

It was nice that in a 59-page document women are mentioned a total of six times – and two of those refer to the fact that we have the vote. Thanks a lot. But my friend Janet, a single mother with two kids, is anxious to know how your proposals are going to affect her. Is medicare going to be okay? Is she ever going to get that day care you promised before the last election?

My lawyer friend, Sylvia, has another worry – an old one. It's the same question that bothered us about Meech Lake. It still isn't clear this time around whether recognizing Quebec as a distinct society is going to weaken the Charter of Rights. The Charter has been pretty useful in winning some important cases in the courts. Sylvia thinks women are going to lose more cases in the future under these proposals....

Sylvia and Janet are also worried about that property rights clause. What does it mean anyway? Can anyone owning property do whatever he or she wants, like pollute? Or opt out of pay equity laws?

My friend, Mary, who is a member of the Squamish tribe, wonders why she has to wait another ten years for self-government. And why in Quebec are Natives going to be relegated to second-class citizens....

Ever since 1984 you and Brian have done things like bringing in free trade and the GST without ever telling voters what you're going to do before elections. Right now, you're getting out of funding medicare – and I don't remember you asking Canadians about that. In another five years we'll probably have a patchwork of medicare schemes across the country. Rich provinces will get good care and poor provinces will get lousy care.

Sylvia and Janet and Mary and I want the Constitution to be made more open and responsive so that we know what we're voting for before elections and are able to get rid of governments that act like dictatorships between elections. Is that too much to ask in a democracy, Joe? And I wouldn't advise you to try that old line, "trust me," on women. After what your government has done to family allowances, women's programs, etc., it wouldn't be a good idea.

These are just a few questions Janet and Sylvia and Mary and I had while sitting around a kitchen table, Joe. We'll probably have a few more when we really get down to the fine print. Be seeing you.

Do it Like Doris!

Tune and lyrics by Linda Palmer Nye

Twenty-six years and here we all are,
More political battles, more political scars.
We did what we've done and we've done
what we could,
And isn't it amazing—we all look this good!

Hey. Hey. Whaddaya say?
We do it like Doris. And we do it today.
Hey now. Sing it out loud –
I am a feminist and I'm damn proud.
I am a feminist and I'm damn proud.

Red, black, yellow, brown. Skins are different,
it's true.
But our hearts are all red and I'm a woman
like you.
So let's put skin colour where it belongs –
Makin' a rainbow of women and makin'
us strong.
Makin' a rainbow of women and makin'
us strong.

Hey. Hey. Whaddaya say?
We do it like Doris. And we do it today.
Hey now. Sing it out loud –
I am a feminist and I'm damn proud.
I am a feminist and I'm damn proud.

In 20 more years, where will we be?
Still working together for our equality.
We will do what we can and we will do
what we should.
And it will be amazing – we'll still look
this good!

Hey. Hey. Whaddaya say?
We do it like Doris. And we do it today.
Hey now. Sing it out loud –
I am a feminist and I'm damn proud.
We are all feminists and we're damn proud!

Linda Palmer Nye is a feminist, based in Toronto, who writes feminist songs to encourage our sense of humour—and feed the fire in our bellies—because both are essential ingredients for a successful revolution.