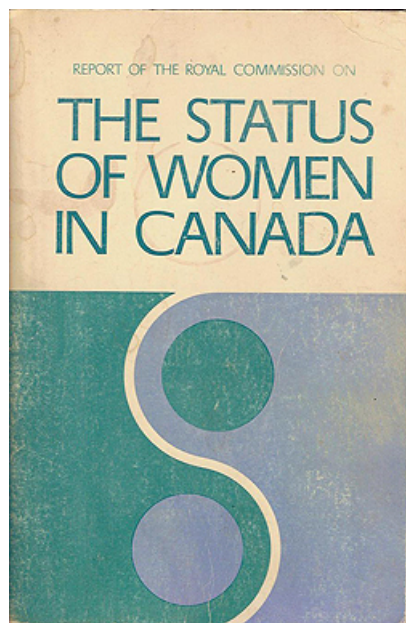


Fifty years later: Child care and the Royal Commission on the Status of Women



The report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was tabled in Ottawa 50 years ago today. Created in 1967, its mandate was to "inquire into and report upon the status of women in Canada, and to recommend what steps might be taken by the federal government to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society."

Last week, Canada's first woman, and first feminist, Minister of Finance referenced the 50 years since the Royal Commission called for a National Day-Care Act. As the Commissioners observed in 1970, "we are faced with a [child care] situation that requires immediate action". The context of Canada's 50 years of on-again, off-again child care activity framed Minister Freeland's commitment to changing child care: "Budget 2021 will outline a plan to provide affordable, accessible and high-quality child care from ocean, to ocean to ocean". The Commission made a series of recommendations specific to child care, the intent of which are still relevant today:

115 . We recommend that fees for the care of children in day-care centres be fixed on a sliding scale based on the means of the parents. (paragraph 167);

116. We recommend that the provinces, where they do not already do so, pay not less than 80 per cent of the provincial-municipal contribution to day-care centres. (paragraph 170);

117. We recommend that the National Housing Act be amended to (a) permit the making of loans for the construction, purchase and renovation of buildings for day-care centres, and (b) permit the inclusion of space for day-care centres in housing developments, including university buildings, for which loans are made under the Act. (paragraph 173);

118 . We recommend that the federal government immediately take steps to enter into agreement with the provinces leading to the adoption of a national Day-Care Act under which federal funds would be made available on a cost-sharing basis for the building and running of day-care centres meeting specified minimum standards, the federal government to (a) pay half the operating costs; (b) during an initial seven-year period, pay 70 per cent of capital costs; and (c) make similar arrangements for the Yukon and Northwest Territories . (paragraph 181);

119. We recommend that each province and territory establish a Child-Care Board to be responsible for the establishment and supervision of 'day-care centres and other child-care programmes, which will (a) plan a network of centres (as to location, type, etc.), (b) set and enforce standards and regulations, (c) provide information and consultants, (d) promote the establishment of new day-care services, and (e) approve plans for future day-care services. (paragraph 187);

120. We recommend that the Department of National Health and Welfare offer an extension of advisory services to the provinces and territories through the establishment of a unit for consultation on child-care services . (paragraph 188)

To commemorate both the 50 year anniversary of the hugely significant Royal Commission on the Status of Women and the federal government's promise to finally transform Canadian child care, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit has assembled key online resources relevant to child care and the Royal Commission of the Status of Women.

Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women [1]

Federal government's description of the Commission [2]

CBC archive: Resources on the Commission [3]

CBC documentary: Commemorating the Royal Commission's creation in 1967 [4]

Collection - Rise Up: a digital archive of feminist activism [5]

National Film Board: Status Quo? The unfinished business of feminism in Canada [6]

Simple justice: 50 years later, Monique Bégin reflects on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women [7]

Sunday Edition (CBC radio) interview with Mme. Bégin, Commission's executive secretary, then first Quebec woman MP and federal Minister of national health and welfare

50 years after the Royal Commission on the Status of Women: Where do we stand now? [8]

A special panel event. University of New Brunswick. Queens University historian Lisa Pasolli and Brock University sociologist Kate Bezanson discuss child care.

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Links

[1] <https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pco-bcp/commissions-ef/bird1970-eng/bird1970-eng.htm> [2] <https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/commemorations-celebrations/royal-commission-status-women-canada.html> [3] <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/topic/equality-first-the-royal-commission-on-the-status-of-women> [4] <https://www.cbc.ca/2017/looking-back-on-50-years-since-the-royal-commission-on-the-status-of-women-1.4004778> [5] <https://riseupfeministarchive.ca/activism/issues-actions/the-royal-commission-on-the-status-of-women-in-canada/> [6] https://www.nfb.ca/film/status_quo_the_unfinished_business_of_feminism/ [7] <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/sunday/the-sunday-edition-for-march-8-2020-1.5482636/simple-justice-50-years-later-monique-b%C3%A9gin-reflects-on-the-royal-commission-on-the-status-of-women-1.5482637> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/resources/events/20/11/fulfilling-promise-royal-commission-status-women-childcare-rebuilding>