

Women's groups tired of support without cash

By CATHY NICOLL
The Daily News

Tory and Liberal politicians agree more funding is needed for such programs as day care, transition houses for abused women, pay equity, and a campaign to stop violence against women — but they stop short of pledging money.

"We're basically tilting at windmills and being knocked down," said Mildred Millar, a member of the Women's Action Coalition of Nova Scotia, after lobbying the Liberals and Tories for support yesterday.

This was the eighth year the group has gone to offices of the provincial political parties to secure continued funding for some programs, and to argue for first-time funding for others.

The 11 women representing various organizations met 13 Liberal MLAs, including five cabinet ministers, and four Tory MLAs. They will meet the NDP caucus next week.

No money

Katherine Reed, representing women's centres, cheered a small victory for her group — the provincial government will look at partly funding six established centres around the province that currently get funding only from Ottawa.

"We've been lobbying the province for five years to assist in our delivery of service to individual women," said Reed.

"What we've been encountering in our lobby is that the government supports everything you say, but then say they have no money to help. The party not in power also say they support us, but they're not in power."

Reed said most politicians are well-versed in the issues.

Eileen Power, of the Breast Cancer Action Committee, said her newly formed group wants to see action on what she calls an epidemic.

She said deaths from breast cancer have risen in the last 20 years, prompting a desperate need for more money for better research.

Gender bias may explain the money devoted to fighting breast cancer, said Power. She said it appears more money is spent on prostate cancer and AIDS research, while treatments for breast cancer are antiquated.

Back words

"We'd have to say very little money is going into breast cancer research because we're going nowhere," she said.

Power said her group also wants the province to research environmental causes of breast cancer.

Heather Hurst, of The Body Shop, and its campaign to stop violence against women, said the Savage government must back its words with money.

During the last sitting of the legislature, Human Resources Minister Eleanor Norrie, who is responsible for the Status of Women, introduced the government's zero-tolerance policy for violence against women.

The Body Shop, in partnership with the YWCA of Canada and the Canadian Women's Foundation, has taken steps to raise money and promote awareness of the problem.

The shop is running a bookmark campaign that could raise up to \$350,000.