

negligence), then employers will be reluctant in hiring women for fear of legal action. As well as this, pressure upon employers to provide completely safe working conditions may result in fewer jobs being made available to women. The factors are interrelated — pushing any of the forces one way will cause reactions elsewhere. As women it is necessary that we work out our priorities.

Governments, unions, industry and individuals must all contribute if we are to gain a better and a safer workplace for women. To understand some of the complex issues involved we need to consider some of these questions:

1. Why does most research concentrate on males, when two-fifths of the workforce is female?
2. Does the mother have full responsibility for the health of the fetus? Can the mother release a company or government from liability on behalf of her future offspring?
3. If a woman becomes pregnant and is working among substances which may be hazardous to a fetus, should she be transferred on full pay to a job for which she is not trained? Should the company be financially liable for her temporary unsuitability to do the job for which she was hired?
4. Is health the responsibility of an individual or of the society? Should legislation protect workers against hazards, or is it enough to educate people adequately and permit them to choose whether or not they wish to subject themselves to those hazards?

5. If an industry feels morally obligated not to hire fertile women to work with a chemical which has known teratogenic effects, how does this conflict with laws against sexual discrimination?

## Notes

- 1 This is condensed from a full research report of the same name written October 1976 by Anne George for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. It is available from ACSW, 63 Sparks Street, Ottawa K1P 5R5.
- 2 Maclean's Magazine, April 2, 1979, pp. 16-17.
- 3 E. Bingham (editor), *Proceedings. Conference on Women and the Workplace*, June 17-19, 1976, Society for Occupational and Environmental Health, Washington, 1977.

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- George, A. *Occupational Health Hazards to Women — A Synoptic View*. Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Ottawa, October 1976.
- Maclean's Magazine, April 2, 1979, p. 16-17.
- Stellman, J.M. *Women's Work, Women's Health*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

## CHAIRS

All styles for all tastes—  
 take your pick,  
 feel the fabric,  
 test the fit,  
     sleek and polished teak,  
     padded, bulging velour,  
     elegant highwinged ladies,  
     dark, demanding horsehairs,  
     carved hard rock maple  
     sporting cheery colonial prints,  
 found in the library, at a tavern,  
 around the dining table,  
 by the bandstand or on the front porch,  
     crayon coloured plastics  
     spouting shiny chrome legs,  
     limbless corduroy bean bags,  
     nameless wooden straightbacks  
     and priceless Queen Anne's,  
 something to sit on, stand on,  
 to pile yesterday's newspapers on,  
 or objects to collect, to exhibit,  
 or companions to enjoy,  
 to love, to cherish,  
     needle point cushions,  
     wicker woven fine designs,  
     look-like leather vinyl  
     and real, genuine suede,  
 in a dentist's waiting room,  
 for a release from gravity's pull,  
 for a base support when lonely,  
 more than a stool, less than a sofa,  
 his and hers: loveseats.

Bernice Lever