



A REPORT ON THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE PROPOSED B.C. WOMEN'S FEDERATION

On the 25th day of May, a conference---Women in Action--was held in Capilano College in North Vancouver. Women from as far away as Dawson Creek attended. After a full day of discussions and workshops, the delegates called for a federation to unite the women of this province; an umbrella group. The delegates also declared that the first act of the federation be to hold a demonstration to dramatizr the slow progress of legislators in the field of women's rights.

Consequently, every group at the Conference named a women to a steering committee empowered to organize a federation and plan a demonstration. Margaret Mackenzie has represented the West Kootenay Women at the 15-16th June and 6-7th July meetings and wants ideas to take to the 24-25th August meeting.

To date, the steering committee is agreed on the following:

1. The name of the organization is to be the British Columbia Federation of Women.
2. The BCFW is to be founded at a conference on the 14th of September, 1974.
3. The B. C. F. W. is to held semi-annual general conventions.

contd.

B. C. F. W., contd.(2)

4. The BCFW is to be open to any and all women who can agree with a majority of the issues that a convention empowers the federation to fight for.
5. The BCFW will be a basically feminist organization, becoming actively involved in all aspects of women's rights.
6. The BCFW is to provide communication and resources exchange among members around the province.

The Steering Committee is still discussing and wants(demands) feedback on the following:

- 1/ Membership--group vs. individuals
 - a. advantages of individual membership
 - sense of belonging to something.
 - permits women who don't belong to a group be part of the federation.
 - b. disadvantages of individual membership
 - how do groups get the backing and support of the Federation?
 - easier to pack conventions
 - small groups at a disadvantage because they have fewer individuals to contribute to the federation.
 - c. Advantages of group membership
 - with a sliding ratio of delegates, voting at conventions would be more fair.
 - communication network would be more efficient.
 - automatic support and backing of the federation.
 - the BCFW would be a true federation, something special and above other groups.
 - d. Disadvantages of group membership
 - individual women might feel the BCFW is "too far away."
 - alienation of women who dislike having to join a specific group in order to take part in a general organization.
 - some people belong to more than one group and could count more than once in assignment of delegates.
2. Governing Body--4 forms were considered.
 - a. parliamentary--requires an opposition, representatives from every district, a cabinet, caucus secrecy.
 - b. executive and corporate(considered together)
 - considered elitist and star making.
 - decisions go from the top down(the majority have no say, just take orders.)
 - c. collective--would require every single member to convene every time any decision was to be made.

Therefore, it was suggested that the governing body take this form:

10 regional reps(region based on population) to be elected by regional vote.

plus, 7 reps with specific tasks to be elected at large.

plus, 3 reps with no specific tasks to be elected at large.

These 20 persons will function as a collective. They will meet once a month in a different region each time. The seven reps with tasks will be:

co-ordinator (arrange meetings, etc.)

external communication (press and other media)

internal communication (newspaper, resource exchange)

finance (raising and distributing money)

membership (records of present members and seeking new members)

action(e.g. the women's parliament and similar activities,)

rural co-ordinator (keeps the others on their toes with respect to the interests and needs of rural women)

The governing body will be bound by policy formed at convention.

3. Money

- the steering committee is currently financing itself and is hoping to be reimbursed by the BCFW when formed.
 - the founding convention can be financed in part by registration fees with the difference being made up by the Provincial Secretary and/or the Secretary of State.
 - The BCFW will receive some money from "dues" but will be conducting fund-raising activities. A raffle is proposed when prizes can be lined up (feminist and/or humorous prizes-- a free divorce, a free abortion, a portrait of a flight attendant saying, "I'm Eric, fly me!")
- The BCFW may eventually run a lottery but the income from a lottery is very slow and much bound by legal restrictions.
More ideas very necessary here!

4. Demonstration.

- must be called a Women's Parliament (mock or shadow implies that we are pretending or playing--we're not!)
- can't be held in the fall - not enough time to do it well
- proposed--to held the demonstration in the early part of 1975 (good kick-off for International Womens' Year).
- proposed--to hold it, if possible, in the actual legislative chamber (makes it an educational experience--would teach women taht getting elected to something is not so bad--which means Mrs. Daly might pay for it.
- to present model(serious) legislation in the house (the sort of legislation that the government should have passed), and to have, in another location, the presentation of satirical material ("We don't need a ministry of men's rights at this time"). The reason for 2 parts to the demonstration is that the house, if we get it, will hold only about 300, and hopefully more than that will show up.
- to mimic the Victoria legislature as much as possible(vicereine, speaker, mace, prayer, pomp, circumstance, etc.)
- to arrive at the demonstration in a cavalcade of cars and chartered buses.

5. Founding Convention

- 14th and 15th of September in the Lower Mainland in some facility that is large and cheap. Eyecatching social (e.g. parade or demonstration) on the 13th for those who arrive early. Day sessions are to be very business like-- founding resolution, small group discussions and eventually a constitution.
- billeting will be available.
- Child care will be available only to those who pre-register.

Anyone who has antthing to say to or against the foregoing, speak up!!! or is there antthing anyone wants to see in the federation? Maragaret Mackenzie lives at 1747 A. Main Street, Trail, and will file a change of address with the Post Office if she moves. Or get ideas and comments to Marcia or Susan or Bubbles or anyone who will forward them.

The following is a strictly personal opinion. Many people in the Kootenays will express unhappiness at the proposed date of the Women's Parliament. Having lived here nearly a year and knowing just how you all have helped me, I feel that West Kootenay Womenare strong--strong enough to consider the mountains a challenge rather than a barrier, to consider the snow something to plow throug rathee than something to be covered over by, to consider ice a spice rather than an excuse. If I'm wrong, I'll be surprised and very sorry.

Margaret Mackenzie

