

Disposition of Resolutions - Passed at the FWIO Annual Meeting, November, 1995

By Gillian Catto

Once again, it is time to do the almost impossible - condense the long letters I have received from the various ministries into a paragraph or so. Letters of reply are still coming to me. Every letter that I send goes to many different places: the Prime Minister, leaders of the federal opposition and appropriate federal ministries; the Premier of Ontario, leaders of the opposition and appropriate provincial ministries; the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIO) office; and, to other people that I feel should be kept informed of FWIO resolutions. Thoughtful letters come back to me in reply and I feel that our resolutions are taken seriously.

Copies of these replies will be sent to the appropriate Area Conveners before the Area Conventions. Should you wish to see a copy of any letter, please send me a business-size, self addressed, stamped envelope.

I am coming to the end of my term of office. I would like to say this position is really interesting, at times quite demanding and frustrating, but it is well worth doing. I have learned a great deal. It is essential that you have the use of a word processor or a computer and you will have to do lots of photocopying. I will be back at the November Board and my successor will be chosen. However, my job will not be completed until I have written all the follow-up letters from that meeting.

From the Eastern Area:

- asking for the revision of the Young Offenders Act in three areas

In his reply the Hon. Alan Rock, Federal Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Canada, writes, "Legislation making important changes to the Young Offenders Act was proclaimed into force on December 1, 1995."

Highlights of the legislation included: increasing the maximum sentences for teenagers convicted of first or second degree murder in youth court to ten years and seven years respectively; dealing with 16 and 17 year olds charged with serious personal injury offenses in adult court unless they can show the judge that public protection and rehabilitation can be achieved through youth court; and, improving the sharing of information between professionals, such as school officials and police.

A parliamentary commission is reviewing a broad range of issues and questions surrounding youth crimes (etc.). "This committee is traveling to various cities across Canada to seek views of concerned citizens."

From the Kingston Area:

- asking that the FWIO take action to publicize the research findings on air pollution in our homes

This resolution has been discussed by members of the Safe and Healthy Communities Committee, and the Kingston Area has worked with The Lung Association to send out a large mailing in their area warning of the pollution in our homes.

From the Guelph Area:

- asking that the selling of mailing lists be made illegal without the consent of the person on the list

A letter from the Hon. Norm Sterling, Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, states, "Currently in Ontario there is no legislation or plans of introducing legislation prohibiting the distribution or selling of mailing lists." A similar reply was received from the Hon. Charles Harnick, the Attorney General of Ontario. The issue of obscene materials entering your homes can be dealt with by contacting Project "P," a joint force unit between Metro Toronto Police and the OPP Anti-Rackets Branch; call Detective Mathews at (416)612-9626.

- asking for a ban on pornography on TV

Barrie MacDonald, with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), wrote, "If a viewer considers that certain material aired on TV or Radio offends against Canada's obscenity laws, that person may report the matter to the Provincial Attorney General and the local police, who might then commence criminal proceedings." Included in the reply from Mr. MacDonald was a fact sheet from the CRTC, "How to File a Broadcasting Complaint." To receive a copy of this sheet write to Sec. Gen., CRTC, Ottawa ON K1A 0N2, or Fax: (819)994-0218.

- asking that legislation be amended in order that judges may impose stiffer sentences

This resolution was presumed by the Hon. Allan Rock, Federal Minister of Justice, to refer to the Young Offender's Act and was dealt with in his reply about the changes to this Act.

- asking for legislation defining reasonable "discipline and abuse"

In his reply, the Hon. John Snobelen, Minister of Education, states that "under the Education Act, decisions regarding discipline in schools are the responsibility of the school principal and the classroom teacher..." He goes on to say that the responsibility for determining the legal definition of abuse does not rest with the Ministry of Education and Training, but rather with the ministries of the Attorney General and the Solicitor General." I did in fact send a copy to the office of the Attorney General.

From the Grey-Bruce Area:

- asking that the Minister of Health maintain adequate funds to improve the present state of health care

In his reply, the Hon. Jim Wilson, Minister of Health, states, "This government intends to improve standards of health care by putting more of our health care dollars into direct care and preventative care. We intend to take advantage of every opportunity to reinvest savings, found through increased efficiencies, back into front-line services." He then listed new services initiated recently.

- asking that the hormone rBST be banned for use on cattle

This resolution will be dealt with at the end of this report.

- asking that standards be established for the quality of zippers

The Hon. John Manly, Federal Minister of Industry, stated that "no federal agency is responsible for the enforcement of zippers." In his reply, Stephen Beatty, the Executive Director of the Canadian Apparel Federation, wrote, "More than half of the clothing sold in Canada is imported. We would have concerns about asking Canadian manufacturers to meet a standard which their foreign competitors are not required to meet." He suggested that consumers bring their complaints directly to the companies who supply inferior products. All clothing is required to be labeled with a five digit CA number; call 1-800-661-1187 for more information about the manufacturing company.

From the Hamilton Area:

- asking that a graduated drivers licensing system be adopted for seniors

Hon. Al Palladini, Minister of Transportation, writes, "The ministry has conducted several long term studies on senior drivers to find the best method of detecting the effects of aging on driving." Graduated licenses have been considered. Under the new highway safety program announced on October 24, 1995, there is a new alternative treatment plan for the renewal of senior's licenses. It will use a questionnaire vision test, and group counseling sessions to assess the skills of drivers 80 and over. After reviewing the questionnaire score and driving record, the counselors will decide whether to renew the license, or recommend a road test or additional driver training.

From the London Area:

- asking that the names of young offenders be released after conviction

Dealt with under the Eastern Area resolution.

- asking the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) to monitor more closely the use of offensive language on Radio and TV stations

The letter of reply from the CBSC, signed by Paddy Leahy, Administrative Assistant, states, "We are not a watchdog organization, in that we do not monitor broadcasting. We were established to receive complaints from the public that relate to our members. Unless several criteria are as follows: the complaint must relate to a CBSC member; the date, time and station on which the program in question was aired must be mentioned in the letter; and finally, the complaint must relate to a code that is administered by the Council." This code can be obtained by writing to CBSC, PO Box 3265, Station D, Ottawa ON K1P 6H8.

From the Southwestern Area:

- asking for more independent research on the hormone rBST

To be dealt with at the end of this report.

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