

# **Toward Prosperity**

## **Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women Consultation**

June 24, 2000

### **Discussion**

#### **Vision**

- “All Nova Scotians” should specify “women and men.”
- “Citizens” should be used rather than “clients”.
- Highways should include municipal roads as well.

#### **Principles**

- “Improving the quality of all jobs” leads to a discussion of issues like more money for minimum wage, pay equity, the debt load issue on young people, universal day care, health benefits and family friendly employers.
- Good social programs are a foundation for successful economic development.
- The focus should be on practical issues.

#### **Education and Income**

- It is important not to limit educational opportunities (i.e. people over 21 should still qualify for free high school). Appropriate training should be available when people need it.
- Voluntary Planning talked about the importance of “life long learning”. How can this be implemented? How do you finance ongoing education?
- People should be able to bank educational credits as a result of working, a pension plan type approach.
- There is a danger in tying education to a job.
- Too many school courses are “fillers”. We need better courses.
- We need to restore confidence in the education system.

#### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

- Business needs to handle maternity leave (replacements, flexibility) better.
- Equality cannot simply mean treating everybody the same. We need to accommodate differences.

#### **Disincentives**

- There are powerful disincentives in the system. They lead to overwhelming barriers.
- Include women in decision making concerning family friendly workplaces.
- Fix the system so it does not hurt one income families.

#### **Internet**

- The Net has the potential to bring communities together but there are dangers in “main-streaming” all cultures.

## **Women**

- How much does the Department of Economic Development spend on women? Does it even know?
- Are there appropriate programs for women entrepreneurs?
- Is it harder for women to get a loan? Start a business? Do we know?
- There are no safety nets for entrepreneurs. Some women need safety nets.
- More good full time jobs are required for all people.

## **Gas & Oil**

- Will Sable save us? There was some scepticism on this point.
- How can we get more women into gas & oil jobs? (And IT)
- There is a danger that this industry will perpetuate the dual labour force. Oil and gas is seen as a “bad” industry for women. There are barriers. Companies have lied to women.
- There is lack of access to unions. There are accommodation problems - at least perceived - on rigs.

## **Employment Equity**

- Who is governed by the Employment Equity Act?

## **Environment**

- There needs to be a balance between development and environment issues.
- Environmental clean up could become an industry.