

'Tell It Like It Is,' Says ADC Mom

By MARGARET MILLER
Women's Editor

"It's not the lack of money—it's the indignities you have to suffer. I can feed my family quite well, but you wouldn't believe what I've had to take from this town."
The speaker is Mrs. Catherine Walker, and she's a Plymouth mother whose total support for herself and three young children is \$239 a month from Aid to Dependent Children.

the story of a group of church people who tried living on welfare rations for a week.

"You should tell it like it really is for an ADC mother," she said over the telephone. "The food aspect has been overplayed—it's not that bad. But no one who hasn't been there can know the feeling of isolation and being a social outcast."

Mrs. Walker said she had two reasons for wanting to tell her story, but complaining wasn't one of them.

CATHY WALKER called this newspaper after we told

"THERE'S NO ROOM for griping," she explained when

visited in the flat she rents in an old four-family frame building in the center of Plymouth.

Makeshift furnishing and two busy over-schooled and their playthings filled the clean room.

"Really, I have a good life for the position I'm in," said the children's mother.

But she added that she'd like to have people—both the well-intentioned ones who try to understand by playing the "welfare game" and the others who don't try at all to understand—to get some idea of what it's like to be on ADC

in the middle of affluent Oberland.

And, more important to her, she'd like in this way to get in touch with other ADC mothers who might be interested in getting together to help each other.

"There are a lot of ways we could help each other—like pooling child care and transportation or learning more about cooking or sewing or home repairs or even forming a Recovery group," Cathy Walker said.

"And if that sounds like a segregated society against the rest of society, well,

that's how it seems sometimes."

RECOUNTING her own story, Mrs. Walker said she's been a resident of Plymouth since she was seven years old. She went to Our Lady of Good Counsel grade school, graduated from Plymouth High School and served in the Women's Army Corps.

"I've held jobs since I was 14," she said, "and I'll work again just as soon as my children are in school or I can find a day care center for them."

Cathy had sons one and two years of age and was pregnant with a third child when her husband walked out more than three years ago.

"I really was down then," she said. "That's what can happen to you. You wonder why you should bother with anything."

After some months of deep depression, Cathy went to Plymouth's Family Service for some counseling.

"I have to give Fred Gillesco—his the former head—credit for practically saving my life," she said. "He took me by the shoulders and made me have some respect for myself."

BEFORE THAT Mrs. Walker had tried working and leaving her babies with a sitter.

"But I couldn't find anyone reliable," she said. "I'd come home and find the children alone. I couldn't take that."

Now, having decided to make the best of life on ADC, Mrs. Walker borrows a car, from a neighbor twice a month to go to a Wayne County office in Inkster for food stamps.

"I get \$30 worth of stamps, and they are good for \$53 worth of food," she said. "That's plenty if I plan carefully, and we get good variety. I bake my own bread, except for a loaf I buy each week for toast."

BUT THE FOOD STAMPS were at the base of one of Catherine Walker's most unpleasant incidents connected with being on ADC.

"The cashier at the store where I shop always insisted that I had to give her the book so she could take the stamps out. I used to meekly hand it over—then a couple of times I found too many had been taken out."

"Other customers don't have to hand over their purses so the cashiers can take out the money, so I asked at the food stamp office if it had to be done that way. They said no, so the next time I insisted on seeing the manager. It was very unpleasant, but now I'm in

'I'm not ashamed to be on ADC. I hate it, but I'm grateful for it. I've held jobs since I was 14, and I'll work again just as soon as my children are in school or I can find a day care center for them.'

charge of my own stamp book."

Then there was the day Mrs. Walker tried to get emergency care in the office of a Plymouth dentist.

"At that time dental care was available under Medicaid," she said, "and I had checked in advance on whether the dentist would handle Medicaid cases."

"But when I got there I was told I'd be treated when I decided to go to work and get some honest money."

SHE SAID she also checked in advance about acceptance of Medicaid when she took a sick child to a Plymouth physician's office.

"But still I sat in the office two hours, and then the doctor came out into the crowded waiting room and informed me loudly that there were clinics in Wayne County for your type of people."

Another difficulty she mentioned was finding a

Plymouth drug store that would fill a Medicaid prescription.

"AND THERE'S something else you have to realize when you consider ADC mothers," Catherine Walker said, slowly. "There are women on ADC who are immoral, and who don't take proper care of their children."

"It's easy to sneer, and harder to realize how you can sink into a deep rut when you're in this position. ADC is a safe, although ego-de-

stroying, shelter, and most women find it very difficult to break out and face the different difficulties of working."

"And all the time being in the rut is bringing on depression that is one of the major causes of immorality, slo-

wness and lack of care for children and enthusiasm for them."

MRS. WALKER has found that many activities supposedly geared for people in

Continued on Page 2C



ABOUT LIBERATION — The new goals of women came up for consideration at a recent meeting of the South Redford Business and Professional Women's Club. From left are Mrs. Millie Rowison, club president; Coy Sandrock, counselor at Thurston High School; Anne Snudden, Michigan State University student; and Nina Peterson, BPW treasurer. (Observer photo)

After 50 Years

Lib Drive Asks 'Why?'

By KATHY MORAN
After vigorously fighting for their right to vote, American women have settled on a back row seat in their society.

Now after 50 years of hibernation, irate women are beginning to reorganize their ranks and ask, "Why?"

Some of the "whys" of the women's liberation movement were voiced recently when a young student and a middle aged woman educator spoke before the South Redford Business and Professional Women.

Among them:
Why should American society be male dominated?
Why should professionally-trained women be paid less than a man for the same job?
Why should women be the secretaries while men are the

presidents? Why shouldn't the country have more women senators and representatives—or even a woman president?

"OUR GOAL is to make society a more human one and to have women make more of an effect on society," Anne Snudden, a student woman liberationist, said.

Miss Snudden, a junior at Michigan State University, said that American society is run by a male ethic in which the men are more aggressive and competitive and women are defeatist and frustrated as the result of a repressive upbringing.

More of a woman's influence on society would alter a society which is built on achievement and which does not consider its effect on people, she suggested.

HOPING to add a "woman's touch" to society, Miss Snudden said the MSU group is made up of diverse women who are resolved to stop job discrimination and have laws repealed that discriminate against women.

For example, she said, often women are not promoted as fast as men because employers think the woman will leave sooner to marry and have a family.

Actually the group found that studies prove the opposite is true. Men tend to be more transient because they will leave one job for a better one, but women generally stay with a job if they like it, she said.

MRS. COY SANDROCK, a girl's counselor at Thurston High School in Redford Township, pointed out that while women have been discriminated against, they have also had protection.

"In some ways women have had better than equality," she said, referring to a woman's privilege to stay home to care for her children

and her household if she chooses.
Protective laws insure that a woman can receive child support or alimony and cannot work excessive hours, she said.

In a sense, women's liberation also means "liberating men" so they are entitled to some of these benefits also, she added.

"I think if we really want equality we have to be ready to take more responsibility," she said. "We each have to decide if this is our thing or not."

MRS. SANDROCK said women will have to recognize that day care centers are the trend of the future, since it is difficult to get babysitters and that a woman should not be expected to hold two jobs—that of her profession and that of a housekeeper.

Women should educate their daughters and not look on it as a waste if they get married, teach them the mechanics of birth control lest they be trapped in an unwanted marriage and get woman's privilege to stay home to care for her children



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As you may have heard by now, this newspaper is the proud occupant of shiny new headquarters.

We went through the throes of moving last week, and I couldn't help being reminded of the ordeal of moving to a different house.

This time I didn't have to tote a six-month-old daughter everywhere I went as belongings were being moved, but other similarities were quite apparent.

I threw out great quantities of things before packing—and seem to have lost a couple of valuables in the process.

I stowed things away in my sparking new desk—and already seem to have forgotten where I put a few of them.

I struggled with the rest of the staff with our new telephone system—and so far have managed to misplace a few calls.

And through it all I keep hoping that this long-time resident of old houses is going to be able to relate to all this new splendor.

Being the type that piles a desk high with clutter the way I stack a kitchen with pots and pans while cooking at home, I keep wondering if I'm going to be able to look a little bit efficient, and organized here.

A fellow editor, better known as The Stroller, neatly summed up the situation, I thought.

"How," he wondered as he boxed up his belongings, "are we going to use those new desks for all this old stuff?"

Mr. Stroller, you'd better not be referring to the editors!

—Margaret Müller

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