

Copy ^{sent} to Legal Services Society
as well as Allan Williams.
J.M.

BCFW

british columbia federation of women

Office of the Attorney-General
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia
V8V1X4

Dear Mr. Williams:

We are appalled to learn that the Legal Services Society's funds have been cut back by 1.3 million dollars. This will not enable the Legal Services Society to fulfill its mandate to the poor and disadvantaged people of B.C. of whom the majority are women. Due to our economic situation the numbers of people dependent on the Legal Services Society for access to justice are increasing rapidly and according to the Legal Services Society there are almost no legal services left for Family Court. Access to the justice system is a fundamental human right, yet we learn that 2,000 people will not get lawyers next year because of tighter eligibility criteria, 2,500 more will not get a lawyer for criminal trials, and 2,000 more will not be represented in divorces. We learn that information and education programs have been cut back and that lawyers who do legal aid are paid 12.5 percent less to do so.

We are appalled that funding for legal assistance in custody disputes was cut back in April 1982. A woman must already have custody of her children and must be battered or have a well founded apprehension that she or one of her family members will be battered before she will receive legal assistance.

We demand that the Attorney-General immediately restore all funding to the Legal Services Society; that the Attorney-General continue to fund the Legal Services Society to the level necessary to fulfill its mandate; and that the Attorney-General fund services to litigants in Family Court.

Yours truly,

Lee MacKay

Lee MacKay

Lower Mainland Region of the
British Columbia Federation
of Women