

CONVENOR: Obviously we are hoping she will be promoted to a judge any minute. That is what that would seem.

SPEAKER: I'd like to ask the lady in blue - -

CONVENOR: That is Quentin Bryce, who is a lawyer.

MS DOWNEY: I would like to ask Quentin Bryce if she would clarify her statement, or why she made the statement, that the police have learnt a sorry lesson about going to court on battered wives because the wife doesn't give evidence. I would ask that because I have worked with victims of rape, and one of the greatest barriers were social attitudes to getting change. That came not only from police but from women saying "She deserved it" or "We brought it on ourselves". Can you clarify why you said that statement?

MS BRYCE: I have learned a sorry lesson - I mean as far as they are concerned; not a sorry lesson as far as I am concerned, but I know - that that is the reason the police will give, and I think it can be substantiated by statistics which they will give you, too.

MS DOWNEY: But shouldn't you as a woman - and particularly as a woman lawyer - be, instead of making that statement, asking "Why don't the women give evidence? Why won't they go along with it?". Why aren't you asking the police "What was the state of the woman on the night when she went for aid"? Why don't you ask about the procedure the woman has to go through before she gives evidence? Why don't you ask about the social attitudes to a woman who is saying she wants help? Why do you, as a Women's Advisory counsellor and a woman lawyer, make that statement without going on and giving other evidence about why....(away from microphone)....?

MS BRYCE: I think perhaps I really misunderstood your question, but that isn't my field of expertise - researching that sort of work.

SPEAKER:....(away from microphone)...

CONVENOR: Excuse me, everybody won't be able to know what you have said or hear what you are saying unless you wait until the microphone comes to you.

MS BRYCE: I am, as a woman and as a member of this council, concerned with those issues. Of course I am. I don't know what else I have to say about it.

MS ROBERTS: I think Quentin was really stating what the facts are at the moment. She does not mean that we are not concerned about the present situation; nor does it mean that the council isn't going to go into this very closely - because as a matter of fact on our agenda we have this very thing listed for this meeting, haven't we?

*CONVENOR: Yes, we do.

MS IDA LLOYD (National Council of Women): I would like to change the direction for the moment, although it does relate to women of course, and that is to comment a press release which you have given out (which we got through the post) saying: "The National Women's Advisory Council criticizes calls for a dependant wife's tax rebate". You would be familiar with this - all of you. Apparently you did not support it, and having spoken to one or two of your council I understand that this does not state the case as such.

As the National Council of Women has for the last two or three years been seeking (like we all have been) to raise the status of the woman who chooses to stay at home, today it seems that everybody is rooting for the girl or woman who wants to go out to work and rushing around to support her in creches and every possible way. Who is going to say something for the woman who chooses to stay at home?

We were looking for some sort of answer and came up with it two or three years ago, and we have been lobbying for what way we could get this going. As you know, everybody today talks of the dollar. The only way we are going to encourage this, perhaps, is to give the woman who chooses to stay at home some financial support. This figure you mentioned of \$2,000 - - we started off with \$1,000 a couple of years ago and it has crept up now to \$2,000, but I do understand that this statement you have made in the press does not relate to the National Council of Women's proposal but to something else, and only on one approach to you.

It seems to me that when you make a press release on a statement of something submitted to you by one section of the community, that isn't broad enough. I don't think it's good enough. I think it is such an important thing that I would call upon you to go back to all States and get more information about it, because we are all concerned for the woman who chooses to stay home.

Our scheme was to try and support the women with children under school age, and I feel financially that is about as far as anybody could go. Even that would be a great cost to the nation but at least it would encourage her, with this support, to stay at home and look after her family. Perhaps, as some of you have mentioned, there is great stress in maintaining a job and a home as well, and perhaps in this way you could relieve some of the stress there is in doing a double job, and perhaps there would be fewer latchkey children who get into trouble.

I think there was a Federal inquiry and 10 per cent of the women asked said they would be very happy to stay home with that extra financial support. Ten per cent of the workforce - the women's workforce - is a considerable amount, when you take the country as a whole, and I think that would release jobs for some of the other people who are unemployed, particularly our school-leavers and teenagers and other young people who cannot get a job.

So I would like to ask for more details about this statement you have made to the press, and also whether you are going to reconsider the possibility of supporting a woman who chooses to stay at home and look after her children.

(ACCLAMATION)

MS ROBERTS: I think all the council is very well aware of the position of the woman at home, and I personally couldn't agree with you more that she needs some support, but that scheme which was given to us to comment on - and it came from government sources - would not benefit the woman who was already at home. It would only be available - - the \$2,000 rebate would first of all be from the husband's income tax and it would only be available in the cases where the woman had been working and retired from the workforce; so this we felt was very discriminatory, particularly as regards the woman was who already in the home; the person who you say - and rightly so - needs some support. This tax rebate would only have been available to those women, or to the husbands of those women who left the workforce.

CONVENOR: It also would only have been of benefit to those who had a large income; not those who had an average income, because that wouldn't be sufficient.

Going on from your comment, and I know Sue is going to make a comment, I think you should be quite interested to know that we are very concerned about the role of the woman at home, and one of our guidelines is that we may commission some research - and so we have commissioned some research into a group of women from the Knox Community Relations Centre in Victoria and they are doing a survey into the problems that women at home have. The reason we did this is that these people were funded by the Uniting Church and did a preliminary survey, copies of which we have here - "What have you been doing all day?" - in which they interviewed a group of 40 women of various ages and with various aged children, and with various incomes. We were so impressed with the work that they had done that we felt we wanted to do more research to know of the situation of the woman in the home, so we could then make some recommendations - particularly along the lines of whether they wanted to do some part-time work; what sort of family support systems they needed; whether they felt an increased family allowance was the answer; what did they think.

We were happy that we were allowed to recommend that this research be done. We do have some copies of their pilot study here if anyone would like to have a look at it. I am sure you would find it very interesting. We do have copies here available, if anyone would like to get one from us later.

I hope that answers your question.

MS LLOYD: It does up to a point, but you do not state here who submitted this. I had felt it was a broader answer. I believe it was only one - - can you answer that, Sue?

MS MARSH: I was just going to make a point. I think the scheme we were replying to was a submission made by the Western Australian Employers' Federation, which did relate directly to a \$2,000 rebate for married women only; discriminating in favour of married women. Women without husbands would not be eligible. Women who had not recently left the workforce, as Beryl pointed out, would not be eligible. Taking into account all the factors on which assumptions were made in relation to that scheme, which we looked at, that was - -

MS LLOYD: It depends on what scheme it is. I thought it was something which had been - -

MS MARSH: No.

MS BROAD: We were looking directly at the scheme put forward by the Confederation of W.A. Industries which was printed in "The West Australian". It was a survey done amongst 40 women. Their proposal - and they didn't push it; it was purely a proposal to be looked at - was that women in the workforce perhaps accept a \$40 a week tax rebate to encourage them back into the home. That was the one proposal. I admit it wasn't clear enough for a statement but that in fact was the one proposal we were looking at and it did discriminate against the women already in the home, the single parent family, the low income family - and there was one other point. We didn't broaden it. We weren't asked to extend it or amend it. We purely and simply looked at the proposal put forward by the Confederation of W.A. Industries.

MS LLOYD: If I could, I would just finish that off by saying we are looking for the broader support for all women of all categories - single women or whoever.

MS BROAD: I think we are, too.

MS LLOYD: Right. That is what I am saying. I would like to see this followed through somehow to see if we can get some financial support to encourage women and help women who stay home, whatever their situation, if they have children under school age. I wouldn't like to go beyond that because we spend a great deal of money educating women today and I feel if they have something to give in the workforce, alright. But you choose to have children today, or most people choose to have children, and if you do I think you would want to be able to look after them, at least till they go to school. This is what we are seeking.

CONVENOR: Thank you very much. We will certainly take your comments into consideration when we examine that further.

MS PATRICIA GILES (Western Australian Trades & Labour Council): I just want to put this particular furphy to rest once and for all.

The survey that was done by the Western Australian Confederation of Industry was a very, very poorly selected sample. Anybody who has even done the most elementary statistics, looking at the survey, would realise how poorly it was selected.

The final result came out with 1.5 per cent of women from this poorly selected sample saying the scheme did have appeal for them; not 10 per cent. They got something like 10 per cent by adding 1.5 per cent and 6.3 per cent, I think, who said they would take a second look - who were just mildly or moderately interested. The scheme got a great deal more publicity in the Eastern States newspapers than it did here in Western Australia.

CONVENOR: We thought that might have been the case.

MS GILES: Yes. It really got a tremendous run. They weren't game to publicise it here because there were too many of us who knew the actual facts and who could add up.

My point of view is that from even this very poorly selected sample, 98.5 per cent of the women rejected it.

(ACCLAMATION)

CONVENOR: Thank you. I might just draw your attention to the fact that there is a pad circulating down the rows somewhere. We are asking you to all put your names and address on it so we can have your names on our records. I hope it is going along somewhere. (Where is it? Who has it at the moment? Good, thank you very much.) It is for our mailing list, too.

MS MARGARET NAPIER: I am here as an independent although I am on an organisation, too, greatly concerned with family life and the stability of same.

From personal comments on this one of an allowance or some sort of a consideration for people who choose to stay at home, I haven't come across anyone yet - and I have discussed it fairly widely, before any comment came out in the paper here, with various women about whether or not there should be a greater consideration as a tax deduction on their husbands' taxation, or something like that - who is not in favour of it. They are all in favour of it, so surveys are very misleading.

(ACCLAMATION)

CONVENOR: I think many of these surveys are perhaps misleading, but when one is in the position we are in we can only do what we feel we get the most information in favour of or against, and this is where we have to appeal to you all always to keep in touch with us and feed information and your views into the council, because the council can only make up its mind when it looks at the submissions and the views it gets

from people. So we do need the support of every one of you to help us when we have to make up our minds and our recommendations.

MS LESLIE LIDDICOATE (Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints): It is mainly a statement that I would like to make. I feel that so much has been raised about problems which women have, and we recognise this, but what is being done in the community generally to educate us at the level where we can cope with problems, cope with families, with being wives, with understanding the financial situation that goes into handling marriage, and the break-up of marriage or whatever? - just to education women generally.

We are getting tremendous help in education in all other fields, but that which relates to home and family seems to be very, very poor. Can we get any help here?

(ACCLAMATION)

MS ROBERTS: Thank you. Yes, we all agree with you. We think education for life is terribly important. If a child, whether it be a boy or a girl, is not properly educated, how can they hope to lead a happy and a normal life? One of the real areas of difficulty, of course, is judging the education and working out what basis it can be made on. Of course, education is a State matter and the States vary so much. The spectrum of education as we look around Australia - - the difference is quite incredible. I think it is terribly important and I think as long as we have an education system we must strive for excellence, and I am sure that you all do.

MS MCCARTHY: I would just like to make one comment. I think when you say we don't get adequate education for life, to be wives and mothers, I also think we don't get adequate education in life to control our own lives and to make our own decisions. There is nobody providing career counselling and offering us career options on the way through.

I did notice in the paper this morning that the Western Australian Department of Education has announced an inquiry into the training of teachers, and I think it would be most appropriate if women really fed into that and said they are really fed up with sexist attitudes in the teaching profession, because the teaching profession is as much a victim of the education system as the current consumers of it - because we are all products of it.

From my other organisation, which is Family Planning, we are going to put in a major submission to all the States (we are having inquiries now in teacher education, plus a national one) to say that there has to be some impetus coming from the teachers within the system that there must be broadened patterns, education for life options, in a

way that there just has not been. We are still tied to very boring, outdated systems which don't suit us at all.

(ACCLAMATION)

MS HOLLYWELL (Perth District): I don't want to change the subject on discrimination as it has come up, but it is known that the Women's Advisory Committee has been very much in favour of the maternity leave for women, and I would like to say and have it on record that there are many, many, many who feel that this is not a good step for women but a retrograde step. (I think that is the word - I hope that is the word.)

I would like to read a piece from yesterday's paper. The name and address is given here. It says:

"I am angry at this supposedly democratic and civilised country. I have been discriminated against. On Monday morning in my local Commonwealth Employment Service office I thought I had found the perfect job; a career position in an exciting industry involving part-time study. The CES officer found that I satisfied the requirements and indeed was anxious for the position of such responsibility.

"However, a phone call established that this was a male only position and I, being female, was unable even to apply. No reason was given but I assumed that the computers I would have been trained to programme objected to being handled by a female."

I would like to add there that it could be that this woman may have been of child-bearing age, not a young girl just leaving school or a very mature woman, and being perhaps equal pay they preferred to have a man who wasn't going to leave - have leave of absence - to have an infant.

Also on discrimination, I am wondering what the Women's Advisory Council can do for a woman such as Ms Maureen Crossum of Queensland who was sacked from her well-paid, highly specialised position because she refused to join her union. She has credentials from other capital cities, in Europe and in Britain, to say that her work is of high standard. In a democratic country it is her democratic right not to join a union. What can the Advisory Council do for a person like this who stands up for her rights?

CONVENOR: I think the first thing I would like to say before I ask Jan Marsh to answer this is that in some States in Australia we have anti-discrimination legislation and anybody who preferred a man to a woman for the job, if

if the woman had equal qualifications - - she would take that to the Equal Opportunities Board. Unfortunately Queensland and Western Australia do not have that legislation yet. Perhaps with more pressure here you may get it in time, but I can assure you that in Victoria and South Australia, and New South Wales, if a person goes for a position and she is discriminated against because she is a woman, that woman - or people supporting her - will most likely take it further and the company or the employer concerned will be in real trouble.

Now, perhaps Jan might like to answer that further.

MS MARSH: I think those issues have to be sorted out somewhat. You quoted a subjective opinion on maternity leave and then read a letter to us relating to discrimination on the ground of sex. There was no evidence of the age of that woman. I think what I was going to say in relation to the woman who clearly had been discriminated against was that there is Equal Opportunity legislation in some States. Unfortunately that is not here. Was that a Western Australian woman - the letter you quoted?

MS HOLLYWELL: Yes.

MS MARSH: I think what should happen and what I would advise that woman to do is to go to the Discrimination Committee here - the State Discrimination Committee here. It is clearly a ground of discrimination on the ground of sex.

Wearing another hat, I am a member of the National Advisory Council on the manpower services which control the CES and I will personally get a copy of that letter, if I may, from you and take that up with that council.

MS HOLLYWELL: I do not blame an employer for wanting to - -

MS MARSH: You can, because it is against the law.

(ACCLAMATION)

MS MARSH: Under the law every person has an equal right to work, and if an employer violates that deliberately - which is what has happened in that case - that is against the law and there are processes which can be put in train to fix that situation. I will take that case up with that committee, which I am a representative on, of the CES. That is quite a serious allegation.

MS HOLLYWELL: I would like to repeat that there are many, many who are not in favour of maternity leave, unpaid or paid.

MS MARSH: In respect to maternity leave - - I don't want to make a speech on maternity leave because I have made about 10,000 in the last two weeks, but I would like to say that maternity leave, as argued by the ACTU - and the principle has been supported by this council and argued

in the court - is an option. No-one is made to take maternity leave. If you don't want to have maternity leave, you don't have to. Maternity leave has been something - - in 1965 80 countries of the world had maternity leave and there is absolutely no evidence that women in any of those 80 countries have been discriminated against in any way because of the existence of maternity leave. In fact, there is positive evidence that in fact women have had careers and skills haven't been lost to employers which would have been in the absence of maternity leave. There is positive evidence that I can produce to show that.

This is a subject thing. I just want to stress that a woman shouldn't be discriminated against because of maternity leave. There is support there within the terms of the award provision and in terms of discrimination committees, and legislation, and it is an optional thing. Nobody - nobody - has to have maternity leave if they don't want it, but the option is there for women who have to for economic reasons, or for any other reasons for women who wish to combine work in the paid workforce and work in the unpaid workforce. That is an option which is now available to women.

(ACCLAMATION)

MS ROBERTS: Just to prove that we have a diversity of opinion on this at council, which indeed we should and we must, I am very concerned that married women will be discriminated against by these maternity leave provisions. Jan and I have had this discussion at council meetings. I have had several employers here in Western Australia and many in South Australia say to me that before they employ a married woman they will want to see her hysterectomy scar - and I am not joking. I was shattered by it. I also sincerely believe that if a woman chooses (and in this day with fertility control being what it is most women do choose) to have her family, until that child is three that woman should stay home and look after that child.

(ACCLAMATION)

CONVENOR: Thank you.

MS ROBIN MURPHY (Women's Electoral Lobby): I am rather pleased to say that Jan Marsh has sort of stolen my thunder, because I was going to make the same sorts of comments; also I think particularly her reference to antidiscrimination legislation which WEL in Western Australia has for some time been trying to get introduced here. In fact, in 1978 we put in a very lengthy submission to the State Government on its request for this very thing - on anti-discrimination legislation - but unfortunately since then there has been no action taken by the government.

We don't have any recourse when discrimination takes place, and in fact WEL time and time again has had women ring up with instances where they have lost their

employment or their opportunity for employment has been taken away because of their sex, and their sex alone. We just have nowhere to send them, except to the National - - no; I must say we can send them to one organisation (the National Committee for Discrimination in Employment).

CONVENOR: That's the one that Jan sits on.

MS MARSH: No, no, no, no.

CONVENOR: It is not?

MS MARSH: No, not at all. The one I was referring to specifically was the one on the Commonwealth Employment Service.

MS MURPHY: Actually, there is a representative from that body here tonight who might like to clarify what their role is in this instance, because we do refer women to them where this has happened - but they don't actually have any teeth, from what I can gather. There is no legislation covering it.

MS MARSH: There are no penalties; no penal provisions at all?

MS MURPHY: That is right. But it is not only in the areas of employment; it is also in the areas of getting loans or in trying to obtain flats, for instance, or housing. Women are discriminated against in that area and all sorts of areas that we come across. We feel that legislation is absolutely necessary.

If we can't get legislation - we and Queensland - perhaps it might be possible for the State Government to have some sort of Women's Advisory Bureau (which I think had been mentioned by a member of the Women's Advisory Council). We believe whilst you are here you meet with the State Government, and we wonder whether or not - because Women's Electoral Lobby can't make any progress - it might be in order for the council to suggest that Western Australia has a great need for some sort of representation of women. For instance, a Consultant Committee for Legal Aid has just been set up in Western Australia and there is a great imbalance of men and women on that, and when we pointed that out - that the users of Legal Aid are mostly women - we were told that men represent women. We just don't feel that that is an adequate explanation.

CONVENOR: Thank you for a couple of your remarks. You may be interested to know that the council did meet with the Premier and the Attorney-General today. We had a very pleasant time with them. Naturally enough we didn't get any promises but we certainly did draw their attention to a number of things, and Sue Broad will be following up a number of the points that we raised today. In fact, we had lunch with them and I was just about to get onto the Attorney-General about anti-discrimination legislation, and he must have been psychic

or something because he immediately moved to the next table. Anyway, I am hopeful that something will come here sooner or later.

You yourself might be interested to know that the council is having a seminar on antidiscrimination legislation at the end of May in Melbourne where we are going to come up with some recommendations to the Federal Government where we think complimentary anti-discrimination legislation could be enacted at the Federal level. We have to be very careful that the Federal legislation does not override any State legislation or does not interfere in other legislation in the States where they do not have antidiscrimination legislation. The Commonwealth is a little bit behind because it hasn't done it and we are hoping that we will, after this seminar, be able to make some recommendations that will give the Federal Government a bit of a push and a shove so that they may get on with it. Perhaps that will help Western Australia and Queensland get on with theirs, too. We hope so. Thank you.

MS GWEN LEAVESLY² (Family Planning Association): I am changing the subject a bit, going back more directly to education. The Family Planning Association in W.A. basically at the moment is more involved in clinic facilities than in fact education, and this is because of the way funding has developed over the years. Initially in W.A. we started off with no funding whatsoever and the State Government came in with \$3,000. That has now been increased to \$7,000.

When the 1975 Federal funding was introduced, initially it was on the basis of a per capita amount of services that were being held. At that time we were in a very small situation as far as services were concerned and, as you know, our population is rather thin on the ground, so we were unable to develop at any speed compared with the other States.

Other States now get a considerably larger amount of funding from their own States which can be utilised for education, whereas in W.A. - as I have already said - we have \$7,000. We have currently 1.25 resource people to cover Western Australia with education services related to family planning and also sexuality and this we find is quite impossible. We are unable to reach rural areas and we are very much aware that there is a need in country towns. Unfortunately most people identify this need as being one to open clinics, but clinics are an expensive service. In fact, the material covered in clinics is probably better covered by the actual resident health services, and we feel that if we can get some funding to train locally resident nurses so that they can be identified as nurse/educators in country towns, they can raise the consciousness of the health and education workers in the community as well as providing an actual residential site where information

can be obtained. They can sell perhaps some contraceptives, although that will need more State legislation changing, but they could also provide a pregnancy testing service.

CONVENOR: I think Wendy could help you with that, as you know, no doubt - because this is her speciality. Perhaps she would like to give an explanation.

MS McCARTHY: I can say nothing except make lovely supportive noises about it, because Family Planning is my area of special interest. One thing I do think I would like to say is this: It has been said by Judy on the panel and a couple of people in the audience, too, that there are plenty of choices for people (males and females but particularly women) to control their fertility at the moment. I don't believe that's true. I think that is a very difficult, a very dangerous, idea to go around the community. It affects very basic things like funding for family planning organisations. If you believe that the first right of every child is to be wanted, to be planned, to be desired, you have got to provide education services so the people can control their fertility - and that requires a great deal of back-up education services, because we do live in a different sort of society at the moment and for people in rural areas there are very, very few facilities.

We would question the type of medical services that women get with regard to fertility control. We have no back-up services in any States for termination of unplanned pregnancies, and despite the common belief in the community, contraceptives fail, too. They are not only human failures in using contraception; there are method failures. There is no perfect contraceptive on the market and it is very dangerous for us to think that there is. There is not one that is appropriate for the needs of women's health and women's total ability to control fertility.

I have already been to see the Minister for Health, in particular to look at the needs of women in States like W.A. where you are very thin on the ground, particularly to see if you can piggy-back on some of the existing services. I think that would be something that would be good. I think you are very well advised to think of people as providing educational services to make women better consumers and more assertive consumers of the sort of health services which they are getting.

(ACCLAMATION)

MS FISHER: Being very concerned with rural women, I would agree that there is a great need for such services in the rural areas and I would like to suggest that where maybe they cannot be set up in every small town, perhaps some form of travelling service of trained people could go around with an education programme, such as is done in other fields.

I feel this is something which perhaps States which have a scattered population could work to that end for.

MS PAT SMEEETON (Country Women's Association): We have already put forward a submission on family planning, asking that qualified nursing sisters go to all parts of Western Australia to take education, counselling and where necessary contraception to women who live in far flung areas.

May I change the subject, or do you want to go on with that?

CONVENOR: No. You may change the subject.

MS SMEEETON: On behalf of the Country Women's Association I wish to make a submission for civilian widows. I have a copy here to give you. It is quite a long submission but I would like to summarise the main points so that everyone can hear - and I must say before I put this that all the talk which has been said, that women can't get loans and women can't this when they are single, and women can't get that - - you can if you persevere because I have overcome all those obstacles myself. Whether it is because I am a woman, I don't know, but there are lots of people in the community who need help and we are very concerned about civilian widows.

The points which we wish to raise are:

Why is it that a civilian widow with one child receives \$24 per week less than an aged pensioner couple and \$10.95 less than a war widow? They are all two-unit families. In fact a civilian widow with four children does not get as much as an aged pensioner couple.

(2) Why is no allowance made in our Social Security structure for differing needs? You cannot establish one pension rate for aged, invalid and widowed people. Their needs and requirements are all so different.

(3) It is high time the anomaly where the Commonwealth limits the amount a widow can earn to supplement her pension but does not provide enough for her to stay at home without financial difficulties be eliminated. Twenty dollars per week for a widow plus \$6 for each child is not realistic in real terms and this amount has not been increased in almost 10 years. War widows have never had restrictions placed on their earnings.

(4) Does the question of whether a husband served in a theatre of war have any real bearing in connection with providing an adequate amount in which to provide children of widows with food, clothing, education, etc.? Surely the wants and requirements of all children are the same.

(5) Why does Community Welfare pay foster families so much more than a widow receives to bring up her children?

(6) Why has no education allowance for the children of civilian widows similar to that of children of war widows ever been established?

They are our main points.

CONVENOR: Thank you very much for the submission. I think you would all be interested to know that about 80 per cent of the correspondence we are receiving as members of the council does concern anomalies in pensions. We realise this and so we are having a file on anomalies in pensions and we will be preparing a report to the Social Security Minister for her consideration, drawing to her attention all the things such as the things you have brought up.

It seems that there are just so many anomalies in our Social Security payments at present and we hope that by bringing them - - as we receive them we will certainly be bringing them to the attention of the minister. We bring them to her attention immediately. For example, when the secretariat is working back in Canberra after our trip here, a copy of this will go to the Minister for Social Securities but also we will put it in our file and take it into consideration when we make our final report on Social Security matters. Thank you.

MS McCONNELL: I just thought when I was listening to this that as a matter of interest, recently when I attended a meeting of representatives of Social Securities departments from various countries in Asia and the Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand, it was quite obvious that Australia and New Zealand are the only non-contributory countries in their Social Welfare and Social Security schemes; but it was pointed out by our Director General of Social Securities that at the moment 23 per cent of the money received from income tax is going into Social Security benefits, so you can see that it all requires terribly careful consideration as to who gets what and what proportion of that amount.

CONVENOR: Thank you.

MS IRENE GREENWOOD: Mrs Beaurepaire, members of the National Advisory Committee and others: I am here, as many know, because I was a member of the old National Advisory Committee in 1975 in International Women's Year. I have put my name down as representing the Australian Federation of Women Votes, of which I am the national vice-president.

I would like to draw attention to everybody present that there are in this audience (because in Western Australia we all know everybody else) members of

nongovernmental organisations, and those nongovernmental organisations founded from the beginning of the century onwards have worked concertedly to change the laws of Australia - which, after all, during federation only applied nationally in regard to customs and defence. They have moved since the United Nations was inaugurated in 1946 towards the ratification of the United Nations conventions. They have therefore sought that their State Attorneys-General, Premiers, Ministers of the Crown or others get all of the State laws into conformity with the national laws in order that a national government may ratify.

There is an international convention against discrimination on women, and all of our nongovernmental organisations in this room have worked hard and long to get the various Attorneys-General or others to meet and to agree that the laws may be got in order in the States in order that ratification may be made federally.

I suggest that would be the first point for you to take up when you are looking for federal legislation to be unified, so that the international convention can be signed. If it can't be, I think a meeting should be called of all Attorneys-General so that they may then meet and may agree, and they may show us - the nongovernmental organisations - wherein our State laws are not in conformity, and we can do some lobbying on them, and we shall say "Alter this or else".

(ACCLAMATION)

CONVENOR: I would like to be as confident as you are that the Attorneys-General would do as we tell them. I'm not sure they would, but anyway your point was well taken.

MS GAIL GREEN (Abortion Information Service): Firstly I would like to thank members of the council who supported us in the recent efforts against the Lusher motion. Secondly, 'a specific question - and I don't know how much you can help us with it: It refers to anaesthetics for 16-year olds having an abortion. A 16-year old in W.A. can have sex, can leave home, can virtually do an awful lot of things, but she cannot get anaesthetic without her parents' permission and this involved an awful lot of difficulty for those young people who don't know where their parents are, whose parents don't care about them and who don't want to tell their parents about the situation they are in.

What we wondered is whether J.P.'s could possibly sign for these young people and, if they could, whether the J.P. would then be responsible for anything that would happen to that child.

CONVENOR: I think that is a State law that I don't think we can do anything about, but we will ask Wendy if she has any comment; if she has met this problem.