on the Equality of Women in Canada. An umbrella organization with representation from thirty-two women's groups and clubs from English Canada, the committee also enjoyed the support of Doris Anderson, editor of Canada's major women's

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., f.58, News Release, Department of Labour, Jan 31, 1967.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., f.55 "Ontario," Ethel McLellan to Mary Rocan, Aug 6, 1965.

\textsuperscript{45} LaMarsh, Bird in a Gilded Cage, 301.

\textsuperscript{46} Morris, "Determination and Thoroughness," 8.
magazine Chatelaine, and that of some Quebec groups and individuals, including the Federation des Femmes du Québec and well-known activist and politician Thérèse Casgrain. Through a written brief and a presentation made to the federal government in 1966, the committee asked for a commission "to inquire into, to report on and to make recommendations which will enable women to achieve such excellence in public and private life as meets the standards set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." Their various differences put aside, lobbyists united in a common appeal for a royal commission.

By January 1967, frustrated by the government's silence, Sabia threatened to call a march of a million women on Ottawa if a royal commission was not established. Widely considered to be a bluff, the action nonetheless illustrated that the issue had finally moved past the level of club resolutions. LaMarsh was not impressed by Sabia's threats:

That kind of bluster is not very effective. I was particularly concerned at the time because the Prime Minister was just about to sign the order-in-council for the royal commission - and I thought if she doesn't shut up he's going to get mad and not sign it. I don't know whether that's a fair assessment of the Prime Minister - maybe he's a little bigger than that - but I thought she was putting the whole thing in jeopardy at that particular moment."

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47 The represented groups covered a variety of mainly traditional associations including CFUW, B&P, the National Council of Women of Canada, The National Council of Jewish Women, the Canadian Home Economics Association, the Catholic Women's League of Canada, the Voice of Women, the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Doris Anderson, editorial, Chatelaine July 1966, 1.


49 LaMarsh, amongst others, certainly did not take the threat seriously. NAC, RG 33-89, V.24, f. "Miscellaneous Articles," Jock Carroll, "I don't Think There is Any Sexual Revolution: Despite Freer Talk, Secretary of State Judy LaMarsh Sees Adults' Morality as Basically Victorian," Weekend Magazine no.30, 1967, 9.
Although she perceived danger in the weak threat, LaMarsh still gave credit to the role played by Sabia and the CEW in the creation of the status of women inquiry.

I have no doubt in my own mind that I would have been unable to convince the Government to set up the commission without the remarkable organization of Mrs. Laura Sabia of St. Catharines, Ontario, who, for the first time in history, brought together women's organizations from all over the country to speak with one voice in Ottawa. That was the pressure needed to make Pearson act, so he finally conceded that he would set up the Commission.  

Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, for his part, was not particularly interested in a federal study on women. Although one of only a handful of major commissions created during his term in office, it is given no mention in his memoirs and he seems to have commented little about it anywhere. Perhaps such an omission is reasonable because, as he was nearing the end of his political career, Pearson was involved only in the creation of the inquiry; his successor, Pierre Trudeau, was the one who had to deal with the commission and its aftermath. In addition, when it came to royal commissions and political issues of the 1960s, the study of Bilingualism and Biculturalism clearly overshadowed other interest concerns such as the Status of Women. Although his motivations are unclear, Pearson did not attend the CEW's presentation and apparently ignored all early appeals for a commission. When pressed on the subject by New

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50 Ibid.

51 LaMarsh, Bird in a Gilded Cage. 301-302.

52 A major commission in the post second world war era is considered to be one averaging five to six members, in contrast to the many inquiries conducted by three or fewer commissioners. George Fletcher Henderson, Federal Royal Commissions in Canada 1867-1966. On Pearson, see: Lester B. Pearson, Mike: The Memoirs of the Right Honourable Lester B Pearson V.2, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.
Democratic Party member of parliament Grace MacInnis, he commented that he had "decided to be very cautious" on the matter. 53

On February 16, 1967, however, Lester Pearson announced that the government would create a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Despite being just one more club demand amongst many in the past, the notion of appointing an inquiry may have had some appeal for the government, because it was a single decision which could appease many groups at once, postpone any major actions, and collect some useful information at the same time. The federal government, like its American counterpart in 1961, was experiencing a time of expanding production and was interested in making full use of the nation's human resources, including both manpower and womanpower.54 A commission could discover how Canada could use its female workforce to the best advantage while working to quiet the complaints of the lobbyists. And, after all, far from being part of the apparent radical element that characterized "women's lib" in later years, these women represented the same groups which had been involved in a regular "civilized" dialogue with governments for years. They were groups which had a certain legitimacy and credibility, as they did not merely shout about women's rights, but fought for clean water, playgrounds for children and other charitable goals. In fact, they were the sort of clubs whose members included many wives and mothers of parliamentarians.55 The major women's associations' agreement to unite their voices over one demand offered the government a rare chance to placate them in one fell swoop.

Once the commission was created, it was instructed to investigate nine major


54 Canadian Women, 347.

55 For example, Lester Pearson's wife belonged to VOW before he was elected to office and many other representatives' wives likewise belonged to such charitable and social improvement societies.
subject areas relating to women which fell under federal jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{56} The terms of reference were quite similar to those suggested in the CEW's brief to the government. Many of the issues, such as amending equal pay and divorce laws, were constant concerns that had been the subjects of briefs by women's organizations for a number of years. The committee had also suggested that the commission be composed of both men and women "and that the Chairman be a competent woman who enjoys the confidence of Canadian women."\textsuperscript{57} In the end, the entire organization of the inquiry was set up along similar lines to those outlined by the women's associations, a fact which would come to play a key role in the investigations and outcome of the study.

Although the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada owed its existence partly to global influences, it was only when a specific commission lobby combined forces with the ongoing efforts of women's organizations that the goal was achieved. Individuals such as Judy LaMarsh worked from the inside to persuade the government to take an interest in women's concerns, but it was the system of women's clubs which raised the issues and provided the strength of numbers for the lobby. By

\textsuperscript{56} The Commission was instructed to investigate the following subjects:
1. Laws and practices under federal jurisdiction concerning the political rights of women;
2. The present and potential role of women in the Canadian Labour force...
3. Measures that might be taken under federal jurisdiction to permit the better use of the skills and education of women...
4. Federal Labour laws and regulations in their application to women.
5. Laws, practices and policies concerning the employment and promotion of women in the Federal Civil Service...
6. Federal Taxation pertaining to women;
7. Marriage and divorce;
8. The position of women under the Criminal Law;
9. Immigration and citizenship laws, policies and practices with respect to women;


\textsuperscript{57} NAC, RG 33-89, V.37, \textit{CEW Brief to Federal Government}, 2-4.
adapting to the changing times and forming a new organization to specifically address the status of women, the clubs aptly demonstrated the power of networking and foreshadowed a similar resurgence of activity which would take place later in Saskatchewan around the work of the royal commission.
CHAPTER TWO

"VOICES AT A VISITING CHATAUQUA"

It may be that the typical CFUW member is not suffering, but the Commission hearings showed that others were... Anyone who followed the hearings from coast to coast must have noticed that the millennium had not yet arrived for everyone.¹

Once the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was established in early 1967, it was faced with the task of making the most of the opportunity it had been given. In particular, it needed to alert Canadians to its existence and carry out a useful program of research and hearings across the country. By tapping into the existing system of women's organizations, it hoped to elicit hard facts and well-researched proposals on status issues. Although such evidence eventually did form the backbone of the inquiry's report, it was overshadowed by the unexpected personal impact of participants' stories at the hearings. In Saskatchewan, these heartfelt accounts added an emotional punch to the routine background information gathered by the commission and played a critical role in opening the eyes and firing the passions of many who were involved with the study. By providing a forum for women to express their own needs and frustrations, and listen to those of others, the commission had a lasting impression on local women's groups and individuals who would later continue its work by networking around the issue of women's status.

The newly appointed commission, which was given the job of investigating everything from tax and divorce laws to women's role in the labour force, was composed of seven commissioners and a research and administrative staff which eventually totalled

¹ Saskatchewan Archives Board [SAB], Mary Helen Richards, S A229, Lin Elliott, "CFUW - do we need it?," The Chronicle (Canadian Federation of University Women newsletter), 1969-70, 23.
over eighty members. Chair Florence Bird, a popular media and social personality, represented the government's desire to take a cautious and impartial approach to the study of women's problems in Canada. As Anne Francis, she had often written and broadcasted about women, publishing a pamphlet entitled "The Rights of Women" in 1950 and later producing a regular newsletter for the CBC on the status of women. Despite these interests, though, she was not associated with "the New Suffragettes who lobbied the Liberal government until it finally appointed a Royal Commission." The media was quick to announce that Bird was not a feminist and that she had "never been exploited, discriminated against, patronized or bored." Indeed, soon after her appointment, Bird was careful to assure Canadians that "the commission has nothing to do with the war between the sexes" and that although she recognized that some Canadian women were downtrodden and needed the commission's help she personally was not one of them.

Bird's fellow commissioners were four women and two men who had achieved varying degrees of expertise and notoriety in research and work with social issues. The inquiry was noteworthy in that it had a majority of women commissioners, including, for the first time, a woman chair. Considering the subject matter of the study and the intense lobbying for such appointments by women's groups, this response by the government is not surprising. Yet it seems that some Canadians were not quite ready for a commission run by women. The prime minister's press release introducing the inquiry and its

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4 Ibid.

members to the House of Commons focused upon detailed descriptions of the careers of the male participants before mentioning the professional lives and the marital status of the females.\footnote{NAC, RG 33-89, V.34, f. "Press Releases," Statement by the Prime Minister on a royal commission the status of women - House of Commons, Feb 3, 1967.}

In fact, the commission fought an uphill battle to have the status of women study and its female commissioners accepted as legitimate. After the inquiry was announced, negative remarks began to pour in from men and women alike. Charlotte Whitton, a well-known social worker and mayor of Ottawa, suggested that the commission was a "fantastically inexcusable thing....The doors are open now, if women don't want to be sissy-pussies making sandwiches in the ladies' auxiliary."\footnote{"Women's Royal Probe gets Mixed Reception," \textit{The Star Phoenix}, 2.} In the face of media ridicule suggesting that "a Commission run by women and on women just couldn't function amicably,"\footnote{NAC, RG 33-89, V.35, f. "Public Relations - Reports," Public Relations Report on Press Comment on the Commission, 5.} the staff felt the need to reassure Canadians that an inquiry made up of mostly women could do competent work. To this end, an announcement was made insisting that all commissioners had "considerable experience in public affairs" and were "accustomed to making decisions based on facts rather than emotions"\footnote{Ibid., V.24, "Prototype speech for the use of the commission."} -- statements which would not normally be used to describe public appointees.

In Canada, in contrast to American tradition, it was not typical to appoint commission members as representatives of business, labour and ethnic groups. It was expected that this cross-section of views would be supplied by the participants at the
Following the custom used for creating federal cabinets and other bodies, appointments to the royal commission were made primarily to represent Canada geographically. After all, such a move could go a long way towards placating the country's most volatile form of political division: that of region. During the 1960s, when tensions between French and English Canada ran higher than usual, it was of the utmost importance to represent both major linguistic groups on key committees of any kind. As Quebec was also viewed as a distinct region, it was only expedient that the other major regions of Canada, such as the Maritimes and the West, had to be represented as well.

The Status of Women Commission followed this established regional pattern when it came to appointing its members. Jeanne Lapointe and Jacques Henripin served as French-Canadian representatives and brought their respective academic talents in education and demography to the table. Doris Ogilvie, a family court judge, was a Maritimer. Donald Gordon, a political science professor, and media personality, represented Ontario. After having conflicts with the others, he resigned in November 1967 and was replaced by John Humphrey, a lawyer, professor, and sometime United Nations human rights director with ties to the Maritimes as well as Quebec. Elsie McGill had connections to both British Columbia and Ontario and was a pioneer woman engineer and daughter of women's rights activist Emily Murphy. Although Bird was well-informed about women's issues, and Henripin and Gordon had gained some knowledge through

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their academic work, McGill was the only member who was a dedicated women's advocate and could be fairly termed, "feminist," at the start of the commission's work.¹²

The Western representative on the inquiry was unusual in that she did not fit the typical image of a commissioner. Lola Lange was a woman involved in various community voluntary associations in Claresholm, Alberta, when she was approached to study the status of women. Although she was known locally for her work with adult education and farm women's unions she certainly did not have the professional or academic image of the other commissioners and was somewhat uncertain about her qualification for the position.¹³ Like Bird, she insisted that she had "never been stronge [sic] committed to a fight for the equality of women" and even admitted that she had "no basis for either forming constructive judgements, or even to know what the problems are."¹⁴ But by approaching the issue as one of upholding minority rights in general, she agreed to join the status of women study, an experience which later proved to be pivotal in her life.¹⁵

In contrast to the general age and interests of the commissioners themselves, the research and administrative staff of the inquiry was composed mainly of young female academics and civil servants with a somewhat more radical bent towards women's issues. Key behind-the-scenes players like Monique Begin, executive secretary, and Monique Coupal, her assistant and later senior administrative officer, offered the counterbalance of


¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lange's experiences with the commission led to personal consciousness-raising, subsequent involvement in women's issues and a divorce from her husband. Morris, "No More Than Simple Justice," 509.
a younger generation's views to a commission which was otherwise quite conservative in its composition. Both women were members of the Federation des Femmes du Quebec and, perhaps, were just the kind of women which the "New Suffragettes who lobbied the Liberal government" would have chosen to play a part in the project. In their capacity as overseers of everything from research projects to the writing of the final report, they had an ideal opportunity to enliven the more staid approach of the high-profile members of the inquiry. This more radical view was clearly expressed in internal documents, such as when commissioner Henripin concluded in a written report that "[s]ociety should encourage mothers to take personal care of their young children," and Begin asked simply in the margin of her copy, "why?"

Once the royal commission was given its mandate, appointees and staff, it put out a call for briefs and made arrangements for the hearings which were to take place in major cities across the country in 1968. It then set to work familiarizing itself with available material about women. From the start of its work, the inquiry was well aware of the international studies on the status of women, particularly that of its predecessor in the United States. Although considerable legislation had been introduced in the aftermath of the Kennedy Commission, the report was criticized for its failure to adequately address the underlying social issues affecting women's status. Yet the Canadian inquiry set out with a similar research strategy. Its commissioners and staff began reviewing laws and legislation, women's status in other countries and classic


18 NAC, RG 33-89, V.24, "Prototype speech for the use of the commission."

19 Mead, ed. American Women, 182
literature on women such as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. 20 Thirty-four research projects were commissioned on topics such as women in the labour force; the best works were to be published at the end of the study.

When the royal commission set out to study the status of women, it interpreted its broad terms of reference according to what was already known, what was of interest, and what was deemed acceptable for the times. It showed that it already had certain expectations of what it might hear from women when it prompted them to report on their needs for job retraining, day nurseries, family planning, and equal opportunity in the labour force. 21 Abortion and divorce laws, which had been under attack by women's and other organizations for years, were also recognized to be problems worth investigation. In this case, the government was already known to be at work on amendments to the Criminal Code, and changes were expected soon. The status of women commission, in fact, was mainly set up to investigate those issues which had already come to the attention of the government and which it had committed itself to dealing with at some level. As was common with other such inquiries, 22 the recognized problems prompting the creation of the study formed the bulk of material in briefs and letters of opinion. 23

The personal interests of the commissioners also influenced the subjects to be studied. Perhaps because of the occupational background of the members, these interests usually centred upon the "hard facts" of law, education and politics, leaving the investigation of underlying psychological and social forces to the staff of researchers and

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20 NAC, RG 33-89, V.4, f. 3-6-5, "List of books to be read," No date.


23 Hugh R. Hanson, "Inside Royal Commissions," *Canadian Public Administration*, V.12, 1969, 361.
social scientists. In addition, research topics were chosen with public attitudes never far from the commission's mind. For instance, although Ogilvie had expressed a desire in the spring of 1967 to study women outside the mainstream institutions of society, including common-law marriages and prostitution, and McGill suggested that "free love" and lesbianism be investigated, none of these issues was given serious attention. Similarly, the subjects of physical and other forms of abuse were essentially ignored. Certainly, it is true that few participants mentioned such behaviour, probably because of the nature of the times. But the commission was less unaware of the phenomenon than it was unwilling to discuss it, as illustrated by Bird's insistence that she was not interested in "my-husband-beats-me" stories.

Although the inquiry did not study such radical issues, there was a new force in society which was willing to address them. The royal commission occurred at a particularly interesting juncture in history because it dovetailed with the women's liberation movement as it arose in Canada. Both were influenced by socio-economic change in the post-war period, and both were responses to the ongoing grievances voiced by women for years. The initial connection between the two, however, was weaker than might be imagined. During the years of the commission's work, the relationship was mainly limited to an interest in some common issues concerning women, since there was a wide chasm between the two in terms of origins, goals and strategy for change.

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26 Arscott, "Twenty Five years and Sixty Five Minutes Later," 44.

Women's Liberation was not closely tied to the status of women study partly because it was still only a fledgling movement in Canada at the time of the hearings and also because it had quite different beginnings. Rather than being a direct outgrowth of activity in women's associations, it was stimulated mainly by young women's disillusionment within the various leftist, peace, student and civil rights movements of the 1960s in the United States and Canada. In fact, few of the members were familiar with the extensive history of club organizing and lobbying for change through traditional means. Rather, they were spurred to create separate Liberation groups when they personally experienced sexism -- often within the very movements which they had joined to promote social change.

Saskatoon Women's Liberation member Denise Kouri notes that her initial awakening came in this "classic" way: discrimination as a woman experienced in the context of "coming of age in the late sixties when questioning was the order of the day." Two of her colleagues, both participants at the commission hearings, related similar stories. One belonged to a socialist study group from which a women's organization split off when it recognized it was being drowned out by the old boys' club and the other experienced discrimination on her university campus at a time when young active women were beginning to break away from larger student movements because their concerns were not being addressed.


30 Denise Kouri. "Feminism then and now," Briarpatch July/Aug 1993, 21


32 Gail Youngberg interview, Saskatoon, Dec 16, 1994.
By the time of the commission's hearings, a number of Women's Liberation groups had formed loose associations, particularly on university campuses. One such group did appear at the hearings in Toronto. It succeeded mainly in publicizing its views and in providing a great deal of shock value for the onlookers and sensationalist news stories for the journalists. For women such as these, however, who believed that more than mere reform of society and its institutions was necessary to end sexism, speaking to a government commission created by traditional lobby groups was neither a common nor popular activity.

It was not until near the end of its work that the commission and many others came to recognize the growing vitality of women's liberation organizing, though it was clearly seen as a separate force from the women's associations which spawned and supported the government study. A few Saskatchewan participants who were personally involved in the new movement recalled local radical organizing prior to 1967. Many of the women involved with the status of women hearings in Saskatchewan, however, including the women's bureau director and the president of the Council of Women, were entirely unaware of the existence and aims of women's lib. Often they had heard news stories from the United States, usually sensationalist pieces about bra-burning and the like, but did not associate them with any similar activity in Saskatchewan.

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33 Adamson, Feminist Organizing, 43-44.


36 Mary Rocan interview, Regina, Sept 25, 1994 and Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.

The royal commission began its operations within this moderate climate of opinion on women's issues in Canada. Instructed by the commission secretariat that "one of the primary functions of a Royal Commission is to inform the public on the subject matter of the inquiry,"**38** the appointees set out to educate Canadians about women's status. In 1967, the commissioners thought that women were "a bit confused about their role" and believed that some of the problems came from "laws, made long ago in Queen Victoria's time, which discriminate against women."**39** In their attempts to enlighten Canadians about status problems, the commissioners consequently focused upon removing specific discriminatory legislation despite their claim to be addressing overall social attitudes.**40** They did not begin to deal with the deeper underlying forces holding women back from achieving equality until towards the end of the study, after most of the appointees had become more enlightened themselves. For instance, Bird noted that "Jeanne Lapointe, who had not been a feminist before, read fifty books on the subject and became one."**41**

The role of the commission in promoting grassroots social change was more readily appreciated by those with a more radical interest in the status of women project. For instance, Sabia noted that "if it is nothing else but an educative force in the country it will have served its purpose well."**42** The staff of social scientists agreed, as evidenced by a draft report, that "the chief public value of a Commission like ours...resides not primarily on the action taken by the government on specific recommendations but the

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**38** NAC, RG 33-89, V.24, f." Documents and Reseach - Misc articles I," WA Carey, royal commission secretariat, memo to the chairman, April 21, 1967, 11.

**39** Ibid., V.24, Prototype speech for the use of the commission, 1.

**40** Ibid., V.1, f.1-5-2-3, Mrs. Evelyn Banks, to Mrs. Lange Oct. 29, 1967.


**42** NAC, RG 33-89, V.1, f. 1-5-2-3, Laura Sabia to Florence Bird, April 28, 1967.
changing of the climate of public opinion." By 1974, the radicalized commissioner Bird believed that the inquiry had prompted a great deal of research and organizing amongst women, which was worthwhile on its own whether or not a Report had been produced at the end.

From an early stage, the commissioners recognized a major limitation in their mandate. As an arm of the federal government, they were given authority to investigate federal matters only, despite the reality that a great number of so-called "women's issues" fell partly or wholly under provincial jurisdiction. In the United States, the status of women inquiry had been followed up by state commissions to deal with matters such as education, child welfare and health. The royal commission hoped for a similar process in Canada. It did not rely solely upon this hope, however, and played an active role in broadening the scope of its work by contacting provincial and local organizations with an interest in such issues and asking them to share their concerns at the hearings.

In addition to these direct contacts, the status of women study used two other methods to publicize its activities. Following traditional practice, media advertisements detailing the commission's terms of reference announced the nation-wide hearings and called for submissions from all interested parties. They appeared in several dozen Canadian dailies, as well as farm and ethnic papers, in the fall of 1968. In addition, a

43 Ibid., V.3, f. 1-8-1, Mark McClung, Point outline of study on the ethical implications of the terms of reference, first draft, Aug 1, 1967.

44 Bird, Anne Francis: An Autobiography, 269.

45 NAC, RG 33-89, V.24, "Prototype speech for the use of the commission."


detailed pamphlet, particularly aimed at women, was distributed throughout malls, grocery outlets, and libraries in the early spring of that same year. Under the heading "What do you have to say about the Status of Women?", it encouraged women to think about status issues and send briefs outlining their thoughts and suggestions. Demand for the pamphlet exceeded the commission's expectations, and the staff eventually mailed out an amazing half million copies.

The publicity campaign, however, contained a major inconsistency. While attempting to solicit grassroots opinions and broaden its appeal to a wide audience of basic "everyday" women, the commission nonetheless showed that it preferred the well-researched and usually less personal contributions typical of associations rather than individuals. The supermarket pamphlet had claimed that a brief required "no special form, style or skill", but Bird indicated that she had a different view, saying "I regard a letter as a brief.... It can't be a personal thing - 'my husband beats me' or some such - but must be concerned with more general situations." A similar contradiction occurred in the publicity for the Saskatchewan hearings. Lange, in her appeals to Saskatchewan women, said "we will not require that you have your problems researched, just let us hear

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48 NAC, RG 33-89, V.35, Pamphlet, "What do you have to say about the status of women?" 1968.


50 NAC, RG 33-89, V. 35, Pamphlet "What do you have to say about the status of women?" Staff comments added to submissions were more favourable towards those which were well-written and based on detailed research. NAC, RG 33-89, V.11-18, "Briefs and Submissions."

51 Ibid., Pamphlet "What do you have to say about the Status of Women?"

from you." At least one Saskatchewan participant, however, noted the commissioner's preference for "hard facts" in briefs. This led to some confusion. After reading a Western Producer report on a speech by Lange, Evelyn Banks of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union became concerned about the appropriateness of her group's brief and asked: "Would results of a circulated questionnaire be adequate for some of the facts?"

In Saskatchewan, media announcements played a role in prompting some commission participants to get involved with the status of women. One of the publicity pieces most often noted was the January 1968 cover story and questionnaire on the status of women in Canada's largest circulation women's magazine, Chatelaine. Some Canadian women mailed in their answers directly in the form of briefs, while others set out in their communities to conduct similar questionnaires before sending the results to Ottawa. In addition, both the French and English versions of the magazine itself submitted their questionnaire results as briefs.

After her initial involvement in the lobby for a status of women study, Chatelaine editor Doris Anderson continued to keep the issue in the news, and for her efforts won praise from none other than the chair of the royal commission itself: "I think your approach has been the right one and the commissioners share my personal view. This letter is not for publication but merely a tribute to what you are doing to help women

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55 Ibid., V.11, Brief #50 Mrs. J Anderson, Brief # 133 NDP Provincial Women's Committee.

56 Ibid., V.2, f. 1-5-2-4 "Public Relations: Requests for Information from "Others"," Margaret Atherton to the royal commission, Nov 28, 1967.
grow up." In fact, continued press coverage from Chatelaine was counted upon to such an extent that it was excluded from the list of periodicals in which advertisements were placed about the status of women study. This action, however, spurred an angry retort from the commission's resident feminist, McGill: "Eliminating Chatelaine in expectation of free publicity seems shabby treatment which substantiates discriminatory claims of women editors."

Despite the coverage given to the status of women in the media women's pages, the majority of those who wrote letters and official submissions did so mainly as a result of hearing about the commission by word of mouth in existing organizations. The commission certainly was not blind to the fact that its most effective, as well as its cheapest, form of communication occurred through such channels and also recognized that "at present, voluntary associations appear to be the major medium through which women possess power in Canadian society." In recognition of this influence, Bird stayed in contact with Laura Sabia, praising a recent interview, thanking her for her efforts in creating the commission and specifically asking her to help spread the word about the hearings and briefs through the contacts she had in various associations. This is not to say that the two shared the same views about the status of women, as Sabia had something of a radical reputation ever since her threat of marching on Parliament Hill in

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58 Ibid., V.33, Telegram, Elsie McGill to Monique Begin, Oct 12, 67.


January and was even seen by some as a "man-hater." The correspondence does, however, show a certain cordial relationship and desire to keep communication open with major national women's groups, many of which were included on the official list of "Associations and Societies that might make useful submissions to the Commission."

Royal commissions generally try to reach, and later claim to have heard from, a cross-section of the relevant constituency for their particular issue. Yet, arguably, they often fall short of the mark. In the case of the status of women study, the aim was to include a fair representation of Canadian women at the very least, if not Canadian men. But despite the commission's best efforts to make its mandate widely known, women in various parts of the country complained about the difficulty they had finding information about the inquiry. Others suggested that the activities of the commission were simply not a priority for many Canadians:

"It would be the very exceptional woman who would worry about her "political rights", "potential role in the labour force", "better use of skills and education", "Federal taxation", etc., etc., while trying to cope with just day-to-day living for herself and her family in sub-standard housing conditions."


63 This is true of the status of women commission as it was of other studies such as the Massey Commission. Paul Litt, The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission, 53.

64 See, for example: NAC, RG 33-89, V.9, f. "Letters of Opinion - Quebec," Mme Murielle Arsenault to royal commission, Feb 26, 1968 and V.11, Brief #83, Regina Home Economics Club.

65 Ibid., V.9, "Letters of Opinion - Quebec," Mrs F.R. Hannen to the royal commission, Feb 27, 1968.
When the call went out for Canadians to think about the status of women and offer suggestions to the royal commission, women in Saskatchewan did not immediately drop what they were doing and rush home to write briefs. Some did not hear the call, while others may have been uninterested or just too busy with day-to-day life. The numerous complaints the inquiry received about the lack of information came from women who actually went to the trouble of writing letters to air their grievances; it is reasonable to assume that there were others with similar complaints who did not go to the same effort. It may also have been that some of those who desired change did not feel that it was possible, or at least not through a government study. One woman wondered whether women were not too timid to speak before a royal commission and expressed her feeling that it would still be "a man's world, no matter what we women DO or SAY."

Essentially, many of those who participated in the study were the same groups who had pushed for the establishment of the inquiry. The staff began by approaching the over seventy-five associations and societies which were thought to have some interest in the status of women and encouraged them to write briefs about their views. The groups included those interested in culture, such as the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, and general health and welfare organizations such as the Canadian Red Cross Society. In addition, many professional and service clubs which had been involved in the Committee

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66 As suggested by a letter writer from Quebec. Ibid., V.9, Mrs F.R. Hannen to the royal commission, Feb 27, 1968.

67 Mrs. Sulma of the Regina Home Economics Club noted, when presenting her brief in Regina, that it had "been difficult for the general public to get information on the Commission" (Commission's words). Ibid., V. 10, f. "Public Hearings: Western Canada," Precis of Public Hearings, Regina, Saskatoon, April 29- May 3, 1968.


69 Ibid., V.1, f. 1-5-2-3 "Public Relations: Requests for Information from Organizations and Associations," Mark McClung to Bird, Memorandum, Suggested List of Associations and Societies, March 14, 1967.
for the Equality of Women's lobby for a commission the year before also received invitations.

Women's groups across Saskatchewan received these letters either first-hand or passed down from their provincial or national executive. Being one issue among many and representing one more brief to submit amongst the ongoing social work of these clubs, requests for studying the status of women generally did not arouse a great deal of interest at first. Some clubs, like the Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League, wrote to Ottawa to ask for more information and background reading. Yet, typically there was less active interest demonstrated by groups at the local level. The Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association discussed the appeal for briefs and agreed to form a study group, but after failing to raise a single volunteer, left the appointment of suitable members up to its nominations committee.

In October 1967, when commissioner Lange made a personal appeal for briefs in speeches to Saskatchewan women, she focussed particularly on local women's groups. In addition to speaking on two radio and one television program, she spent an entire day in discussion with the Provincial Council of Women in Regina. She then met with female doctors and doctors' wives for a convention luncheon of the Saskatchewan Medical Association in Saskatoon. This gathering also included invited guests from the local Council of Women, University Women's Club, and the press. Lange went on to meet personally with other influential organizations, such as the Business and Professional

70 Ibid., f.1-5-2-4 "Public Relations: Requests for Information from "Others," Mrs J.P. Leier, to the royal commission, Nov 5, 1967.


Women's Club, and continued to have regular communication with Mary Rocan, supervisor of the Department of Labour's women's bureau.\(^{73}\)

The bureau in Saskatchewan, as in other provinces which had such structures, proved to be a useful contact for the royal commission. Lange found Rocan to be helpful as a source of information about Saskatchewan and as an avenue of advertisement and encouragement to women's organizations about participating in the commission's activities.\(^{74}\) The assistance offered by the Saskatchewan bureau was partly a result of the personal interests of the supervisor, who reacted to the announcement of the commission by saying, "it was about time."\(^{75}\) With her background of involvement with the B&P, Soroptomists, YWCA, Family Service Bureau and Civil Service Union, and having just completed a province-wide directory of women's organizations which she passed on to the commission, Rocan was in an ideal position to play a networking role for Saskatchewan women.\(^{76}\) Recognizing the royal commission's potential for increasing the current body of research, statistics, and remedies for problems faced by employed women in Saskatchewan, the bureau went to great lengths to become involved in the work of the inquiry and served as something of a local clearinghouse for information between Ottawa and the province.\(^{77}\) In addition to helping the Saskatchewan government prepare its official submission, the women's bureau "maintained for distribution on request directives and brochures prepared by the Commission and assisted in an advisory capacity


\(^{74}\) NAC, RG 33-89, V.38, Report on Meetings, Conferences etc Attended by Commissioners.

\(^{75}\) Mary Rocan, correspondence, Regina, Jan 31, 1997.

\(^{76}\) Ibid. SAB, R212, f.6 "BC Women's Bureau," Mary Rocan to C.K. Waddell (BC Women's Bureau director), Feb 15, 1968.

\(^{77}\) Mary Rocan interview, Regina, Sept 25, 1994.
individuals and organizations interested in preparing briefs. 78 Involvement in the project had a profound effect upon the office, which followed its presentation to the commission with provincial action related to the status of women and regular references to the study in its annual reports and correspondence. 79

After the initial commission publicity campaign, a number of Saskatchewan women wrote letters to Ottawa to offer their opinions about the status of women. A few of these letters were followed up by official briefs and presentations at hearings but most of them were informal expressions of frustration on specific personal issues. Dorothy Arnold wrote of her outrage at the federal voters' list, which offered no occupational category for married women, while Ivy Smith expressed dismay that pension plan benefits did not apply equally to men and women. 80 Others wrote of personal tragedies, such as Mrs. William Kelly, who recounted her desertion by a husband who was a "debtor" and a "liar." 81 A number of homemakers sent in letters denouncing Canadian society for not offering fair recognition of or compensation for their work. "[W]e are made to feel we are just housewives," complained Mrs. Swalm. 82 Betty Tait agreed, explaining that

[m]any married women have entered the labor force in an attempt to prove that they can be useful citizens. But in so doing they have given men the idea that their role as homemaker, wife and mother is only a small job and can be done evenings, weekends and days off. What we should have done was demand that our role as Homemaker, Wife and Mother is a very


81 Ibid., Mrs. William Kelly to the royal commission, Feb 13, 1967.

82 Ibid., Mrs. Swalm to the royal commission, March 15, 1968.
important role, that it should be recognized as employment and that the
government should pay a salary to all Homemakers. 83

One issue which received a great deal of attention from western letter-writers was
the plight of farm women, including such issues as isolation, lack of salary, and difficulty
in accessing training courses or any kind of childcare in the rural areas. 84 The overriding
farm concern, however, was property rights; women usually did not share in the title of
the land they had worked upon for years, and the law did not prevent it from being lost
overnight after the death or divorce from a husband. It was with this inequality in mind,
that the Glamis Homemakers' Club in Saskatchewan wrote to the commission, presenting
a recent club resolution: "In this year of 1968, set aside as Human Rights Year, we farm
women demand to be recognized by the laws of Canada as a human being in partnership
with our farmer husbands." 85

In Saskatchewan, the number of formal submissions to the commission can be
determined in several ways. The total may vary depending upon how briefs were
classified as being Saskatchewan and/or official material. For instance, two reports were
written on behalf of national organizations by executive members who merely happened
to reside in the province. 86 They neither represented local clubs nor appeared at the local
hearings, following the pattern of national groups speaking to the commission almost

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83 Ibid., Mrs. Betty Tait to the royal commission, March 18, 1968.
84 NAC, RG 33-89, V.1, f.1-5-2-3, "Public Relations: Requests for Information form
Organizations and Associations," Mrs M. Seymour to the royal commission, May 25, 1968 (isolation),
Mrs Blanche Moxley to the royal commission, May 19, 1968 (salary), Mrs Leta Fumeaux to the
royal commission, March 22, 1968 (training).
85 Ibid., V.8, Glamis Homemakers' Club to the royal commission, April 5, 1968.
86 These organizations were the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Canadian Women's
Press Club.
exclusively at its Ontario sessions. Last-minute submissions were also received on the
days of the hearings, but were not always submitted later in writing, a requirement for
acceptance as official briefs. And, for unknown reasons, some reports which were handed
to the commissioners personally, or soon afterwards, were never added to the formal list.
As a result, while the status of women study officially recorded thirty-two Saskatchewan
briefs, there were in fact at least four more written and five more verbal ones presented,
in addition to dozens of informal comments from callers and members of the audience at
each hearing.\(^{87}\)

From its creation, the commission was always closely associated with the activity
of women's organizations. Participation in the hearings only continued this trend. Despite
the commission's hope of reaching out to ordinary individuals, sixteen of Saskatchewan's
official proposals came from organizations. In addition, some of the others spoke on
behalf of groups informally. For instance, at the instigation of the Saskatchewan Farmers
Union women, Elmer Laird presented a brief based upon a survey of local women, while
Sherrie Tutt represented many other single parents from a fledgling Regina single parents
group.\(^ {88}\) Others voiced opinions about personal concerns, but nonetheless were longtime
members of associations such as the rural Homemaker's Clubs,\(^ {89}\) University Women's
Clubs,\(^ {90}\) or the more radical peace group Voice of Women.\(^ {91}\)

\(^{87}\) Written submissions were also made by Mary Helen Richards, Mrs. Leaks, Mrs. Hitchings and
Mrs. Morton. Verbal presentations were given by Winnifred Virtue, Harriet Kaplan, Gail McConnell
(Youngberg), Betsy Naylor and Margaret Mahood (on behalf of the Voice of Women in Saskatoon).
NAC. RG 33-89, V.10, Precis of Public Hearings at Regina and Saskatoon.


\(^{89}\) NAC, RG 33-89, V.1, f. 1-5-2-1, Carrie Berndtsson to Anne Francis, April 11, 1967.

\(^{90}\) Mary Helen Richards.

\(^{91}\) Wilma Brown was a member in 1964. SAB, Regina Voice of Women, R 138, V.1, f.3
A significant number of the presenters belonged to not just one but numerous voluntary associations over their careers. And in contrast to the image of the "ordinary" club member, let alone the "ordinary" woman, many of them held key executive positions and were active at the provincial or national level of their club bodies. In fact, included amongst the participants were two Voice of Women provincial vice-presidents, two past-presidents of the Saskatchewan Home Economics Association, a past-president of the Saskatoon University Women's Club, two past and one future chair of the Saskatchewan New Democratic Women, and a future president of the National Council of Women.

Active membership in groups such as the Business and Professional Women's Club, whose "main reason for being" was to keep abreast of employment issues such as maternity leave, childcare and equal pay, pre-disposed its members to discussing women's issues. Overall, most of the participants shared a history of volunteer work, which may have prompted their interest in the commission and offered experience with resolutions, public speaking and the presentation of briefs. Such a background contributed significantly to the likelihood that they would hear about and speak to the royal commission and also provided a key existing network for ensuring that its report would not be ignored. Responses to the federal inquiry and continued dedication to status of women issues, however, depended a great deal upon the individual presenter, her other

92 Margaret Mahood and Mary Ann Lavallee.
93 Emmie Oddie and Isobel Gibbings.
94 Mary Helen Richards.
95 Pemrose Whelan, Anne Blakeney and Thora Wiggens.
96 Helen Hynatyshyn.
interests and responsibilities, and sometimes the focus of the organization she represented.

Participants who were official representatives of an association were usually less caught up in the work of the commission and were less likely than others to remember the experience as important later. For some, they were merely carrying out the directions of their organization as members of a committee and may have had only a passing interest in women's status issues.\(^{98}\) Others were busy working on so many social projects that one brief to the government in 1968 did not stand out among the others. In contrast, those who went to the effort of writing to the inquiry on their own, were more likely to be distressed about one or more issues at a personal level. The tone of their briefs was more that of a plea for justice than a list of statistics and recommendations -- supplying few of the "hard facts" the study had originally hoped for.

Despite the commissioners' original appeal for well-researched submissions on general topics, they came to appreciate the importance of listening to women's personal experiences at the hearings. Doris Ogilvie pointed out that "while they had read and studied the briefs previously, when they heard people presenting them they took on a new dimension;" Bird agreed, adding that she felt "every day had been tremendously moving" and "women who worked on briefs by themselves were wonderful."\(^{99}\)

Commission hearings on the status of women took place from April 29 - May 1, 1968, in Regina and from May 2 - 3, in Saskatoon. Attendance at all of the hearings

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\(^{98}\) Some members of such groups commented that they did not maintain a specific interest in the commission's work and had few if any memories of their 1968 submissions. Hub Elkin, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, correspondence, Regina, Aug 13, 1994. Lawrence Heinemann, John Howard Society, correspondence, Regina, Aug 9, 1994.

across the West had broken records, and Saskatchewan was no exception, drawing crowds of well over one hundred spectators at several of the sessions. In common with the other hearings, and indeed with royal commissions in general, discussions took place in major hotels with a battery of press present. What was new at the status of women sessions, however, was that employed women were encouraged to attend by the addition of evening discussions to the usual daytime format and phone lines were opened up to elicit comments from those who could not attend in person. Saskatchewan women responded to the new measures with enthusiasm, filling the seats at night and keeping commissioners busy with up to ten phone calls per hour.

What was truly unique about the status of women hearings, however, was the composition and participation of the audience. Across the country, the media observed that the meetings lacked the usual "witness-before-a-tribunal feeling" and that there was "a friendly female buzz about the room which one doesn't usually associate with royal commissions." Although the chief purpose of the hearings was to hear official presentations of briefs, Saskatchewan observers reflected that "much of the more lively discussion has arisen from remarks and questions from the audience."

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105 Ibid.
noted that in contrast to the usual gathering of "experts" at public inquiries, the status of women sessions attracted a large and enthusiastic assembly of citizens. Yet considering that these citizens were not only overwhelmingly female but were often involved in organizational efforts to improve women's lives, they were the experts on the topic of study.

The typical person who spoke up about the status of women at the Saskatchewan hearings was an urban, white, middle-class woman. Many, such as Zenny Burton and M.J. Mack, discussed the issues facing professional women who combined family and career responsibilities and recommended childcare and tax reforms to ease their burden. Eleanor Hitchings, reflecting on how women often worked a double day, explained that in my time, husbands did not involve themselves in "women's work." I came home from the office each day & plunged into meal-making, dishwashing, laundry, mending, ironing, etc.... I had a far better position than my husband, yet allowed myself to be a household slave, because married women were supposed to see to their husbands' every comfort! Bitter? A little, I suppose, but that's the way it was.

Although rural women were well-represented among letter-writers to the commission, they did not write many official briefs or attend the city hearings in large numbers. Although it is not known why this was the case, given rural women's isolation and busy schedule, the urban setting of the sessions may have contributed a great deal to the low attendance rates of farm women. The letters they sent discussing farm issues, however, certainly demonstrated that there was substantial interest in the commission's work amongst rural clubs such as the Homemakers. Their appeals did not go unnoticed as, in both Alberta and Saskatchewan, the commissioners were "impressed with the

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107 Eleanor Hitchings, correspondence, Saskatoon, Aug 18, 1994.
presentations from farm women, which Mrs. Bird described as down to earth, and honest and "no nonsense".108

Saskatchewan participants at the hearings, although mainly urban residents, reiterated the concern over marital property rights expressed in letters by farm women. Judge Mary Carter, speaking from her extensive experience with such legal issues, noted that "unless [women]...have a kind and loving husband who puts all future property in their joint names, it is his."109 As one remedy for this situation, she proposed a homemaker's salary. Thora Wiggens and Betty Tait, farm women from the Prince Albert area, also spoke in favour of such a solution to women's financial dependence upon men, explaining that "we are simply advocating pay for service given."110

One of the most consistent features of the status of women presenters in Saskatchewan was their racial background. The overwhelmingly white group, was not an unusual representation of a province which had yet to see a great increase in the number of immigrant visible minority residents in 1968.111 Indeed, very little was said in Saskatchewan, or in the rest of the nation's hearings, about specific problems faced by women of colour. Although commissioner Gordon had suggested at an early date the need to take ethnic groups into account, he was talking about ethnicity in mainstream 1967 terms, which to him meant Ukrainians, Italians and Jews rather than visible

108 "Hearings dramatic experience, says commission chairman," The Star Phoenix, 12.


110 Ibid.

111 It has not been possible to ascertain the racial background of every participant. Where it has been possible, only two such persons can be identified as visible minorities. (Native Canadian). According to Census Canada, the non-European population of Saskatchewan was only 4.4% of the total in 1961 (3.3% was Aboriginal). The numbers had not increased significantly by 1971. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Canada - Ethnic Groups 1961, 1971.
minorities. In an effort to fill this gap in knowledge, two studies about women immigrants were eventually produced but little discussion of the issue occurred in the final analysis.

The important exception to the silence about visible minorities was the growing awareness of Aboriginal women's lives highlighted at the hearings. Probably no other issue underwent such a major change, in terms of perceived importance to the commissioners, as this one. Natives were not specifically mentioned in the terms of reference nor did the royal commission know much about the status of First Nations women when it began its study. Significantly, there were no hearings originally scheduled in the largely Aboriginal northern territories and the inquiry intended to group Native issues in with the mandated category of "Citizenship and Immigration." The topic, however, gained more prominence as women spoke out at the hearings and the plight of Native women began making headlines across the country.

Problems faced by the Aboriginal population were brought to light in briefs written by Natives and non-Natives alike, in Western Canada. Organizations such as the Voice of Women and the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union spoke of the need for more aid in Native communities, including better housing and better representation on health and education boards. This concern reflected the interest in Aboriginal Canadians by many social welfare groups in the 1960s. Although that interest did not often translate into

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113 Ibid., V.4, f. 3-11 "Studies not published - permission to release," Edith Ferguson, "Immigrant Women in Canada," and Freda Hawkins "Women immigrants in Canada."


115 NAC, RG 33-89, V.15, Brief #271 and V.13, Brief # 173.
practical assistance, there was a popular trend in women's clubs to host speakers on Native issues and bring up related subjects in various resolutions and study groups.116

Other organizations, which spoke about Native women in some detail at the hearings, were the John Howard Society, which dealt with the criminal justice system on behalf of offenders, and the Saskatchewan government. In both cases, most of the discussion revolved around the high proportion of Aboriginal women in the prison population, particularly in cases where alcohol laws had been broken. Although the government did not probe the question to any extent, Judge Tillie Taylor of the John Howard Society suggested that compassion and rehabilitation were preferable to punishment for such crimes: "Why don't we take these women to hospital overnight or get treatment for them? What good does it do to send them to jail for two weeks?"117 Taylor displayed a remarkable attitude for the times by analyzing underlying social issues leading to criminal offence and recommending "greater involvement and self-government on the part of natives in solving their own problems."118 Elmer Laird offered a similarly radical opinion, suggesting that the federal government had slighted its Native citizens in its recent emphasis upon a bicultural vision of Canada, which completely ignored the nation's Aboriginal founding cultures.119

Most of those who spoke about First Nations people at the hearings were concerned non-Native citizens. But those who knew the most about Native life and


119 Ibid. Elmer Laird, Brief #134.
caught the attention of the media, the commissioners, and the audiences, were the Aboriginal women who came to speak for themselves about the status of women. Clemie Humphries spoke of her concern over the tragic lives of many young Native women who left reserves for the bright lights of the city only to be faced with discrimination, poverty, and crime. Mary Ann Lavallee appeared at the Regina hearings to talk about women but, more importantly, came to talk about treaties, children's education and the standard of living on reserves. Like a number of other presenters, she recognized an opportunity in the hearings to raise issues of personal interest which were not officially part of the commission's terms of reference:

In this year of 1968, when the public eye is focused on the female of the species, the mantle of responsibility quietly falls on the shoulders of Indian woman...to bring to the attention of the public her point of view and her suggestions for remedial actions to right the wrongs which constantly dog the life of Native people.

She asked for understanding rather than handouts, saying "[w]e know we must do what has to be done ourselves, but it would help immeasurably if we thought we had the support of at least some of the public."

The stories told by women like Lavallee had a great impact upon the commission and the audiences. Although the staff had initially believed that it would need to "rely

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120 "Women demand government action," *Western Producer* May 9, 1968, 45.

121 Various outside issues brought up in briefs and hearings across Canada included everything from cigarette advertising, to troubles of automation, suicide and the Vietnam war: NAC, RG 33-89, V.11, Canadian WCTU, Brief #84 and V.12, The Congress of Canadian Women, Brief #139.

122 NAC, RG 33-89, V.10, f."New briefs received at end after public hearings," Mary Ann Lavallee, Brief received after public hearings.

123 "Plea made for status for Indian men," *Leader Post* May 2, 1968, 11
on the reports of the research people and the Department of Northern affairs" for insight into Aboriginal status issues, the commissioners changed their minds when they heard first-hand stories from Native women at the hearings. In fact, Bird later counted her experiences with Native presenters across Canada as the most moving and fascinating part of her work, while journalist Christina Newman described the briefs as "poignant declarations of what it means to belong to The Other Canada." Ivy Smith, a letter-writer and audience member in Saskatchewan, had had little prior contact with or knowledge about Canada's Native population, but she too found herself moved by one of the personal stories she heard:

[A]t the hearings, here, I never will forget an Indian woman who got up then spoke. And it was so eloquent and so simple and straightforward. And she told how they could never be liberated, the Indian women, as long as they were hungry and as long as they were second-class citizens....It was really a touching moment.

Alongside the issue of race, Saskatchewan briefs and hearings highlighted the many problems facing poor women. The commission in particular and women's organizations in general were attacked by some who believed that such strongly middle-class bodies could not understand the plight of the working class. Ever since the inquiry's inception, it had been dogged by such complaints, beginning with calls for the inclusion of a representative member from the labour community. While assuring those

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concerned that there would be ongoing discussions with workers, the commission's chair revealed the largely political nature of the issue: "I think it is very important for us to make labour people feel that we are deeply involved in their problems and that we are not just a group of middle class people thinking in middle class terms."\(^{129}\)

Issues of race and class were discussed in a remarkably similar, mostly detached way at the hearings as the majority of commission submissions came from women who clearly did not face these problems personally. For instance, one of the most common complaints in the Saskatchewan briefs was that women did not get a tax break for wages paid to a daytime housekeeper or nanny.\(^{130}\) Although generally considered a reasonable suggestion in the light of similar concessions offered to those with outdoor or live-in hired help, the comments nonetheless demonstrated a certain class background of many of the participants: these were clearly women who could afford to hire domestics. Judge Carter, while making a point about women's financial dependence on men, only underscored these class assumptions by her comment that "most women come into marriage with only their false teeth and maybe a fur coat."\(^{131}\) At the first session in Regina, this "fur coat" background was also apparent. After quoting Pierre Berton on the twenty percent of Saskatchewan residents who earned less than $3000 a year, an unknown audience member went on to note "I don't see many of them here this morning."\(^{132}\)

Middle-class presenters were more likely than others to speak about abstract

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\(^{129}\) Ibid., V.1, f.1-1-1 "Miscellaneous," memo, Florence Bird to Monique Begin, April 26, 1967.

\(^{130}\) For example, in Saskatchewan: Brief #10 Mary Carter, Brief # 27 Sk Jaycettes, Brief # 50 Mrs J Anderson, #74 Assoc of homemakers, #76 Dora Kuehn, #113 NDP Women's Committee, #224 Greengrass, #295 Yorkton NDP Ladies, Eleanor Hitchings, last minute brief.

\(^{131}\) "Deserted women penalized if poor," The Star Phoenix, 11.

problems, such as the socialization of boys and girls, the negative image of women in the media, and the need for women to change their way of looking at themselves and society. These subjects, like the tax issues associated with hiring domestic servants, were rarely the primary worry of women who were forced by economic necessity to be in the labour force. Sherrie Tutt from Regina recalled that, for the most part,

low-income women had very different concerns... because we had very practical day-to-day "keep the wolf from the door" kind of problems. And the consciousness raising stuff almost was incidental to that. So, housing was a major one. Education was a major concern. Daycare was a major concern. Jobs - being able to do that kind of thing. Those were the things we were really concerned about.

Those concerned with "the wolf at the door" were outnumbered greatly by the other presenters. The commission itself had foreseen this imbalance, noting that "the 'welfare' stratum of our society does not tend to belong to any organization" and fearing that there would be a dearth of written submissions from them as a consequence. Considering the nature of women's service clubs at the time, such a result is hardly surprising. Having changed little since their inception decades earlier, women's association meetings and events were frequently held during the day and many charity projects were undertaken to aid the needy both locally and abroad. Such aspects of club life required a certain amount of financial stability as well as leisure time on the part of female members. Commissioner Lange, when speaking to organized women on her promotional tour of the West, realized that "there are many older women, for instance,

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133 As groups such as VOW did.


who just do not have the money to belong to a group."\textsuperscript{136} Professional associations, although dealing with women in the work force, were also exclusive in their membership. This restriction could occur explicitly, such as in the University Women's Club which required a university degree for membership. But it could also be implicit, as the Provincial Business and Professional Women's Club noted in its 1967 meeting minutes: "Mention was made again the name "Business and Professional Women" scares people and that some think membership is limited...Members were urged to make it clear that any employed woman is eligible to join."\textsuperscript{137}

The commission's concern that much of the evidence given at the hearings would come from middle-class women was certainly borne out -- but only in terms of overall statistics. When it came to emotional impact, the presentations by those struggling to make ends meet made an impression far beyond that expected of their small numbers. The chair noted that "the poverty of women thrust itself upon us and could not be ignored, even though it was not mentioned specifically in our terms of reference."\textsuperscript{138} And a sympathetic female reporter watching the proceedings explained the significant difference existing between the two groups, as one where "the middle class women were seeking something ambiguous called "equality"; the poor were voicing an urgent need for a decent life."\textsuperscript{139}

The Saskatchewan hearings forced the "comfortable suburban housewives"\textsuperscript{140} who

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., R-461, SK BPWC Annual Meeting, Oct 5, 1967.

\textsuperscript{138} Bird, Anne Francis: An Autobiography, 267-8.

\textsuperscript{139} Newman, "What's so funny about the Royal Commission?" 24.

\textsuperscript{140} Rosemary Speirs, "Men get blast at probe hearings," The Star Phoenix April 22, 1968, 10.
dominated audiences across the West to recognize the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. In Regina, Wilma Brown and Sherrie Tutt spoke of their experiences with desertion, single-parenthood, and welfare, and their struggles to access education and training while each raising three children. Tutt made a significant impression upon the gathering as she recounted a personal story of the pressure put on single mothers to put their kids up for adoption. "I realized I could no more give them away than fly to the moon," she told onlookers before bursting into tears. Despite her feeling that much of the audience could not relate to her concerns, Tutt received an "enthusiastic ovation from an audience of 150 women and nine men at the end of her moving appeal for a better deal for unmarried mothers." Such heartfelt presentations occurred mainly at the Regina evening hearings, however, and contrasted with the more sedate atmosphere of sittings which involved typical club submissions. For instance, Gretchen Gosse of the Regina University Women's Club noted that her morning session was "business-like and cool" as was expected for the formal presentation of briefs at that time.

The hearings highlighted one issue above all others which had created a groundswell of support amongst presenters: the childcare needs of mothers. It received more attention in briefs across the country than any other subject. The Western

\begin{enumerate}
\item[142] "Unwed mother raps paternity laws," The Star Phoenix Saskatoon, May 1, 1968, 3.
\item[143] Sherrie Tutt, interview, Regina, Sept 24, 1994.
\item[144] "Unwed mother raps paternity laws," The Star Phoenix. 3.
\item[146] NAC, RG 33-89, V.24, Precis of Saskatchewan hearings.
\item[147] Ibid. V.20, f."Documents and Research: daycare," Daycare services, royal commission report, Nov 1969, 1.
\end{enumerate}
Producer acknowledged it as the number one concern at the time of the Saskatchewan sessions, saying "day-care centres, day-care centre, day care centres.... Nearly every brief presented at the Saskatoon hearings on May 4 and 5 asked for some form of facility where children of working mothers could be cared for." Although there was disagreement over how centres should be licensed and paid for, and who should be given access, it was almost universally acknowledged by presenters, commission staff, and media that daycare services had to be improved. If women were to be able to achieve a higher status in society in the areas named in the terms of reference, such as education and equality in the workforce, then accommodation had to be made for those who had young children to care for.

Although most presenters were in a financial position to either stay at home with their children or hire a caregiver, there were some others who could not afford such luxury. Sherrie Tutt, who spoke to the commission about these problems on behalf of a single parents support group, had searched for daycare for her kids and could not find anything suitable in terms of safety standards and cost. As a result, she was forced to give up her nursing job and rely upon her parents for support. She believed that she and her peers faced certain women's issues in a different way than some of the other women in the audience did:

That, I think, was the main difference between OUR presentation and the presentation of most of the presenters, at least here in Regina. Is that we were concerned about the very practical problems of being a woman raising children in our society and the discrimination that affected us in that particular role.

148 "Women demand government action," Western Producer 42.

149 "Unwed mother raps paternity laws," The Star Phoenix, 3.

Daycare, however, did attract the attention of many of those watching and was mentioned in twenty of the briefs. Even some of those who could afford to stay home with their children struggled with the issue. Zenny Burton explained that although she enjoyed her position as a registered nurse she was considering quitting the job solely because of the difficulty she had in finding acceptable childcare arrangements.

Saskatchewan comments to the commission about daycare were remarkably similar to those expressed across the country. Often the focus was on providing services for those women forced to join the labour force out of financial necessity, but sometimes the argument was extended to include parents who needed a break from caring for their children. Mary Helen Richards insisted that a mother should "make no apology, nor should she be asked to submit to a means test, when she requests the government to make available to her a well-regulated and convenient daycare centre for her pre-school children." Letter-writer Mrs. C Wagner suggested that "[m]ost women appreciate getting out of the home for a few hours or a few days each week and working at something a little more challenging than housework." Although many homemakers focused upon the joy they received from parenting, a few admitted some ambivalence about the full-time work of raising children. An unnamed woman attending the Saskatchewan hearings explained her dilemma, saying "I love my children but the three days a week I work are such a release, after three days alone with them I'm exhausted."

151 NAC, RG 33-89, V.24, Precis of Saskatchewan Hearings, Regina and Saskatoon.
152 Ibid., V.14, Zenny Burton, Brief #211.
154 Ibid. See also NAC, RG 33-89, V.8, Mrs. C. Wagner to the commission, Nov 19, 1968.
155 "Women demand government action," The Western Producer, 45.
Another popular topic during the Saskatchewan hearings, as elsewhere, was the role women played in their own status struggles. It was often expressed during the inquiry that "women are women's 'worst enemies."\textsuperscript{156} It was noted, for example, that women employers were just as unsympathetic as men towards the needs of their female employees. And briefs from across the province highlighted the difficulty women would have in achieving equal status as long as they did not take on equal social responsibilities, such as going to war and paying on dates. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour suggested to the commission that "the numbers of women prepared at this time to accept such responsibilities are in the minority."\textsuperscript{157}

Many of the women who spoke to the commission demonstrated this type of ambivalence about the status of women in Canada. In Saskatchewan, a few of them favoured legislative change in areas such as equal pay and tax laws, but were not interested in giving up the gallantry and other privileges which they experienced as women. An anonymous audience member in Saskatoon explained that "[t]here's something nice about being looked after, it is part of our femininity."\textsuperscript{158} To some participants, if equality meant sameness or downgrading of the stay-at-home mom, they wanted nothing to do with it. Dora Kuehn emphasized the "womanly arts"\textsuperscript{159} which differentiated women from men and made them uniquely suited to certain jobs both at home and in the work world. Although recognizing the need for some women to be employed, the Saskatchewan Farmers Union and Regina Home Economics Club hoped

\textsuperscript{156} NAC, RG 33-89, V.II, Dora Kuehn, Brief #76 and V.I4, NDP Women, Brief #133.

\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., V.IS, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, Brief #296.

\textsuperscript{158} "Young women air views at status of women inquiry," The Star Phoenix May 3, 1968, 6.

\textsuperscript{159} NAC, RG 33-89, V.II, Dora Kuehn, Brief #76.
that the study would preserve the importance of the family and increase the respect given to mothers who chose to be full-time homemakers. The Provincial Council of Women summarized this divided feeling by stating:

No one disagrees with the theory, or the ideology, or the desirability of women remaining in the home, at least where young children are involved. But, if we are going to be realistic, we must face the fact that [some] women do work outside the home - and the reasons actually are irrelevant.

It was the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union Women, however, who demonstrated the most visible ambivalence about the status of women in their association. After first suggesting that "the position of women in this organization is no different from that of men," they went on to admit in a supplement to their brief that "in the Farmers Union the constitution says women have equal status, but this is questionable."

Several participants in Saskatchewan took issue with semantics and argued that women's "status," per se, was not a major problem. Some understood that equality of opportunity already existed, but that women did not always take up the challenges and responsibilities necessary to earn an equal position in society. Others commented that a similar legal status existed for men and women on paper but "since our roles are often very different this is not much help to us." The Regina Home Economics Club suggested that "one reason for the lack of enthusiasm in the 'Status of Women' could be

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160 Ibid., V.15, Saskatchewan Farmers Union, Brief #271 and V.11, Regina Home Economics Club, Brief #83.

161 Ibid., V.11, Council of Women, Brief #67.

162 Ibid., V.15, Saskatchewan Farmers Union, Brief #271.

163 Ibid., V.11, Dora Kuehn, Brief #76.

164 Ibid., Mary Carter, Brief #10.
that professional women feel that women in Canada do enjoy an equal status with men.\textsuperscript{165}

Many of those who presented their views to the commission in Saskatchewan approached the study with optimism and believed that their ideas were well-received.\textsuperscript{166} Not surprisingly, those women who spoke on behalf of established associations were generally comfortable with the proceedings, belonging as they did to "the very groups which had made the commission their own supercreation."\textsuperscript{167} Others were less enthusiastic about the commission after attending the hearings. Despite the positive reception of her brief noted by the press, for example, Sherrie Tutt felt out of place amongst the broader feminist discussions of the club women who seemed to monopolize the proceedings:

[It] was almost like we were talking about nitty gritty dirty stuff that didn't belong there. That's the impression we got from the commission. So when we walked out of the room, I think we were quite - well I wouldn't say "frustrated", we were just disappointed.\textsuperscript{168}

For others, like Margaret Mahood, their briefs highlighted issues of personal concern but they were resigned to the fact that little major change would result from a government study:

I felt that the royal commission would be to some extent bound in its findings by what would be politically acceptable, you see. So I didn't expect them to go way out on a progressive - what I would call a

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., Regina Home Economics Club, Brief #83. Emphasis added.


\textsuperscript{168} Sherrie Tutt interview, Regina, Sept 24, 1994.
progressive and some people would call a radical - limb.\textsuperscript{169}

Not surprisingly, in contrast to those who had doubts about the study's potential to effect change, there were some Canadians who entirely disagreed with the work of the commission. Certainly the media responded negatively to the inquiry during the early part of its work. Some journalists felt that the status of women study was "providing some good laughs"\textsuperscript{170} for Canadians, and the commission itself recognized that the dominant press attitude was one of "underlying amusement that women should be the subject of a royal commission."\textsuperscript{171} The coverage was generally more favourable, however, in the French-Canadian press and in the "ghetto" of the women's pages.\textsuperscript{172}

The commission displayed little sympathy for negative views about the status of women, such as one Saskatchewan man's suggestion that what participants really needed was "a good psychiatrist or some tranquilizer pills."\textsuperscript{173} Chair Florence Bird even had a "screwball file" which was set up for this purpose.\textsuperscript{174} The administrative staff was similarly candid in the comments it added to most of the submitted briefs when processing them. Some were termed merely "badly written"\textsuperscript{175} or "lacking in facts."\textsuperscript{176}

\textsuperscript{169} Margaret Mahood interview, Regina, Oct 16, 1994.

\textsuperscript{170} Sheila H. Kieran, "Who's downgrading women? Women," Maclean's, June 1968, 42.


\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 4. Freeman, "The Media and the Royal Commission," 4.

\textsuperscript{173} NAC, RG 33-89, V.8, f."Letters of Opinion," Mr B.R. Christenson to editor, Leader Post, May 1, 1968.

\textsuperscript{174} Bird, Anne Francis: An Autobiography, 264.

\textsuperscript{175} NAC, RG 33-89, V.15, United Church Women, Driver Saskatchewan, Brief #282.

\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., V.13, Sherrie Tutt, Brief #157.
while still being considered valuable for their ideas. Others, particularly those which displayed traditional beliefs about women's roles, were deemed to "have little relevance to modern society." The commission even went so far as to refuse to send out invitations to the hearings to some who had made submissions, including one woman from Saskatchewan. Coupal suggested that it was best to "not invite the participants whose briefs are... not of any value or not related to our terms of reference." Despite her assessment that certain submissions were of "doubtful quality," some of these less eloquent writers went on to attend the hearings and make the strongest emotional impact upon the audience.

Although many of the negative comments about the inquiry came from men, there were also a number of women who did not appreciate the study and what was often seen as a waste of government money. Some suggested that there was no sense in antagonizing men and certainly no harm in benefitting from their role in leading and protecting society. Others were upset with what seemed to be increasing social decay, including juvenile delinquency, and believed that changes in the status of women were making matters worse by concentrating upon the individual rather than upon the needs of the whole family and community. In expressions which would be later echoed during the second wave women's movement, frustration was directed towards those who

177 Ibid., V.11, Jennie Jacobi, Brief #31.

178 Ibid., V.36, f."Relations with Government - Privy council," memo, Monique Coupal to John Stewart, July 16, 1968.

179 Ibid. Special mention was made of the impact of Mary Two Axe Early's presentation by Christina Newman "What's so funny about the Royal Commission on the Status of Women?" Saturday Night, Jan. 1969, 24. See also, Bird, Anne Francis: An Autobiography, 285.


181 Ibid., V.11, Jennie Jacobi, Brief #41.
focussed on women's rights and employed workers to the detriment of the other "working women" in society - namely those who stayed at home to take on the important role of raising their children.

Overall, the commission found that status of women issues were similar across the nation. Lange was amazed by the agreement demonstrated on what was and was not important and found that even rural and urban areas, for the most part, had the same grievances. Bird witnessed a "significant sameness about the kind of people who came to the hearings, day by day, in city after city" — a mix of dissatisfied housewives, women struggling with poverty, and workers dealing with discrimination in the labour force.

Issues raised in Saskatchewan were essentially the same as those heard in neighbouring prairie provinces. It was, however, the only province whose government took the time to present a brief to the commission. Likely due to the high proportion of rural residents and Native citizens in these provinces, farm issues, marital property rights, and Aboriginal matters were a focus of many prairie briefs. The commission felt that the submissions in the West were "rather different" from those made in the East. Central Canadian concerns focussed upon discrimination faced by women in the workforce and the bored housewife syndrome identified in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, while Atlantic participants spoke mainly on legal reforms. A number of observers recognized that the desperate issues of desertion, poverty, prostitution, and


Aboriginal life were brought to light in a more powerful way in the West than elsewhere. A reporter who followed the commission as it journeyed east through the provinces noted that "[a]round about Winnipeg, disadvantaged Canadian women stopped bringing their misery, poverty and birth-control problems and dumping them in the laps of the [commission]."

Despite such stories, most Saskatchewan participants still represented middle class club women, whether in an official capacity or not. Comments of the "I've never been discriminated against" type came mainly from those who did not personally face serious problems in the work world and were reminiscent of Florence Bird herself who had made similar declarations upon receiving her post in 1967. The commission chair, however, later divulged that she felt her life would have been much more restricted if she had experienced the many complications of being a mother. Some of the presenters did recognize at the time that others did not have as easy a life as they had. The NDP Provincial Women's Committee insightfully noted that "women without family troubles - involving legislation related to mother's allowance, divorce, desertion, abortion and similar misfortunes - are slow to add the weight of their numbers to help women in need of better laws on these subjects."

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189 NAC, RG 33-89, V.15, Helen Ternes, United Church Women, Brief #282, V.12, NDP Women, Brief # 133, V.11, Mary Carter, Brief # 10, V.11, Dora Kuehn, Brief #76.

190 Ibid, V.12, NDP Women, Brief #133.
The people who chose to participate in the royal commission study represented a small minority of Saskatchewan residents, albeit a vocal and influential one. Women usually spoke to the commission about what they knew best and understandably overlooked that which was not part of their personal backgrounds. It was likely because of this oversight that so many observers from the middle-class clubs, press, and commission were surprised by the stories presented by Native women, single mothers, and others facing such critical issues on a daily basis. Florence Bird, still claiming at later hearings that "we are here to listen and be informed, not to enter into a dialogue with you. We are a commission of inquiry, not a forum," missed the significance of what the study meant in Saskatchewan. For the royal commission provided exactly this kind of discussion about personal problems -- subjects which were not usually topics of polite conversation and may not have been recognized by those who were not affected personally by them. If the hearings did nothing else, they effectively removed this blind spot for many of those watching the proceedings. They also served to fuel the efforts of many organized women's groups in the coming years as they waited for and then responded to the royal commission's final Report on the status of women.

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192 Bird was impressed, however, with the women's openness about issues such as divorce and abortion and felt that times had changed since the early 1960s to enable them to do so. "Commission study said "like holding up mirror," The Star Phoenix April 29, 1968, 18.
CHAPTER THREE

"NEGOTIATING A NEW NETWORK"

I would think that at this particular time the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women would provide every Council with 167 instant issues and could be the basis for uniting and involving women on the community level.¹ [spring 1971]

Saskatchewan participation in the Royal Commission on the Status of Women both arose from the ranks of organized women and forged new networks amongst women who united around the issue of status at the end of the inquiry. A number of participants and members of women's groups, having been moved by the stories told to the commission, took up the mantle to see that the Report did not merely gather dust on a shelf in Ottawa. In the process of pursuing this aim, they played a significant part in bringing together the radical and traditional factions of the developing local women's movement into new Status of Women associations. This organizational activity proved to be the chief legacy of the royal commission in Saskatchewan -- by the fall of 1972 it could be said with confidence that "A 'Network' of women interested in the status of women has been established throughout the province."²

Canadian historian Marjorie Cohen, in her writing about the women's movement, argues that "there is no doubt that many women collectively and individually focused on


the Commission and its work for the three years it operated." 3 Although it may have been
true elsewhere in Canada, this was not the case in Saskatchewan. When the royal
commission moved east to hear from Manitobans in May 1968, Saskatchewan participants
returned to their previous activities and, for the most part, gave the study little thought
again until the Report was published two-and-a-half years later. Most of those who wrote
briefs in Saskatchewan did so either to air their personal grievances or to represent their
formal associations before one of many such government bodies. Once these tasks were
carried out, there was often little time or reason to continue specific involvement with the
status of women. Having said their piece, many returned to the work which was the
primary focus of their groups, such as farm policy, labour concerns or professional issues
faced by teachers and home economists. Pemrose Whelan of the provincial New
Democratic Women's Committee explained the return to general political issues as a
natural next step: "life goes on and you tackle something else and our immediate concern
was that Saskatchewan wasn't getting on." 4

Most women forgot about the commission because they were extremely busy with
family and other responsibilities. Anne Blakeney was so involved with the birth of a new
child and the election of her husband as the leader of a provincial political party that she
confessed to "total amnesia" about her association's regular activities at that time, let alone
its brief to the commission. 5 Margaret Mahood was kept occupied in those years with her

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3 Marjorie Griffin Cohen, "The Canadian Women's Movement," Eds. Ruth Roach Pierson,
Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Paula Bourne, Philinda Masters, Canadian Women's Issues Vol.1: Strong
Voices, Twenty-Five Years of Women's Activism in English Canada. Toronto: James Lorimer and Co,
1993, 5.


5 SAB, Thora Wiggins, S A379, V.IV. f. 48 "Saskatchewan New Democratic Women," 1986
conference proceedings, including history of Anne Blakeney being honoured for her long-term service;
See also Anne Blakeney, correspondence, Saskatoon, Aug 9, 1994.
clinical practice as a doctor and her efforts to help create the Saskatoon Community Clinic. The status of women inquiry was really no more than an isolated, albeit exciting, event within the routine and ongoing work being done locally on women's issues. Nothing in the organizations' extensive history of lobbying on social matters had led them to believe that a government study would change everything overnight. Although the royal commission's presence in town created a temporary stir, it seemed to leave as quickly as it came -- aptly described by one witness as a "visiting Chatauqua." For those who were pessimistic about how much good would come out of the study, there was even less reason to closely follow the work of the commission. Some of them chose to pursue their interests in women's status through other channels, particularly through organizations which were outside the mainstream of traditional women's clubs. Believing that she "was on a forefront somewhat ahead of the royal commission," Dr. Margaret Mahood continued her own efforts towards medical and legal reform, including the controversial issue of abortion, through her professional work and her association with the fledgling local Women's Liberation movement. For others, disappointment with their reception at the inquiry played a role in organizing new action groups, by focussing their aims and strengthening their resolve to see these goals carried out. Sherrie Tutt expressed the view that her loosely organized single parents association gained confidence by appearing before the commission: I think it probably did a lot for us, in that I think it made us more

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7 Gail Youngberg interview, Saskatoon, Dec 16, 1994.


determined to do something ourselves. ... [O]ur notion of doing things prior to the commission was still very nebulous. ... [But] we walked out of there determined to get organized. \(^\text{10}\)

Following the hearings, any discussion about the status of women was part of regular club business as women waited to see what would be said in the report. During this time, the commission itself was rarely mentioned, outside of comments received in some clubs from the national levels of their associations. \(^\text{11}\) The deeper involvement of the national bodies can be partially attributed to their role in pushing for the federal commission in the first place, whereas the local groups, at least in Saskatchewan, had always focussed more on lobbying provincial and municipal governments.

There were a few local associations, however, which had always shown a regular interest in status concerns and continued to do so in the years between 1968 and 1970. In Saskatchewan, the University Women's Clubs, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the Council of Women which represented them both, stand out in particular. As parts of federal organizations which had lobbied for the commission, all three had a vested interest in ensuring that the proceedings went well and that the final report was a useful and influential document. They were also groups which had long focussed on general issues of women's advancement in Canadian society.

Other groups which appeared before the Saskatchewan hearings, such the John Howard Society, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour and NDP women's committees, certainly had an interest in status issues but primarily dealt with criminal offenders, labour policy, and party politics respectively. And while the Women Teachers Association and

\(^{10}\) Sherrie Tutt interview, Regina, Sept 24, 1994.

\(^{11}\) SAB, B141, Saskatoon Women Teachers Association, f. 2-9, Minutes - General Meetings 1962-1970. SAB, Sk Home Economics Association, B17. Even the women's bureau did not mention anything about the Commission in its spring 1970 Annual Report.
Home Economics Clubs shared a concern with the issues of working women, they quite naturally devoted a great deal of their time to discussing items of specific interest to their professions. Although these organizations did not continue to pursue status of women issues, the B&P, CFUW and Council of Women did. Gretchen Gosse of the Regina University Women's Club noted that her group was "most interested in the commission."\(^\text{12}\)

The Saskatchewan B&P Clubs were discussing the soon-to-be-released report several months before it appeared and the Laws Committee of the Saskatoon Council of Women increased its regular meetings to bi-monthly sessions in anticipation of the Report\(^\text{13}\).

Although the federal government created and paid for the status of women study, when the Report was released in December, 1970, the government was by no means bound to abide by its recommendations. Yet without such an obligation to accept the study's results, there remained a danger that they would indeed end up as a forgotten volume on a shelf. Around the time of the status of women investigation, it was suggested by one critic, J.E. Hodgetts that the temporary nature of commissions was one of their most serious defects: "royal commissions are short-lived and when they have reported they are no longer on stage to ensure a follow-up on their recommendations or to force governments to explain why their advice has not been taken."\(^\text{14}\) In the case of the status of women inquiry, however, no such problem occurred because there was a network of women's organizations ready and willing to take on such a watchdog role.

Throughout the later years of the 1960s, women's associations in Saskatchewan


\(^{14}\) J.E. Hodgetts, "Should Canada be De-Commissioned?" *Queen's Quarterly*, V.70, 1964, 489.
had generally treated the royal commission as just one more government study; they had aired their grievances and that was the end of it. But when The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was released in December 1970, a marked shift in attitude occurred. Within the clubs most actively involved with status issues, "the status of women" became the buzz phrase of the day. In Saskatchewan, it was called a "milestone," and "a bible for women's organizations." Joanna Michelenko, an active member of the CFUW and Saskatoon Council of Women, even suggested that "[t]he past year may eventually become known as 'The Year of the Report'." After decades of resolutions and briefs to all levels of government, an official document had finally been produced which recommended 167 ways in which Canada could improve life for women.

In the Report, this advice was organized into ten chapters, nine addressing status subjects and one dealing with a plan for government action. The topic receiving the most attention by far was "Women in the Canadian Economy," which covered issues such as equal pay and discrimination in the public service, the Unemployment Insurance Act, and the Canada Pension Plan. Other subjects included in the commission's terms of reference, including criminal law, citizenship, and taxation, were dealt with in the Report in a routine fashion. In some respects, such inequalities were the easiest to deal with as they often involved nothing more than amending existing legislation. They were also problems that the government was already aware of and expected to hear suggestions about.

In the remaining chapters, however, the commission demonstrated that its research

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16 Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.

had taught it something new about the issues and priorities of Canadian women. For example, the discussion of education went far beyond the mandated study of "the better use of the skills and education of women, including the special re-training requirements of married women." It recommended special training initiatives for immigrant, Native and rural women and suggested that co-ed family life courses be taught to children starting in kindergarten. The commission also gave credit to the educational value of women's volunteer work and recommended removing stereotypical gender images and lessons from school curricula and texts.

Perhaps the most significant new issues to appear in the Report were poverty and the family. After hearing stories from participants across Canada and conducting research on women in the economy, the commission had come to recognize that "women of this country are particularly vulnerable to the hazards of being poor" and dedicated a separate section in the Report to their needs. Chapter four, "Women and the Family," was an expansion of the initial mandate to investigate marriage and divorce. The Report recommended liberalizing not only divorce laws, as expected, but abortion, sterilization, and birth control legislation as well. It also addressed two issues which were of special interest to Saskatchewan women and became the focus of intense lobby activity later in the decade: the amendment of the Indian Act to recognize the status of women who married non-Natives, and matrimonial property rights. On the latter subject, the commission recommended recognition of "the concept of equal partnership in marriage


21 Prior to 1982, the federal government removed official Indian status from women who married non-Natives; their children were also denied this status.
so that the contribution of each spouse to the marriage partnership may be acknowledged and that, upon the dissolution of the marriage, each will have a right to an equal share in the assets accumulated during marriage otherwise than by gift or inheritance."22

In addition to these marital issues, the "Women and the Family," chapter delved into the underlying status issues surrounding parenting. By doing so, the Report demonstrated that the commissioners were willing to advance some ideas which had not yet received general public acceptance. They began by expressing the somewhat radical view that "many women operate much more successfully in other fields of work than in the nursery. We think that they should be able to do so without apology. We were also impressed by the number of working women who feel they are better mothers because the stimulus derived from their outside interests carries over into their relationship with their children."23 Despite this attitude and the recognition of recent contributions made by Women's Liberation to the analysis of women's oppression in the family, the Report moderated its approach by assuring readers that most Canadians continued to believe in the family as an institution.24

Just as the inquiry's research about women in the economy had led to an awakening about poverty, information on working women highlighted the glaring lack of childcare facilities in the nation. In order for women to truly make free choices about paid employment and caring for their children, they needed to have affordable, available, and flexible daycare services. Once again, the commission took a radical stand by

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22 "Women and the Family," Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, chapter four, 246. In 1980, Saskatchewan passed legislation which recognized the contributions of both marriage partners and divided the assets upon divorce.

23 Ibid., 261-2.

24 Ibid., 226.
insisting that the government be actively involved in funding and planning such a program:

There has been what we believe to be misguided opposition to the suggestion that the state play a part in the care of the child. We suggest that this position must be greatly modified. It seems clear, moreover, that it has never stood on very firm ground: that it lost validity with the establishment of the first public school. The need for wider community assistance in the care and education of even very young children emerges from our findings as an essential factor in improving the position of Canadian women.²⁵

Because time was needed to digest the Report's 167 recommendations, little activity took place in Saskatchewan on status issues outside the club level in the first year following the Report's publication. Many of the organizations which had participated at the hearings made the Report a central topic of discussion in their meetings and recommended that it be studied by members either on special committees or on their own.²⁶ Helen Hnatyshyn, who had presented a brief on behalf of the Saskatoon Council of Women, believed that it was the council's "moral obligation" to ensure that the Report was followed up with action.²⁷ As national president, she urged clubs to take up letter-writing campaigns, report on changes in legislation, and discuss a recommendation of local significance at the start of each meeting.

Some of the participants from the Saskatchewan hearings never did read a copy of the final report. Usually this was because they were busy with other activities; some

²⁵ Ibid., 262. A comprehensive government program of daycare has still not been realized in Canada.


had returned to working with specific issues rather than the broader topic of women's status and did not go to the trouble of tracking down a copy to read. After the long wait for its release, it was already a "dead issue" to some. Sherrie Tutt, having moved onto specific work with single parents, explained her lack of association with the Report: "if there'd been anything within a year or two we'd have been interested enough definitely to go look at it. [But] I don't recall there being anything."  

In contrast, those who were involved with women's groups like the Council of Women did not need to go to any extra effort to gain access to the Report. Such organizations provided both motivation and an ideal network for discussing the commission's ideas and accessing information. President Harris of the Saskatoon local council told her club in early 1971 that it would be:

the responsibility of some of our members to take a very active part in pursuing a serious study of the Report and in the subsequent action necessary to implement those recommendations found to merit our support. I would hasten to add that I also feel it is the responsibility of all Council members to familiarize themselves with what is recommended in the Report and, thus, be better prepared to become involved and give support.  

In this endeavour, many such organizations made use of some of the 15,000 printed copies of the Report's study guide. As a large and well-respected organization representing women, the National Council of Women had been given privileged access to the Status of Women Commission's results and was asked to compile the guide, entitled

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"What's In It?"  

The guide made the Report accessible by condensing its 451 pages down to a mere forty-eight and "opened eyes that wouldn't have otherwise opened." The tiny Swift Current local council, for instance, managed to sell sixty copies of the study guide in the first year following its release.

Many of the Report's recommendations on equal pay, part-time work, daycare, and pensions were welcomed by clubs around the province. Controversy arose, however, over a few issues which were considered to be taking reforms either too far or not far enough. For instance, the suggestion that the Criminal Code be amended to allow abortion under certain circumstances was denounced by those who believed that the matter should not be included within the code at all. Perhaps, the most contested issue concerned the report's fourth underlying principle: "in certain areas women will for an interim period require special treatment to overcome the adverse effects of discriminatory practices." One related recommendation singled out for dismissal by many Canadians was a suggested quota system for female Senators. Even the supervisor of the women's bureau believed that the commission's support of affirmative action would serve only to

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31 The Federation des Femmes de Quebec (also a large umbrella organization representing other groups) was given the task of producing the French version.

32 Interview with Sophie Steadman, chair of NCWC Status of Women committee, as quoted in Cerise Morris, "No More Than Simple Justice," 310.


36 SAB, R461, f.14 "Status of Women," Andrew Brewin and Grace McInnis, NDP federal caucus committee on the status of women, to CFBPWC Club Presidents (to Betty Sexty) Feb 23, 1971. The committee supported all recommendations except those pertaining to special status.
perpetuate women's inferior status. The University Women's Club agreed, saying "we cannot support any of the recommendations that would give "special status" to women in their field of employment, beyond provision for maternity leave."  

Generally, however, Saskatchewan participants responded to the results of the status of women study with enthusiasm. Gail Youngberg recounted that "we all waited for the Report and when it came got a copy and looked at it and were delighted." Mary Rocan "read it from one end to the other...[making] copious notes on all the pages." For some, however, it merely confirmed their suspicions that social reforms were happening too quickly and that they did not benefit Canadians equally. Jennie Jacobi had hoped that "changes would have been slower ... [and] more in the interests of all of society - including men and children." Similarly, although she had been "thrilled" to participate, Dora Kuehn was also disappointed with the results: "[F]or "the rich and educated women," it helped tremendously, while for the less fortunate women, especially the inadequately educated ones, it's harmed." Still others felt that the commission did not go nearly far or fast enough in the promotion of a new social order. According to Sherrie Tutt, "[i]t did increase frustration amongst many of the women who had higher

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38 Ibid., R351, f.9zb "Status of Women," Sharon Haggerty, Report by standing committee on education to status of women committee, April 1971.


42 Dora Kuehn, correspondence, Lloydminster, Jan 16, 1997.
hopes for it. But again, you know, that may not have been all bad because out of our frustration other things happened."\textsuperscript{43}

Within a matter of months, the Report became a standard reference point for women's issues, and its results were used when discussing any number of related topics or when drafting resolutions for annual meetings. At the Saskatoon Council of Women, it was assumed that members were familiar with the status of women results; reference was made in meetings to numbered recommendations, without specifying which report or royal commission they came from.\textsuperscript{44} For years afterwards, resolutions at annual meetings referred back to this touchstone, prefacing their demands with statements such as "whereas recommendations... [a,b,c] in the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada have not as yet been implemented...."\textsuperscript{45}

The final chapter of the Report had addressed the issue of implementation by asking that federal, provincial, and territorial governments create bodies to support the execution of the commission's recommendations. Included in this vision were government implementation committees, Human Rights Commissions, and a federal Council on the Status of Women responsible directly to Parliament. Although the first suggestion was acted on soon after the tabling of the report, it took several years before the others were put into place across the country.

Because of the royal commission, the status of women became institutionalized within the government as Status of Women, Canada, a department headed by a minister chosen for this responsibility. The new Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of

\textsuperscript{43} Sherrie Tutt interview, Regina, Sept 24, 1994.

\textsuperscript{44} SAB, B82, V.I, f.11 "Minute Book 1971-78," general meeting, March 9, 1973.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., R856, V.9, "Resolutions and Bylaws, 1969-83," Resolutions for CFBPWC convention, July 13-17, 1980.
Women (1973) (CACSW) was a government appointed and funded body, similar to other such councils, created to inform the public and advise the government. Although it submitted its reports to the new minister in charge of the status of women rather than directly to Parliament as the Report had recommended, its members were appointed "from suggestions made by women's groups across the country." Saskatchewan was represented on the national council by two women with a great deal of organizational experience in their home province: Helen Hnatyshyn, president of the National Council of Women, and Isabelle McNabb, president of the Saskatchewan Indian Women's Association.

By the early 1970s, despite the fact that many of its recommendations had not been implemented, the royal commission had succeeded in creating a climate of general acceptance and credibility for the status of women as an issue in Canada. Because the government had created and supported the study, and then went on to fund new bodies and offices to deal with the subject, it was clear that official recognition had been given to women's status issues which had been only the domain of lobbyists until that time. As Eva Latham of the federal NDP explained, "[w]hen the government makes a costly investment of this kind, it shows it recognizes there is a problem." In Saskatchewan, participants in the commission overwhelmingly believed that the study was influential in legitimizing status issues. Not only did the stamp of government approval help, but the very process of bringing women together to discuss their personal

stories brought issues into the open and made them an acceptable, rather than shameful, topic of conversation. President Margaret Harris of the Saskatoon Council of Women believed that "it gave status to the work, the endeavours of that time, to have the government see that there was a need to look at this situation in the country and recommend change." Even those who were unhappy with many of the specific recommendations and the cost of the inquiry agreed that the commission brought about "[a] greater awareness of legitimate concerns" on some matters such as property rights within a marriage.

Despite this new acknowledgement of women's grievances, organizations were concerned that the recommendations would be largely ignored as club briefs had been for years. Although the creation of various government bodies and councils was recommended by the commission, and was welcomed by those with a continued interest in women's issues, this step alone was not considered to be sufficient to ensure that the status of women remained on the government agenda. However appropriate the individual appointments may have been deemed by women's societies, the advisory councils were often seen as too closely tied to the government party in power and therefore limited in their potential to create real change. They also suffered from restricted budgets, which

50 Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.
52 SAB, A229, "Status of Women and Human Rights Issues 1967-78," Richards to Honourable Marc Lalonde, Oct 9, 1975. Although approval was expressed about the original appointments made to the council, more recent replacements were not as popular: "in knowledge of the women's movement, general understanding, and dedication they are about ten years behind the rest of us."
was clearly demonstrated by the Saskatchewan chair's need to work out of her basement for two years before being given an office.\textsuperscript{54}

As a result of this limited government action, new activity began in Saskatchewan around the issue of the status of women. Those who were committed to keeping the Report alive came together to organize entirely new groups with the express purpose of continuing the work of the royal commission. Many of the issues dealt with in the study were not new to women's groups. Yet after compiling a vast amount of information and statistics, which seemed above reproach when done by a government inquiry, the Report proved to be a particularly influential document which focussed and energized the ongoing debate on women's concerns.\textsuperscript{55} Margaret Harris explained it this way: "People talked and people were concerned and letters were being written and so on. But this [the Report] put it all down in print and in a form that groups could work with."\textsuperscript{56}

At the national level, events were taking place which worked to inspire and support action taken by those working on the status of women in Saskatchewan. Preceding the release of the Report, the Committee for the Equality of Women, which had lobbied for the study, reorganized itself under the banner of "The Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of women" and took on the role of government watchdog. Letters were sent to participants, urging them to maintain their interest and work to keep the issues fresh in the minds of all levels of government. Included with each letter was a list of other women and groups who had participated in the province and a plea for them to get


\textsuperscript{56} Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.
organized together to plan for further action on the report's recommendations.\(^{57}\)

The Ad Hoc Committee was not the only one to actively promote further involvement on status issues. Member of Parliament Grace McInnis also appealed to clubs, urging them to take up a letter-writing campaign. As the sole female in the House of Commons, she was "deeply concerned that Parliament may fail to give this matter the priority it needs."\(^{58}\) Over the next two years, as the recommendations were studied by government and organizations alike, various prominent personalities put their weight behind the push to keep the Report alive. Commissioners, particularly Bird, McGill and Lange, crossed the country as keynote speakers at women's conferences, always asking for continued pressure to back up their recommendations.\(^{59}\) Helen Hynatyshyn of the National Council of Women asked associated clubs to work for the immediate implementation of the most important recommendations\(^{60}\), while her counterpart at the Business and Professional Women urged similar action, inquiring of the local clubs, "[are you] discussing the Status of Women Report? And have you asked for a guest speaker on this subject?"\(^{61}\)

These efforts to have women's associations keep the pressure on the government

\(^{57}\) SAB, R212, f.76 "Correspondence with royal commission," Laura Sabia to Mary Rocan, Jan 23, 1970.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., R461, Grace MacInnis to Miss Charlotte VanDine, Dec 9, 1970.


\(^{60}\) Helen Hynatyshyn, "Report of the President," Yearbook, 1971, 36.

did not go unnoticed. Freda Paltiel, the federal co-ordinator, Status of Women, who was appointed shortly after the tabling of the Report in the House of Commons, acknowledged the key role played by such groups in her 1972 report on the federal government's progress in fulfilling the recommendations. She recognized that the publication was really a "response to the many letters and enquiries from Women's organizations and concerned individuals across the country asking what has happened to the Status of Women Report" and credited their "sustained interest" as a "constant spur" to further government action.  

In Saskatchewan, although such "sustained interest" was demonstrated by certain key organizations and individuals, overall it was hard to recreate enthusiasm about the status of women nearly three years after the hearings. While some onlookers had supported the lengthy and detailed study of the recommendations as the only way to properly analyze the results, others such as Laura Sabia had warned that spending too much time on passing club resolutions would dilute the impact of the Report. She was right -- it delayed action by women's groups and made organizing difficult by drawing out the period of study.

When the Business and Professional Women's Club tried to organize the first status of women group in Saskatoon in 1971, the women's bureau noted that it was "finding it somewhat difficult to get women motivated." According to Rocan, new organizing was still "nonexistent" in Regina at that point, although the Council of Women and local B&P and CFUW were studying the Report and the council had sponsored a

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successful panel the previous May. The bureau then acted as a catalyst for promoting provincial activity around the Report by appealing to Freda Paltiel in Ottawa, suggesting that "women's groups in Saskatchewan are probably not aware of the activities of your office and the direction you might be prepared to give." The bureau provided a list of groups to serve as valuable contacts, including not only the usual Council of Women associations but also recognizing the contributions which could be made by newer activist groups of native women, single parents, and Women's Liberationists. Paltiel took the appeal to heart and was in Regina less than six weeks later to host a luncheon with local club representatives. Regina went on to form a committee in 1972, after being inspired by the visits of both Paltiel and Sophie Steadman, a member of NCWC's Status of Women committee and the moving force behind the Royal Commission study guide. Rocan credited Paltiel in particular with giving the new organization "the push they needed."

Although open to individual membership, these Status of Women committees acted effectively as umbrella associations with ties to other community groups. In Regina, they "aimed to involve as many women's organizations as possible and eleven such organizations attended the first meeting." The three major women's groups pushing status issues were present, as well as the Home Ec Association, which had also made a presentation to the commission. Saskatoon's membership was similar, but had a more


radical flavour because of the addition of Women's Liberation and Action for Abortion Law Repeal. Although often joining officially as individuals, those who got involved usually had previous active volunteer experience to their credit. Such interrelations facilitated the committees' ability to network, and as Marion Younger of the Saskatchewan Action Committee later explained to her club, "although I plan to carry on this work, [as an individual] it is much more effective to be speaking for a group; and the long-range objective of B and P is the implementation of the recommendations of the Report." 

In 1971, the newly formed Status of Women Co-ordinating Committee of Saskatoon approached the provincial government for a grant to enable the group to host a provincial conference specifically on the commission Report. Similar conventions were taking place in other provinces and one of the major, though controversial, benefits of the commission was that it had made funding of women's projects more accessible. The financial support was forthcoming, and a committee arranged a conference for October to brainstorm on status issues by networking with women from existing associations:

It was planned to invite women who are leaders in organization work...a group of 100 women who would return to their communities and organizations to stimulate interest in The Report and encourage action


71 For example, Betty Sexty (president of SK B&P) and Marian Younger (president of Saskatoon B&P), became heavily involved in the Status of Women committees and conferences, as did Margaret Harris (chair of Advisory Council and president of the Saskatoon Council of Women), Margaret Patillo (extension division at the University of Saskatchewan and past-president of the Saskatchewan Home Economics Association) and Mary Helen Richards (past-president of the Saskatoon CFUW)


74 Adamson, "Feminist Organizing," 55. Controversy occurred because women's groups feared accepting government money would obligate them to the political party in power and limit their ability to advance radical ideas and programs.
toward implementation.\footnote{SAB, R212, f.82 H Report of Saskatchewan Conference on the Status of Women, Oct 20-22, 1972, Saskatoon.}

Representatives were then invited through making direct contacts with the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes and presidents of those clubs affiliated with the Council of Women. The response to the conference was extremely gratifying to the organizers.\footnote{Ibid., B104, f.5(1) "Briefs and Submissions 1967-1975," Zoe Dallas, "...On Women's Conference," \textit{The Star Phoenix}, Oct 24, 1972, 14.} Although they had realistically expected to attract some eighty delegates, more than 150 had registered by the time they met in Saskatoon in October and over 450 appeared to hear the keynote speech given by Doris Anderson. Those attending represented a large number of traditional organizations, as was expected, as well as newer groups such as Women's Liberation and newly formed Native women's associations. Although there were also some who "had no particular affiliation but were 'just interested',"\footnote{Ibid.} more than seventy percent were either representing clubs or were present in an official capacity as speakers, group leaders, or resource persons.\footnote{Ibid., R212, f.82 H, Report of the Saskatchewan Conference on the Status of Women.} Amongst these participants were at least eight women who had made presentations to the royal commission four years previously, all but three lending their experience for resourcing or organizing the proceedings.

True to its original intentions of using the meeting as a stepping stone to further organizing in the province, the conference wrapped up its business by creating a provincial Steering Committee on the Status of Women with the stated task of acting as a "representative organization of women in the province of Saskatchewan concerned with
the status of women." Despite its preference that members associate themselves mainly as individuals, this body continued the tradition of the fledgling status of women movement of drawing upon the resources of established women's organizations. After the fifteen members of the committee were elected, they recognized that they "weren't starting on ...[their] task like the first explorers in virgin territory. It was necessary for ...[the] committee to relate to other women's organizations that had already broken ground and planted seeds." As a result, Margaret Harris of the Council of Women, Margaret Patillo of the University extension division and Marian Younger of the Business and Profession Women's Clubs and conference chair in 1972, were specially invited to join as liaison members.

Saskatchewan mirrored events occurring on the national level; in the same year, the new Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women organized a national conference to bring interested women together to work for the implementation of the commission's recommendations. Key figures, such as Bird, McGill, Sabia and Paltiel were involved, and a number of women from Saskatchewan organizations attended, including Mary Helen Richards, a presenter to the royal commission and the vice-chairman of the CFUW's Standing Committee on the Status of Women. In the wake of the conference, a new national umbrella association was created and from these beginnings, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, popularly known as NAC, went on to style itself as a self-appointed watchdog on status issues and representative of hundreds of organizations.

In 1973, as organizational momentum was gaining, a second provincial conference

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was planned which "grew out of Saskatchewan women's increasing awareness of the situation of women in Canada and their concern that the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women should not be forgotten."\textsuperscript{81} This time it was held in Regina and 175 interested delegates attended. Although the proceedings focused upon the specific recommendations of the Report, it was the expressed opinion of the conference committee that a number of items discussed "were more detailed and far-reaching than the recommendations contained in that document."\textsuperscript{82} In particular, the issues of daycare and abortion generated intense debate and controversy, while property rights in marriage created lengthy discussion but resulted in much more consensus; there was widespread agreement upon the need for women to have an equitable partnership in marriage.\textsuperscript{83}

The 1973 "Woman Today" conference, as it was called, continued to work within existing networks of Saskatchewan women and to foster new ones. Over 150 organizations had been invited to attend, although the conference preferred that they attend officially as individuals and all registrants were listed as such.\textsuperscript{84} In addition, the organizers' stated goal included reaching "those women who had little previous knowledge of the Royal Commission's Report and who had had no contact with women's organizations."\textsuperscript{85} The status of women conferences, however, witnessed a similar pattern of involvement to that which had been seen at the commission hearings. Although those women who came to talk about poverty, Native issues and single-parenthood were in the

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., f.5 (1) "Briefs and Submissions," Woman Today Conference, Jun 8-10, 1973, Regina.


\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., B104, f.5(1) "Briefs and Submissions," Woman Today Conference. Ibid., R212, f.82 H, Report of Woman Today Conference.

minority, they were regularly credited with making a great impact upon those who had not faced these situations personally. Anonymous survey responses following the conference indicated that such interaction was a positive experience for some. One writer admitted that she "had never had the opportunity to talk with Indian women," while another "did not realize there was such a lack of birth control information."86 A third participant commented, "I was unaware of the plight of single parents...in rural areas we don't see these concerns as much." Another summed up the experience saying "[w]e learnt about the problems of other women - which we had never thought about."87

In the end, the organizational flavour of the conference was still sufficiently pronounced that it prompted complaints from more than one participant that not everyone was well represented by the "handpicked delegates."88 One commenter felt that "it must have been shattering to Seekers of Security and Indian and Metis women to have their problems shunted aside" and another was convinced that attention "went to the higher income bracket - they didn't want to hear about poverty or poor people."89

One of the key positive results of the conference was that many who attended were inspired to further action on status issues. Some later said that they were motivated personally to "go out again and reach for higher goals," while others were "galvanized" to join the women's movement. Certainly a boost was given to the creation of new networks, with women commenting that it was "good to see Saskatchewan women

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87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 38.
89 Ibid., Questionnaire Report, 37, 41.
together and talking" and recognizing that "[m]any new contacts" were made. Following the weekend exchange of ideas, elections were made to a permanent body which would "promote action on and implementation of the Report...foster public knowledge of the rights and status of women....[and] facilitate communication between individuals and groups concerned about the status of women." This organization, the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women (SAC), went on to publish a regular newsletter, Network of Saskatchewan Women and to represent over 1000 individuals and ninety-one organizations by 1975.

New activity on the status of women was not confined to the work of women's organizations in Saskatchewan in the early 1970s. The provincial government also got involved by appointing a Task Force on the Status of Women in Saskatchewan to investigate the forty percent of the commission's recommendations which fell under provincial jurisdiction. For Mary Rocan, the commission Report had become a "bible in the Women's Bureau" and her thorough study and support of it helped lead to the creation of the task force and her subsequent appointment to it. By working together with deputy minister of Consumer Affairs Arlene Hynd on the project, Rocan felt that the study and its Report were given more clout within the government than if the women's

90 Ibid., 41.
92 Ibid., Feb 1975.
bureau alone had been involved.95

The task force's 1973 report was mainly a re-statement of commission results -- an indication of "which recommendations of the Royal Commission had already been implemented by the Province and how the government might proceed to implement those recommendations outstanding."96 It offered sixty-eight of its own concrete suggestions on how Saskatchewan could bring about change in those areas which had still seen no action taken. For example, following the royal commission's advice that labour legislation apply to men and women equally, the task force recognized that "the department of labour administers approximately eleven safety acts which should be examined from the point of view of removing protective measures which could apply only to one sex. We are advised that an examination of these acts is being carried out."97 But despite action on specific statutes such as these, little headway had been made on major social issues by the time the task force completed its study. Rocan and Hynd noted that "equal pay legislation cannot become a reality in the absence of government priority," that "at the present time, the concept of equal partnership in marriage with respect to the sharing of the assets accumulated is not embodied in Saskatchewan legislation," and finally that "the recommendations related to day-care have not been implemented in Saskatchewan to any significant degree."98

Although the provincial study on the status of women was primarily carried out as an internal assessment of government departments, it maintained connections with the

95 Ibid.
96 Saskatchewan Women '73, 1.
98 Ibid., 10, 35, 38.
community of women's organizations through hearings and contacts with the women's bureau. In all, 890 witnesses appeared to speak to the task force, including representatives of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs and the Women's Liberation Movement. Once again, the bureau offered assistance to groups by helping them to better understand the commission's recommendations and by aiding with their preparation before the hearings. President Marion Younger of SKB&P expressed her thanks for such networking in a message to Saskatoon club president Betty Sexty: "It really is impressive the way Mary Rocan, Theresa McCallum, you and I have worked together, with the support of our Board and Clubs, to accomplish this brief." The report of the task force also readily recognized the role played by women's groups interested in status issues. It noted that "women across the nation have organized themselves into various action committees. The purpose of these committees is to ensure that the Report of the Royal Commission is not forgotten." It also recognized that such groups felt "very strongly that they should be involved in the long-term implementation of the recommendations in the Province."

When the task force's report was tabled in the summer of 1973, the government had taken no action to create either an advisory council or a position of Provincial Coordinator, Status of Women. By the time the study was published in November, however, announcements had been made concerning the government's intention to do so; both actions were carried out the following year. As well, in accordance with commission

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99 Ibid., R212, f.76 "Correspondence with Royal Commission," Comments and observations relating to material from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in Canada as submitted to the Government of Canada.

100 Ibid., R461, f.22 "Brief to Government of Saskatchewan re: report of the RCSW," Marion Younger to Betty Sexty, Feb 5, 1972. McCallum was another member of B&P active in status issues.

101 Saskatchewan Women '73 , 4.
recommendation number 165, Saskatchewan also became one of the first provinces to pass a Human Rights Act leading to the creation of a Human Rights Commission in 1972. Aside from these measures, the provincial study did not prompt a great deal of concrete legislative change, but it did greatly increase the demand for copies of the royal commission report and helped to keep discussions of status issues alive.102

The most significant outcome of the Report in Saskatchewan was its impact on women's organizations. Whereas before the commission there had been one general type of group pushing for women's rights in Saskatchewan, there were three afterwards. Although Women's Liberation did not owe its creation to the commission's work, the new Status of Women associations most certainly did. Saskatoon CFUW member and national chair of the standing committee on the status of women, Joanna Michalenko, noted in 1973 that

the status of women in Canada has become a popular "in" topic, rising from a desultory beginning after publication of *la rapport Bird* to a current high in nation-wide interest. New citizen groups and established organizations are studying the Royal Commission Report and rallying public opinion to criticize, approve or improve upon the recommendations.103

Despite closer ties to the traditional clubs and partial rejection by more radical activists, the status groups played a key networking role between the two, providing a new avenue for Saskatchewan women to promote change on women's issues.

Many royal commission participants became extremely prominent in the new status of women activities in the province following the release of the Report. In fact, as they attended conferences, joined local status groups, or became involved in some other way,
they constituted a core group around which the women's movement of the 1970s was to form in the province. Helen Hynatyshyn was part of the Saskatoon Status committee, as well as the federal Advisory Council on the Status of Women, while Nadine Hunt was appointed to the provincial Advisory Council in 1973 and also chaired a session of the conference in Regina in that year. Nancy Adams and Mary Helen Richards were elected to the Steering Committee at the 1972 Saskatoon conference, and Thora Wiggins became a regional representative for the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, a permanent group organized after the Regina conference. Emmie Oddie, Betsy Naylor and Mildred Dalgleish also attended this convention, at which Mary Rocan, Judge Mary Carter, Gail Youngberg and Harriet Kaplan filled roles as resource persons, panel member, and hostess, respectively. Sherrie Tutt attended a Regina Status meeting, Wilma Brown joined the Regina Women's Centre and Margaret Mahood continued to be involved with Women's Liberation. Judge Tilly Taylor, who represented the John Howard Society at the royal commission hearings, was appointed as the first Chair of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, created in 1972 partially

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104 Helen Hynatyshyn was president of the National Council of Women and Nadine Hunt was active in the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

105 Nancy Adams was involved with the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union, Country Women of the World and CFUW. Mary Helen Richards participated in many local organizations as well as being president of the University Women's Club and vice-president of the federal CFUW's standing committee on the status of women. Thora Wiggins was actively involved in many Prince Albert committees in addition to being president of the Provincial New Democratic Women and running as a candidate in several federal elections.

106 Emmie Oddie was past-president of the Saskatchewan Home Economics Association and Mildred Dalgleish presided at the Saskatoon Council of Women at the time of the 1968 hearings. Gail Youngberg was involved with Women's Liberation in Saskatoon and Harriet Kaplan was the chair of the status of women committee at the Saskatoon University Women's Club.

107 Sherrie Tutt became involved in the Regina Single Parents Improvements Association and organizations which worked to provide better housing. Both Wilma Brown and Margaret Mahood were members of the Voice of Women.
as a result of pressure from women's organizations and other interested groups.

In addition to these women who wrote or presented briefs to the royal commission, others who were involved as interested spectators were also inspired to join the new status of women projects. Margaret Seymour, who had written a letter to the commission on behalf of the Garfield Homemakers' Club about the plight of farm wives, later joined the Saskatchewan Action Committee after hearing one of its representatives speak at a banquet of the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes in 1974.\(^\text{108}\) She then went on to offer her services in spreading the committee's message and increasing its membership. Mary Chernesky, president of the Saskatoon University Women's Club and past-president of the Saskatchewan Home Economics Association, participated in the open discussion at the Saskatoon hearing and later went on to attend a conference.\(^\text{109}\) When Saskatchewan set up a provincial Advisory Council in 1973, it was chaired by Margaret Harris, president of the Saskatchewan Council of Women, who had followed the commission's work since meeting with Lola Lange in 1967, promoted study of the Report, and joined the local status of women committee at its inception in 1971.\(^\text{110}\)

Although the status organizations were dominated by members of women's clubs, they were also able to reach out to part of the more radical segment of society. In doing so, they found common ground between members of old and new parts of the women's movement which were otherwise distrustful of each other and differed greatly in a number of ways. Women's Liberation shunned the strict hierarchical organization and decision-making process of the older groups, choosing instead to work in collectives where no one

\(^{108}\) SAB, B104, f.7 "Editor's Correspondence," Margaret Seymour to Gwen Lee, June 6, 1974.


\(^{110}\) Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.
was president and group consensus was required to decide on action. It also had a firm belief that "the personal is political" and that the reformist lobbying techniques of women's clubs were insufficient for promoting real change both in society and in the home.\textsuperscript{111} By focussing on the private consciousness-raising of its members, it hoped to create change as much from within as through reforms gained through government and institutional intervention.

Rejecting the need for public acceptance by a society whose values it did not particularly respect, this branch of the women's movement became known for its radical tactics such as staging a protest against a beauty pageant in Saskatoon and creating an Abortion Caravan which went to Ottawa and interrupted a session of the House of commons to speak about its demands.\textsuperscript{112} To be involved with such actions was to risk losing a certain amount of public credibility, as one member saw it:

I was always brought up to believe that I should be respectable. So in choosing to belong to a group which was not, you know as I say, Council of Women or a traditional group, I had to be prepared to stand up for my beliefs and to accept some negative feedback and some rejection.\textsuperscript{113}

Such behaviour was seen as quite militant by members of the traditional clubs, who recognized that the vocal young women had certain valuable things to say but disapproved of their unconventional tactics:

\begin{quote}
[Large numbers of women in so called liberation groups, are springing up, some of them radical in their aims, some of them wildly bizarre and the newspapers naturally play up the most grotesque. Some of the things they are saying are true and should be brought forcibly to the attention of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{111} Bonnie Kreps, Guide to the Women's Movement in Canada - A Chatelaine Cope-Kit 8, 13. Kreps was also a presenter to the Royal Commission in Ontario


\textsuperscript{113} Margaret Mahood interview, Regina, Oct 11, 1994.
Society. We can only hope that what they are saying can be heard over the din of their voices.\textsuperscript{114}

When it came to discussing women's rights specifically, traditional clubs, such as the Council of Women, divided between those who thought it a subject of minor importance and those who felt that broader social change was necessary to make life better for women. Amongst service groups, some members were counselled: "at a time when so many groups are demanding "rights" be proud to be a part of the Council of women, whose emphasis is on personal responsibility."\textsuperscript{115} Elva Kyle of the University Women's Club echoed this sentiment, saying "it has been a privilege to be President of an organization respected by both men and women. I have been conscious that the community regards us as a group of concerned but moderate women with enthusiasm for orderly change."\textsuperscript{116}

Despite such declarations, portions of the traditional groups eagerly took up study of the commission's report and joined Status of Women associations. The New Democratic women's committee, after noticing the "shift in character" of its women's clubs\textsuperscript{117} starting in 1969, eventually reorganized itself in 1972 under the chairmanship of Thora Wiggens, a presenter to the commission. Wiggens pointed out that the new group had "no wish to duplicate the services the established Ladies Clubs perform"\textsuperscript{118} and recommended that the new committee "make use of the excellent Status of Women.

\textsuperscript{114} SAB, R461, "1970 Convention Minutes," President's Address by Margaret Ashdown, July 4-9, 1970, Halifax.
\textsuperscript{116} SAB, University of Regina Women's Club, R 1086, V.I., f.16 "Reports 1951-87," Annual Report May 12, 1975.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., A379, untitled write up from 1986 conference of NDP women
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., Thora Wiggens, "Provincial Women's Committee Report," Nov 18, 1972.
material available.\textsuperscript{119} Members of other organizations also became actively involved, including Margaret Harris who expressed dismay that some Saskatchewan women

[ didn't] have any idea that change was needed in so many areas. And a number of those were people who were quite comfortable in their own home, in their own financial situation. And they didn't seem to be concerned. They didn't see any problem because they didn't have a problem. \textsuperscript{120}

A similar division took place, albeit on a different part of the political spectrum, within newly organizing Women's Liberation groups in Saskatchewan. Here the issue was not whether or not to fight for women's rights, but rather to what lengths the movement should go to achieve this goal. Those who held Marxist beliefs argued that no true relief would come for women without revolution\textsuperscript{121}, while others preferred to focus on change at the present time or were convinced that women's problems transcended the issue of class: "we cannot rely on socialist men to make the necessary changes needed to liberate women, we must do it."\textsuperscript{122} While some members of such collectives acted in non-conformist ways, others were more tentative about taking on extreme attitudes. Significantly, those who spoke to the commission did not see themselves as radical feminists although they likely would have been so termed by others outside the movement.\textsuperscript{123} Gail Youngberg recalled that there were

meetings in which we would just about be driven nuts by some of the "trots" we called them - Trotskyites, because they were firm believers in

\textsuperscript{120} Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.
\textsuperscript{122} Carol Gudmundson, "A need for more women in politics," Saskatoon Women's Liberation Newsletter, Apr 1973, 16.
\textsuperscript{123} Margaret Mahood interview, Regina, Oct 16, 1994.
the value of a slogan and for all of their socialist rhetoric, not very strong believers in the capacity of the masses to think things through.... And some of the rest of us, really genteel and middle class perhaps, and also practically speaking politically naive, wanted to avoid that kind of thing.\textsuperscript{124}

When women who wanted to focus on the royal commission and related status issues came together at conferences in the early 1970s and built new associations around the issue, they forged connections, albeit tenuous ones, between women's liberation and the more traditional clubs. The new Status of Women committees profited from the dissent present in the other organizations, in that they drew their membership largely from the more moderate factions in each. While maintaining some of the public credibility of the so-called liberal or reform feminists, these groups borrowed the women's liberation method of attacking women's issues head on, asking for change not merely in the name of "the highest good of the Family and the State\textsuperscript{125} but in the name of women themselves.\textsuperscript{126}

In doing so, the province's status of women organizations were tapping into an existing division within established groups -- one that had been present since before the royal commission. In fact, many such organizations had been noticing a trend of aging and sometimes even declining membership in the early 1960s, and as a result had been seeking ways to appeal more to busy young women with family and employment responsibilities.\textsuperscript{127} The Saskatchewan B&P clubs noted that "the image of being a club

\textsuperscript{124} Gail Youngberg interview, Saskatoon, Dec 16, 1994.


\textsuperscript{127} "Challenge of survival faces women's groups," \textit{The Star Phoenix} May 5, 1967, 6.
of older women is definitely fixed in the minds of many and younger women don't want to be identified with that age group." Indeed, according to a 1964 survey, the mean age of members was in the early fifties. At the Council of Women, similar troubles prompted a suggestion for more evening meetings to accommodate those who had trouble fitting volunteer work into their schedules.

In contrast to the trend in these groups, those who joined Women's Liberation were overwhelmingly young women. Yet they were often social counterparts of the club members because, as was the case in the American women's movement, their backgrounds were similar on almost every other point. Both drew largely from the well-educated middle-class; in fact, the members of Women's Liberation could have been and probably often were the daughters of those in the clubs. Both factions, however, experienced certain difficulties in appealing to large numbers of young women. When the royal commission came along and prompted new work to be done on status of women issues, a new middle ground approach opened up for women to work for change.

Not associating closely with the clubs of their mothers or the seemingly radical Women's Liberationists, some younger women found a compromise solution by identifying with the status groups. It was similar to a trend discernable in the membership of NAC's counterpart in the United States, the National Organization of Women (NOW), which offered the respectability of older associations combined with the

newer issues and personal "rap group" approach of the liberationists. In Saskatchewan, despite a previous difficulty in attracting the new generation to meetings, when the Council of Women spearheaded a committee to discuss the commission's report, "it was all young women" who showed up to work on status issues. Although initially expecting to find no conflict with the new status groups, the president of the Council of Women admitted later in 1971 that "we are finding we are competing with action groups which attract the younger and more dynamic women, where long ago council was the women's liberation of the day."

The Status of Women organizations which developed in Saskatchewan after the royal commission were usually composed of a core group of progressive club organizers, enlivened by moderate radicals and entirely new recruits to work in women's issues. The former offered legitimacy and experience with formal lobbying, while the liberationists infused the movement with their social analysis and dynamics; the young women just joining in added enthusiasm and new blood. Because of the many interrelations of organizations represented, members provided an ideal network for spreading word of

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132 Jo Freeman, *The Politics of Women's Liberation: A Case Study of an Emerging Social Movement and its Relation to the Policy Process*. New York: David McKay Inc, 1975, 85. Bonnie Kreps, a well-known Women's Liberationist, explained that "rap groups" were devised by radical feminists for the purpose of personal consciousness-raising and creating solidarity among women. In such groups, she said, "[y]ou begin to understand the term often used by feminists, "The personal is political," in that you see that what you thought was your own personal problem -- you were inadequate, neurotic, etc. -- is not merely your problem but part of a whole social context which can be labeled [sic] "Born Female."" Bonnie Kreps, Guide to the Women's Movement in Canada: A Chatelaine Cope-Kit

133 Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.


136 Margaret Harris interview, Saskatoon, Oct 11, 1994.
status issues and programs to their other associations. For some, work within the status organizations created an ideal niche for ideas which were neither wholly radical nor supportive of the status quo. Indeed, what other committee would involve a woman who read and even contributed to the Saskatoon Women's Liberation newsletter while presiding at the University Women's Club and a liberationist who also belonged to the very genteel U of S Faculty Wives Club? By forging such networks and providing them with an agenda, The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada played a critical role in promoting activity amongst Saskatchewan women as the second wave women's movement was gaining momentum.

CONCLUSION

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada was not directly a product of the more radical second wave women's movement, and thus cannot be termed its first success. The inquiry followed decades of efforts by women's clubs to establish equality between female and male citizens. Its Report would become a standard reference manual for those who continued its work through status organizations in the years to come. It was through these new associations specifically dealing with the status of women that Saskatchewan activists continued to keep an eye on governments to ensure the commission's report was not forgotten. By bringing together radical club members and moderate women's liberationists to pursue this aim, the status of women committees provided a dynamic middle ground position from which to approach the women's movement of the early 1970s.

Criticism of the royal commission as unrepresentative of the variety of women's experiences in Canada\(^1\) is well founded and holds true in Saskatchewan. The status of women study was by no means a priority or even a known entity for the majority of the province's residents. The participants who did present their views to the commission were disproportionately urban, middle-class, and leaders of major women's organizations, for whom speaking to a government body, like the royal commission, was part of regular club business. The urban focus of professional women's organizations and Women's Liberation may have alienated farm women from status of women and general women's movement.

activities in the early 1970s. Although a number of working class individuals expressed their concerns to the commission on the status of women, they did not become involved in follow-up activities to the same extent as the club women did. They may have been restricted from joining status organizations by the very life experiences which brought them before the commission: working frantically to make ends meet while raising a family. Ironically, although women who told these stories at hearings and conferences sometimes walked away feeling they were not included, their expressions made a great impact upon the club women who were listening and went on to organize around status of women issues.

The networking between Saskatchewan women's groups in the aftermath of the commission's report produced new organizations but otherwise did not last long. Despite some cooperation, there continued to be ambivalence towards women's liberation within the women's movement of the 1970s. Indeed, fearing possible clashes, organizers urged delegates at the 1972 status of women conference to "[j]oin with other groups. Seek allies by discovering what you have in common, not where you differ." Although commission participant Nancy Adams, noted that "there was a change of atmosphere" by the end of the conference sessions, hostility was still expressed by some delegates. They were

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2 Daina Bruners, "The Influence of the Women's Liberation Movement on the Lives of Canadian Farm Women," Resources for Feminist Research Vol.14, no.3, Nov. 1985, 18-19. Involvement later increased after the well-publicized court cases of Irene Murdoch and Helen Rathwell in 1973. The two women were denied equal shares of their accumulated marital property upon divorce from their husbands.

3 For example, Edith Mair, Wilma Brown, Winnifred Virtue, Ruth McGill, Mary Taylor.

4 SAB, R212, f.82H, Report of Woman Today Conference, Questionnaire Report, 37,38,41.


worried about how their image might suffer by being connected with those making such "belligerent clamor." Suggestions were even made that the newly forming organizations improve their publicity as "Status of Women has gained a poor reputation based on women's lib." 

Women worried about this problem of image, not only as individuals, but also at the club level. President Nora Thibideau of the newly formed Saskatchewan Native Women's Movement was careful to point out that although Native women were organizing to work for better lives and communities, they were certainly not a women's liberation group. And while it became increasingly popular for organizations to bring in speakers to talk about both liberation and the status of women, the two were not always clearly separated in the minds of club members. This confusion was demonstrated at a 1972 meeting of the Saskatoon University Women's Club at which a panel of speakers, including commission participants Carter and Richards, spoke about the women's movement:

Not enough women know the difference between status of wom[a]sic and women's liberation, was one comment later from the meeting. The terms were synonymous in the minds of some and this speaker did not want to be associated with women's liberation.

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7 Ibid., R212, f.82 H, Report of the Woman Today Conference, Survey results, 45.
8 Ibid., 45.
10 For example, Gail Youngberg addressed the Saskatchewan Home Economics Association: Ibid., B17, f.7 (1) Newsletter, May 1971; Margaret Mahood spoke to the New Democratic Women: Ibid., B82, V.II, f.2 "Annual Reports 1963-79," 1971 Annual report, April 7; Mary Helen Richards spoke to the Saskatchewan Women's Institutes: Liz Delaney, "Years of decline become years of action," The Western Producer June 17, 1976, 52.
Even the Status of Women organizations shared this ambivalence. Such associations were generally much more open to the new tactics and terminology of the women's movement than those in the traditional clubs and even adopted some of these practices as their own. At the conferences, references were made to sisterhood and consciousness-raising while local Saskatoon committee meetings sometimes "had no formal speaker and turned into a rap session." Status of Women member Mary Helen Richards demonstrated that her group had moved beyond the tactics used during the royal commission when she asked members to "acknowledge the value of militancy [as demonstrations, protests, boycotts will get more news coverage than a dozen well-considered briefs." President Jane Abramson of SAC emphasized that "Women's Lib" is not a term that we need be ashamed of....They deserve a great deal of credit for the part they have played in arousing public attention.

Despite such displays of unity, SAC and its local committees were regularly concerned with how to keep their image publically appealing and mainly worked to effect change through lobbying channels. By their own admission, the groups were "primarily made up of women concerned with legislative reform." Following a meeting between the somewhat militant Saskatoon committee and provincial government representatives, one member feared that the presence of radical members may have damaged the group's credibility:

12 Ibid., R212, f.82 h, Report of the Woman Today Conference, survey results, 43.


16 Ibid.
I feel that Mr. Rolfes got the impression that it was a "lib" group - they were certainly the majority and gave him a rather rough time. I do hope other, more conservative members join the Coordinating Committee in the fall.\(^{17}\)

When such conflicts occurred, affiliation between Status of Women and Women's Liberation suffered.

The frustration was also felt by the liberationists, as they grappled with the issue of how to be faithful to radical ideas of change within organizations which accepted government funding for their existence.\(^{18}\) Saskatoon member Carol Gudmundson also expressed her group's doubts about continuing to lobby for reform through the usual channels which had not proven to have been very effective:

I don't believe that by using pressure group tactics we can change these paramount problems. Do you really think the old boys' club in Regina, the old boys' club at City Hall, the old boys' club in Ottawa really understand when we talk about repeal of abortion laws, equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for women, or our hostile attitude towards their assumptions that women should be barefoot, pregnant and chained to the kitchen sink, with chain big enough to reach the bed? Do you really think they even care?\(^{19}\)

Although the women's movement expanded in the 1970s, it did so by breaking into a myriad of new organizations which took up specific causes, rather than uniting to transform society overall. Women's Liberation redefined its goals and moved on to new activities on issue or service-oriented projects, such as abortion campaigns and women's shelters. Saskatoon's movement, which had revolved around a women's centre for several


\(^{18}\) Ibid., Gail McConnell, A725, Minutes of women's liberation meeting, May, 1976.

\(^{19}\) Carol Gudmundson, "A need for more women in politics," Saskatoon Women's Liberation Newsletter, April 1973, 16.
years, chose the former strategy. At a meeting in 1976, a core group of ten women announced their decision to alter their focus:

A few of us have begun talking about the sad state of the women's liberation movement in Saskatoon.... We feel that our work is not of a service-oriented nature. The birth control and abortion work the Centre did so long is being adequately done by Family Planning. Status of Women is working on pressuring governments and keeping touch with Saskatchewan women. Our work can best be done around issues.\(^{20}\)

Significantly, at a time when this major readjustment was being made on behalf of radical women, the compromise groups, which had been born out of the royal commission's work and energized by women's liberation, remained strong. The most vocal liberation group in Saskatchewan noted in 1978 that "the last few years have been disastrous. Between 1974 and 1976 almost every Canadian women's group (except the major revisionist groups like Status of Women) went into a slump so serious that it appeared that we had perished."\(^{21}\)

Royal commissions have long been criticized for avoiding real progress by tailoring their advice to suit the government of the day. Yet an inquiry with broad terms of reference can indeed open up radical debate upon social issues which has reverberations far beyond the halls of the House of Commons. The 1977 Berger Commission, for example, "recognized the importance of this process of developing consciousness and of its articulation and it afforded its participants many opportunities to "come into their own" as advocate groups through the process of speaking to the

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\(^{20}\) SAB, A725, Minutes of women's liberation meeting May 76, statement signed by Annette Kouri, Molly McQuarrie, Nancy Allan, Glenda Brown, Audrey Hall, Laurienne Ring, Linda Charlton, Colleen Pollreis, Sue Smee and Nadia Greschuk.

inquiry.22 The status of women commission played exactly this kind of role in promoting new work amongst women activists at the local and provincial level.

The major significance of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Saskatchewan was that it provided women with an agenda and inspiration for new activity within the second wave women's movement of the 1970s. Although many of the issues were not new to activists, the study focused the lobbying efforts of women's clubs and contributed a great deal to the institutionalization of the status of women within both the government and the women's movement. Like the traditional clubs that generated them, these status associations failed to attract many poor women, farmers, Natives or young radicals. Yet by having their eyes opened to such issues at the hearings and subsequent status discussion in Saskatchewan, women in the new organizations demonstrated a willingness to go beyond the conservative reform work of their predecessors and constituted a vibrant part of the provincial women's movement at a time when both traditional and radical women's groups were in decline. In these efforts to improve women's lives, the status of women associations had the royal commission to thank for their roots, their focus, and the creation of a new climate of opinion which accepted women's status as a legitimate subject of discussion in Saskatchewan.

22 Ibid., 179-80.
APPENDIX A: The Royal Commission on the Status of Women

TERMS OF REFERENCE

P.C. 1967-312

Certified to be a true copy of a Minute of a Meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 16th February, 1967.

Canada
Privy Council

The Committee of the Privy Council, on the recommendation of the Right Honourable Lester Bowles Pearson, the Prime Minister, advise that

Mrs. John Bird, Ottawa, Ontario,
Miss Elsie Gregory MacGill, Toronto, Ontario,
Mrs. Ottomar Lange, Claresholm, Alberta,
Miss Jeanne Lapointe, Quebec City, Quebec,
Mrs. Robert Ogilvie, Fredericton, New Brunswick,
*Mr. Donald Gordon, Jr., Waterloo, Ontario,
Mr. Jacques Henripin, Montreal, Quebec,
**Mr. John P. Humphrey, Montreal, Quebec,

be appointed Commissioners under Part I of the Inquiries Act to inquire into and report upon the status of women in Canada, and to recommend what steps might be taken by the Federal Government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society, having regard for the distribution of legislative powers under the constitution of Canada, particularly with reference to federal statutes, regulations and policies that concern or affect the rights and activities of women and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, to inquire into and report on:

1. Laws and practices under federal jurisdiction concerning the political rights of women;
2. The present and potential role of women in the Canadian Labour force, including the special problems of married women in employment and measures that might be taken under federal jurisdiction to help in meeting them;
3. Measures that might be taken under federal jurisdiction to permit the better use of the skills and education of women, including the special re-training requirements of married

2 The married women commissioners signed the Report in 1970 with their own first names rather than their husbands'. 
women who wish to re-enter professional or skilled employment;
4. Federal Labour laws and regulations in their application to women;
5. Laws, practices and policies concerning the employment and promotion of women in the Federal Civil Service, by Federal Crown Corporations and by Federal Agencies;
6. Federal taxation pertaining to women;
7. Marriage and divorce;
8. The position of women under the Criminal Law;
9. Immigration and citizenship laws, policies and practices with respect to women;

and such other matters in relation to the status of women in Canada as may appear to the Commissioners to be relevant.

The Committee further advise that
(a) The Commissioners be authorized to exercise all the powers conferred on them by section 11 of the Inquiries Act;
(b) The Commissioners be authorized to sit at such times and at such places as they may decide from time to time;
(c) The Commissioners be authorized to engage the services of such counsel, staff and technical advisers as they may require, at rates of remuneration and reimbursement approved by the Treasury Board;
(d) The Commissioners report to the Governor in Council with all reasonable despatch, and file with the Dominion Archivist the papers and records of the Commission as soon as reasonably may be after the conclusion of the inquiry;
(e) Mrs. John Bird, Ottawa, Ontario, be Chairman of the Commission.

R.G. Robertson
Clerk of the Privy Council

** Appointed in replacement of Mr. Gordon - P.C. 1968-229 of February 2 / 68 refers.
CRITERIA AND PRINCIPLES

1. In a dozen succinct words the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has clarified the issue of the rights of women: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

2. Canada is, therefore, committed to a principle that permits no distinction in rights and freedoms between women and men. The principle emphasizes the common status of women and men rather than a separate status for each sex. The stage has been set for a new society equally enjoyed and maintained by both sexes.

3. But practices and attitudes die slowly. As we travelled across the country, we heard of discrimination against women that still flourishes and prejudice that is very much alive. It became abundantly clear that Canada's commitment is far from being realized.

4. We have been asked to inquire into and report upon the status of women in Canada and we have done so in the light of certain principles. A general principle is that everyone is entitled to the rights and freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We have examined the status of women to learn whether or not they really have these rights and freedoms both in principle and in practice. Some of our recommendations should establish a measure of equality that is now lacking for men as well as for women.

5. Explicit in the Terms of Reference given us by the Government is our duty to ensure for women equal opportunities with men. We have interpreted this to mean that equality of opportunity for everyone should be the goal of Canadian society. The right to an adequate standard of living is without value to the person who has no means of achieving it. Freedom to choose a career means little if the opportunity to enter some occupations is restricted.

6. Our Terms of Reference also imply that the full use of human resources is in the national interest. We have explored the extent to which Canada develops and makes use of the skills and abilities of women.

7. Women and men, having the same rights and freedoms, share the same responsibilities. They should have an equal opportunity to fulfil this obligation. We have, therefore, examined the status of women and made recommendations in the belief that there should be equality of opportunity to share the responsibilities to society as well as its privileges and prerogatives.

8. In particular, the Commission adopted four principles: first, that women should be free to choose whether or not to take employment outside their homes. The circumstances which impede this free choice have been of specific interest to our inquiry. Where we have made recommendations to improve opportunities for women in the work world, our goal has not been to force married women to work for pay outside of the home but rather to eliminate the practical

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3 Ibid., xi-xii.
obstacles that prevent them from exercising this right. If a husband is willing to support his wife, or a wife her husband, the decision and responsibility belong to them.

9. The second is that the care of children is a responsibility to be shared by the mother, the father and society. Unless this shared responsibility is acknowledged and assumed, women cannot be accorded true equality.

10. The third principle specifically recognizes the child-bearing function of women. It is apparent that society has a responsibility for women because of pregnancy and child-birth, and special treatment related to maternity will always be necessary.

11. The fourth principle is that in certain areas women will for an interim period require special treatment to overcome the adverse effects of discriminatory practices. We consider such measures to be justified in a limited range of circumstances, and we anticipate that they should quickly lead to actual equality which would make their continuance unnecessary. The needs and capacities of women have not always been understood. Discrimination against women has in many instances been unintentional and special treatment will no longer be required if a positive effort to remove it is made for a short period.

12. With these principles in mind, we have first looked at women in Canadian society. Within this perspective, we have gone on the consider the position of women in the economy, the education they receive, their place in the family and their participation in public life. We have considered the particular implications of poverty among women, conditions of citizenship and aspects of taxation, and the Criminal Code as it affects the female offender.
APPENDIX B: Saskatchewan Participants

OFFICIAL BRIEFS ACCEPTED BY THE ROYAL COMMISSION:

#10 The Honourable Mary Y. Carter, Saskatoon
#11 Carrie A. Berntsson, Robsart
#27 The Saskatchewan Jaycettes, Regina
#41 Mrs. E.E. Jacobi, Moosomin
#50 Mrs. J Anderson, Saskatoon
#67 The Provincial Council of Women of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
#74 Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan, Wood Mountain
#76 Dora Kuehn, Lloydminster
#83 The Regina Home Economics Club, Regina
#84 Canadian Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Regina
#109 Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association, Saskatoon
#114 John Howard Society, Regina
#133 N.D.P. Provincial Women's Committee, Saskatchewan Section, Regina
#134 Elmer Laird, Davidson
#151 Mrs. Edith Mair, Regina
#157 Sherrie E. Tutt, Rouleau
#173 Voice of women, Regina
#187 Wilma Brown, Regina
#211 Zenny Burton, Regina
#224 A Group of Women, NDP Workshop, Saskatoon
#228 May Taylor and Ruth McGill, Regina
#271 Women of the Saskatchewan Farmers Union, Saskatoon
#282 Driver United Church Women, Driver
#287 Saskatchewan Home Economics Association, Regina
#294 University Women's Club, Regina
#295 Women's Organization of the New Democratic Party, Yorkton
#296 Women's A d Hoc Committee of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, C.L.C, Regina
#328 Canadian Women's Press Club, Regina
#376 Sophia Dixon, Saskatoon
#384 Government of the Province of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
#387 Nellie M. Mitchell, Fiske
#446 Mrs. Sam Lavallée, Broadview
#447 Betty Tait and Thora Wiggens, Northside
#456 Jean H. Sloan, Lloydminster

PRESENTATIONS OFFICIALLY RECORDED AT SASKATCHEWAN HEARINGS:

Regina, April 29 - May 1:

Saskatchewan Jaycettes
Regina Home Economic Club
University Club of Regina
Regina Voice of Women
NDP Prov. women's Committee
Government of Province of Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Home Economics Association
Association of Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
Wilma Brown
Mrs. Ruth McGill, Mrs. Mary Taylor
Sherrie Tutt
Mrs. Sam Lavallee (last minute)
Mrs. T.E. Berndtsson
Mrs. Zenny Burton

Saskatoon, May 2 - 3:

John Howard Society
Driver United Church Women
Saskatchewan Farmers' Union
Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association
Provincial Council of Women
NDP Women's Organization of Yorkton
NDP Workshop
Judge Mary Carter
Mrs. J Anderson
Elmer Laird
Mrs. Wiggens, Mrs. Tate (last minute)
Mrs. Leaks (last minute)
Mrs. Virtue (last minute)
Mrs. Hitchings (last minute)
Mrs. Marton (last minute)
Mrs. Richards (last minute)

\(^5\) As recorded in NAC, RG 33-89, V.10, Precis of Public Hearings, Regina - Saskatoon.
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Helen Hynatyshyn, A847.
Gail McConnell (Youngberg) A725.
Regina Voice of Women, R138.
Mary Helen Richards, A229.
Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women, 514.1
Saskatchewan Business and Professional Women's Clubs, R461.
Saskatchewan Home Economics Association, B17.
Saskatchewan Provincial Council of Canadian Federation of University Women, R638.
Saskatoon Local Council of Women, B82.
Saskatoon Women Teachers Association, B141.
Status of Women Society, B104.
Thora Wiggens, A379.
University Women's Club of Regina, R351.
University of Regina Women's Club, R1086.
Women's Centre, B112

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