

## Struggle to organize

# Women's caucus meets problems

By Louise Hutchinson

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**HOUSTON, Feb. 10**—The National Women's Political Caucus, with political equality for women as a major goal, agonized today over organizational problems as it struggled toward political maturity.

At its first national convention here, the 18-month-old group, dumbfounded by a turnout of 1,200 women from as far away as Hawaii, learned a basic rule: the groundwork to achieve lofty goals can be hard, wearisome, confusing work.

**TONIGHT**, as the convention became deadlocked over a motion to admit men, Betty Friedan, author of "The Feminine Mystique," arose for an impassioned plea for unity.

"In a year and a half, we have created this beautiful new force in American life," she said. "We cannot afford to continue this way."

She begged the women to "overcome the things that are tearing us apart," and cited "our distrust of each other," the contention between dele-

gates from small and big states, and what she called "black vs. white."

**AFTER AN** hour, the convention voted by a three-fifths vote majority to admit men as at-large nonvoting members on the national caucus level and to permit state and local caucuses to decide the question for themselves.

Coupled with a sense of commitment to the caucus goals is a sense of uncertainty among some delegates over what groups or individuals may be seeking power.

Confusion over a rules report earlier in the day led to near disruption of the convention as the chairwoman, Gwen Cherry of Miami, a Florida state legislator, struggled with the meaning of resolutions being voted on.

The final result was that delegates can vote their full delegation strength even though many women are not

present from a given state. Illinois, represented by 11 delegates, may vote that state's allotted 23 votes.

**AT ONE POINT**, Rep. Bella Abzug [D., N. Y.] took over the chair to handle a vote. Mrs. Abzug is one of the so-called superstars of this organization and these luminaries have caused resentment among some delegates and admiration among others.

Still awaiting resolution is the real power struggle for the day: How the caucus, with over 30,000 members nationally, can structure itself to work more effectively after impressive successes in electing women candidates and at both major political conventions last year.

**A SMALL GROUP** labored thruout the afternoon and early evening trying to reach a compromise between two plans. One caucus member involved in the discussions described the

confrontation as between those who want the caucus to be a federation of state groups or a national group of state and large urban areas.

Under the tentative agreement, which can be changed by the convention, special interest groups such as labor and lesbians will be assured a certain representation on the national governing group. So will minorities, blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians.

Earlier today hundreds of N. W. P. C. members marched twice around Foley's a major department store here, protesting the sale of their Farah Slacks.

In a surprise move, Mrs. Rhea Mojica Hammer, of Chicago, an Illinois leader in Raza Unida Chicano political group, distributed biographies of herself to some delegates announcing her candidacy to head N. W. P. C. in elections to be held tomorrow.