The Pictou Statement

A feminist statement for a Guaranteed Livable Income

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Canadian Woman Studies Journal -- Volume 23, numbers 3, 4 (December 2004)

For millennia women's work, along with the free gifts of nature, has provided most of the true wealth of our communities. Women's work has been central to individual and collective survival. In all our diverse communities women can be seen to work on the principle that everybody is entitled to economic and physical security and autonomy and a fair share of the common wealth.

Women in every community, context and racial group are still denied our rightful political power over the economics governing these communities and our world. To paraphrase "A Women's Creed," for thousands of years men have had power without responsibility while women have responsibility without power.
This situation must change.

Feminists insist that all activities of government and business in our nation(s) and our diverse communities should be assessed in the light of the prime value of sustaining life and social priorities of universal entitlement, human security, autonomy and common wealth. Social priorities of universal entitlement, human security, autonomy and common wealth must become central in social life and in public policy.

We refuse to accept market measures of wealth. They make invisible the important caring work of women in every society. They ignore the well-being of people and the planet, deny the value of women's work, and define the collective wealth of our social programs and public institutions as "costs" which cannot be borne.
They undermine social connections and capacities (social currency).

We reject policies that sacrifice collective wealth and individual security in the interests of profit for transnational corporations.

Women in Canada expect full and generous provision for all people's basic needs from the common wealth. Social and collective provision for sustaining life must be generous and secure in Canada and must be delivered through national mechanisms appropriately influenced and controlled by the women of our many specific communities.

We expect all people's full and dignified participation in society including full individual and social sharing of the work and responsibility of sustaining life that has so far been gendered [i.e. done by women]. Men must share equally in this work within and beyond monetary measures.

We expect our rightful share of the wealth we have created. Women's work must be recognized and valued both within and beyond monetary measures. We expect sustained and expanding collective provision for people's needs.

Women demand an indexed guaranteed living income for all individual residents set at a level to enable comfortable living.

"...women's livelihood, dignity, and autonomy are financially threatened in new ways. To write and to think creatively with political ingenuity and wisdom is difficult but essential in these circumstances. [I]n Pictou, Nova Scotia [17] feminists from across the country [met] for two days of intense dialogue. The mix of significant numbers of national groups with a substantial regional grassroots presence proved inspired... we rediscovered there that feminism is alive and fighting in Canada and demands her share of a better world. [We] tackled the question of women's economic security and autonomy from different but related angles. Starting from sharing information about women's lives and experiences, including our increasing economic insecurity, the other group identified/imagined what changes would be needed to ensure the security and autonomy of all women. [We] prioritized the implications for the poorest women, Indigenous women, and immigrant women, and to include attention to international contexts. The whole group contributed to the articulation of a feminist position on a guaranteed livable income captured in the "Pictou Statement"... [I]t is an exciting outcome of a rare and generative feminist dialogue... an important advance in feminist thinking on these issues." ***(excerpts) from the Preamble to the Pictou Statement, Canadian Woman Studies Journal, Volume 23, No. 3, 4 (December 2004)***