

The Hon. Dalton McGuinty  
Premier of the Province of Ontario  
Legislative Bldg, Room 281  
Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1  
August 17, 2004

Dear Mr. McGuinty,

This is a response of the Ontario Council Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) to your government's 2004 Province of Ontario Budget

During the Spring Pre-budget Consultations, our Council submitted a brief to the Legislature's Standing Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs and to the Minister of Finance, The Hon. Greg Sorbara. The policy areas that we proposed for urgent consideration in your government's budget have been identified as a priority by our members at the Annual General Meeting in October 2003 in Ottawa.

We made suggestions and asked questions in the following areas. (Brief appended)

- Public Health care
- Public Education
- Housing and Homelessness
- Child Poverty
- Water

There are other issues of urgent concern to our members, but in view of the provincial fiscal situation we limited our request for funding and government action to the most essential areas requiring immediate remedy.

We commend your government for addressing the policy and funding issues considered most important by our members.

**Health:**

We would like to commend:

- Additional monies for public health now announced as Operation Health protection;
- Additional monies for immunization;
- Additional nursing hires;
- Recognition of the credentials for foreign-trained physicians, now announced as a \$26 million programme involving IMG Ontario and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

We are concerned about:

- Delisting of services including optometry exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic services,
- The regressive nature of health premiums. It places an unfair burden on the middle income earners.

### **Education:**

We are pleased to see the 2004 annual budget includes funding specified for:

- Literacy and numeracy programs;
- Gradually reduced class sizes;
- The opening of spaces in teachers' colleges to train over 1,000 new teachers in 2005-6 as well as the professional development for 4,000 new lead teachers, doubling the number of specialists;
  - § All of the above now announced as part of the Education Foundations Programme
- Resources and facilities that includes textbooks and building maintenance

CFUW-Ontario Council is also pleased that \$100 million has been announced for special education programmes and staffing. We are also pleased to see additional funding of \$65 million for the Learning Opportunities Grant.

CFUW-Ontario Council continues to urge the government of Ontario to provide additional funding for:

- English as a Second Language programmes to return ESL programming to students who were disadvantaged by qualification policies implemented by the previous government
- Regular physical education
- Specified funding for learning materials, libraries and library staffing

### **Universities and Colleges:**

We are pleased to see that the Government of Ontario is making access to post secondary education a priority and reducing both economic and social barriers to higher education by:

- Providing colleges and universities with funding to offset shortfalls caused by the recently announced two year tuition freeze.
- Providing greater access to student loans through a \$20.9 million enhancement to the Ontario Student Assistance Program.
- Providing college stabilization funding, target at smaller rural and northern colleges.

We urge you

- To provide a system of need based grants as an adjunct to the Ontario Student Assistance Program.

CFUW-Ontario Council is pleased to see the announcement on July 12<sup>th</sup> of the Post Secondary Education Review under the chairmanship of former Premier Bob Rae.

## **Housing:**

CFUW-Ontario Council commends your Government for:

- Providing new monies for affordable housing, including new housing spaces for people with developmental disabilities.

We continue to be concerned that:

- Not enough was provided for the need, only \$18 million was new provincial money;
- A rent supplement programme was not addressed.

## **Child Poverty:**

We commend the Government for:

- Delivering the federal monies intended for the child-care system to the municipalities;
- Creating 4000 new subsidized spaces for children 0-6;
- The increase in welfare benefits;
- Passing on the increase in National Child Benefit to those on social assistance;
- The increase in the operating funds for women's shelters.

We noticed that:

- More child care spaces are still required. A universal system, as promised during election, has been part of CFUW policy since 1987.
- More affordable housing and/or a rent supplement programme is required;
- Welfare benefits need to still be increased so that we no longer have children and their families living in poverty.

## **Water:**

We commend you for:

- Additional monies for more water inspectors and research into better potable water standards;
- An aid package to help the large farms improve their manure-disposal practices;
- Improving sewage treatment plants;
- While not in the Budget, the new regulations covering the training for water quality analysts and managers.

We note that since the Budget, on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, draft legislation concerning watershed-based source protection has been announced, as well as amendments to the Water Taking and Transfer Regulation involving bulk water. Our Council is submitting comments to the Ministry of Environment and will be monitoring the changes in water legislation and regulations.

## **WHO ARE WE:**

Our member groups have been part of the fabric of Ontario for a century. CFUW Ontario Council is made up of approximately 6000 women university graduates from all the regions of Ontario. We are totally self-funded. Our members live in big urban areas as well as in rural and northern towns. We are non-partisan and non-sectarian. When voting on policy each of our clubs has one vote so that members from Thunder Bay and Renfrew and St.Thomas have the same weight as those from Toronto and Ottawa. This results in well-balanced policies that may be embraced by most Ontarians.

We are business women, scientists, teachers, university professors, nurses and physicians, seed specialists and engineers, farm women and artists and accountants, wives, daughters, mothers and grandmothers. All put their skills and education at the service of their community, and are active

- in all public affairs
- for a high standard in public education,
- for the improvement of the Status of Women in Ontario, and
- to ensure Human Rights in the Province.

We are not a charitable fund raising organization. Our Ontario clubs, nevertheless, award more than \$200,000 annually in scholarships and bursaries to students in all the regions of our province and to charitable and cultural causes.

We are part of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) and have links to the International Federation of University Women (IFUW)

It is unfortunate that that the Ontario Government finds itself faced with such a large deficit and that promises that were made during the election campaign cannot be kept at this point. Our issues are very basic to the fabric of life in Ontario – a strong health care system, a well educated population, children living and growing without fear of extreme poverty, affordable housing for all as well as clean drinking water. Our members look for measurable progress in these areas during your government's first term. Our Council will continue to monitor programmes, funding announcements and programme results.

Yours truly,

Edeltraud Neal,  
President, CFUW-Ontario Council

