



Northwest Territories Minister Responsible for Status of Women

Women's Secretariat

TABLED DOCUMENT NO. 61-88(1)
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Government of N.W.T.
Yellowknife, N.W.T.

MEMBERS,
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

It is with disappointment and a sense of frustration that I table the first report on the 1985 Five Year Action Plan. Responsibility for the implementation of the Action Plan rests with appropriate departments. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, is responsible for reporting annually to this assembly. It has been 2½ years since the plan was approved and, I must say, that I am dissatisfied with the lack of progress. The plan should have been tabled earlier. It appears that due to lack of significant progress made by departments there was little to report.

As 1985 marked the end of the United Nations Decade for Women, the Government of the NWT reviewed its achievements in the area of equality for women and found that there was still much to be done. Our review, using a United Nations Questionnaire, found that in many areas the NWT did not meet the world standards of women's equality set out in International Agreements, or under the Rights and Freedoms guaranteed in the Charter. While some progress had been made, there were still many areas in the social, political and economic life of the residents of the NWT where women's status was not equal to that of men.

As a result, in 1985 this government announced its commitment to achieving equality for the women of the NWT by tabling the Five Year Plan of Action - Equality for Women.

The policy set out a framework and a set of principles to work towards equality. The Action Plan set out a series of specific actions which the Government of the Northwest Territories would undertake in order to achieve equality in a variety of areas during the Five Year Life of the Plan. The action items fall under 6 priority areas - Integrating Status of Women concerns into Government of the Northwest Territories Plans, Policies and Programs, Employment, Education, Health, Women in Public Life and Legislation.

I applaud the government for having taken the initiative to address the concerns of women. I am, however, disappointed at the lack of progress since the Plan was approved in June 1985.

Items which have been addressed include:

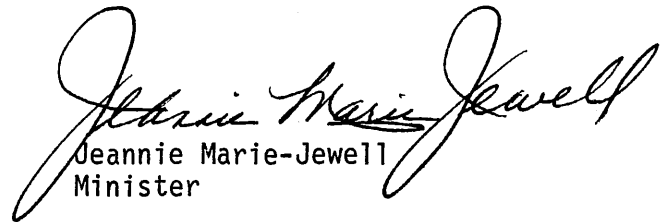
- 1) The Municipalities Act was amended during the last session to allow for local bylaws to control the display of pornographic materials.
- 2) The Women's Secretariat, funded and worked jointly with the Department of Education, to review grades K-9 NWT curriculum and program materials for sexist content. The resulting recommendations are under consideration by the Department of Education.
- 3) A new health curriculum has been jointly introduced into NWT schools by the Departments of Health and Education. The curriculum covers all areas of health education including mental and emotional well-being, alcohol and drug abuse, family life education and family planning.
- 4) Choices, The Three Year Plan of Action on Spousal Assault is being implemented.
- 5) A clause on sexual harassment is now in the Collective Agreement.
- 6) A permanent research position was approved in last years budget for the Women's Secretariat.
- 7) The Women's Secretariat established a Talent Bank of women's names which is regularly updated. Departments are given names of women from the Bank for consideration for appointments to Boards and Councils.
- 8) Financial assistance for correspondence courses from recognized institutions has been introduced by the Department of Education. This is in recognition that women may not be as readily available to travel to institutions of higher learning.

The Action Plan has 53 items, 8 have been implemented. That leaves 45 items yet to be addressed. I am sure that 2½ years ago when these items were on floor, many members here were honestly concerned and committed to see equality for women become a reality in the NWT. With this in mind I expect many in this house will feel as dismayed at the lack of progress as I do.

To quote from The 5 Year Plan of Action: - **"This Government will actively support and encourage the participation of women on an equal basis with men in all aspects of society in the NWT."**

Such was the statement and goal of this government in 1985. Considering how little has been accomplished in the past 2½ years..

I ask this assembly to renew the commitment with their hearts and minds and lend vigor and encouragement to this government to achieve equality for women in the NWT.


Jeannie Marie-Jewell
Minister