

Feel Biog. Bk.

S25-85712
Paul Barry Bk

Marland appointed to shadow Cabinet

By JOHN STEWART
Staff Reporter

Mississauga South MPP Margaret Marland has been appointed to the Tory shadow Cabinet at Queen's Park as spokesperson for housing, rent review and women's issues.

"It's a terrific opportunity," Marland said Monday in an interview. She was appointed by former Premier Frank Miller last week to replace Jim Gordon who was named labor critic following the appointment of Dr. Robert Elgie as chairman of the Workers' Compensation Board.

Marland becomes the first female critic on women's issues since the then-Conservative government created the portfolio. That role had been filled by Dennis Timbrell, who is now involved in the race for the party leadership.

"I certainly plan to be very aggressive on women's issues," says Marland. She says she is not a feminist, but feels women "have a special need because historically, they have not been encouraged to provide for themselves.

She says she noted with interest that the first thing the Liberal government did on the equal pay for work of equal value issue after being elected

was "to backtrack." But she agrees with the strategy of implementing the concept first in the public sector before regulating the private sector.

The former city councillor says there is a direct relationship between her critic roles in housing and women's issues since so many of those having difficulty finding affordable accommodation are single mothers.

While people think the image of a person living in a one-room apartment with only a hotplate to cook on is a myth, Marland says there are thousands of Ontario citizens for whom it is a stark reality. Although billions of dollars have been spent over the years on housing assistance "something is falling between the cracks," says the MPP.

Because of the decision to lower the increases in annual rents to the 4 per cent level, Marland argues that inventors have lost confidence in the residential apartment market.

She points out the anomaly that while luxury housing is restricted to 4 per cent rent hikes, there are no controls for public housing. "The people who are in the greatest need (in public housing) are those who aren't protected," she says.