

NDN - FEB 13/78

# WAP to champion women where discrimination occurs

The West Kootenay Women's Association, through a grant from the Secretary of State, has created the Women's Advocacy Program (WAP).

WAP will act with and on behalf of women facing discrimination in the com-

munity. The program will attempt to identify recurrent problem areas and work to eliminate them. Pamphlets are being distributed throughout the Nelson and surrounding area, with information and a response form for women seeking assistance of WAP.

Ms. Bonnie Baker, a spokeswoman for the program, explains: "While some of the most blatant forms of discrimination are no longer practised, there are still many instances in which women face discrimination and have no place to go for help. The Women's Advocacy Program will provide that place.

"For instance," Ms. Baker continued, "we know that some women in this area have been advised by lawyers that they do not have the right to keep their maiden names when they marry. This is not true, and we will be sending information to lawyers about areas of the law that specifically relate to women. Many things of this type

may go unnoticed, and we hope to provide current information to ensure that such errors are not continually repeated." Ms Baker added.

WAP wants to obtain as much information as possible from women about types of discrimination they feel they face, whether blatant or subtle in nature. Where a specific case warrants action, they will seek to aid the aggrieved woman. Where a problem area is repeatedly brought forward, the program will seek, through meetings and educational materials, to help redress the problem.

The WAP is operating two days a week, Thursday and Friday, at the Nelson's Women's Centre, 307 Vernon Street.

"We hope that women will not be shy about bringing their experiences to us," says Ms. Baker. "The success of our program depends on our ability to collect the information from which to identify the areas of greatest concern to women in our community."