

which deals almost completely with the problems of women; we were always able to turn the issues into something which men could deal with and discuss as MEN, without reflection on or threat to our manhood. We never discussed families when we discussed welfare; we discussed restraint.

That being the case, when one moves into other sectors the climate should be even more apparent. In sectors of government dealing with economic development, or in the private sector world of banks and trust companies and the major money brokers, is it at all surprising that economic development initiatives would be so indifferent to their *impact on women*. In those areas men can be comfortable in their concerns, while at the *same time being fully faithful to their duties*.

Job choices, pay levels, location of industry, transportation, child care arrangements, scheduling, training, and so on all reflect predominant male biases and perception, because the creative work — the planning and implementation is done by men — or by women working in a male environment and compromised by male imperatives.

This situation will not change through the gradual enlightenment of men. It will change from the deliberate and assertive — even sometimes aggressive — action of strong, united and determined women whose actions threaten the stability of the present system. To move this issue closer to home for you, when one thinks of farms and farm organizations, one thinks of men! When we speak of farm operations — planting, cultivating, harvesting, and marketing — we are describing the activities of men. Banks and government agencies want to deal with men on matters pertaining to farm financing.

We speak of farm wives, not farm husbands — farm women, but not farm men. Farm means men. As a result “farm women” have been financially vulnerable all through their lifetime, because their contribution to farm operations has not had any recognized or measurable value. Indeed, they often had no money. This means they have had no independent credit rating, no independent means of borrowing, and hence no access to an independent career which is not tied up to her spouse’s interest and agreement. They have no way of breaking free.

To consider the further implica-

tions of this situation, I would advert to the need for feminine — women’s — leadership in rural economic development, inasmuch as women are likely to be better educated, and better money managers, than men, and to have a greater capacity to run small businesses successfully. At the same time as women are expected to carry this role — they must do so in an environment which has placed them in a very subordinate role with respect to farm ownership, farm management, farm production, despite the vital contribution they have made over the years.

Hence their perception of themselves as potential leaders in rural economic development must overwhelm the reality of limited recognition by all of the major institutions affecting their lives as to their maturity, general management capability, and financial good sense.

My firm, DPA Consulting, has recently taken notice of some of the underlying issues in this field of “women and economic development” and we may be the only major institution in Canada outside the women’s movement to have done so. We have not yet finalized a product, but we are exploring appropriate ways for us to intervene in this field, and we may well be your partners in some way in the near future.

### Women and Political Action

Politics is almost exclusively a male domain, despite the presence of a small

number of women in legislatures and in other political office. The language of politics is male; the leadership is male; the issues are male; the strength and sources of funding are male; there is no real female voice in all of this. One could pour over political utterances for a long time, over Election platforms, throne speeches, Party Policy statements, Campaign speeches, without ever getting the impression that the electorate is over 50% female, or that there is a special perspective that must be afforded women in politics.

That would be a problem if women were not so vulnerable to poverty, nor so inhibited from economic leadership by the prevailing conventions, nor so victimized by men in so many and varying ways. But while women share with men concern over general political, social and economic issues, there is a different set of issues, unique to them of which men remain completely unaware, and their political debates reflect as much. Watch the almost perverse love-hate relationships which so powerfully binds male politicians to one another, and then reflect on how a woman could ever hope to overcome it.



### Leckies Corners WI

Mrs. Minnie Nevers (right) presents a trophy to Mrs. Barbara Carter, delegate to the FWIC National Convention, for Leckies Corners WI which won first place in the Tweedsmuir Competitions, History Division.



### Street Sign Project

Mrs. Lorne Shute, president, Bognor WI erects a street sign in Bognor assisted by Mrs. Fred Moulton, left, and Mrs. Eugene Thomson, right. The Bognor Branch (North Grey) undertook the street sign project to mark its 70th Anniversary.