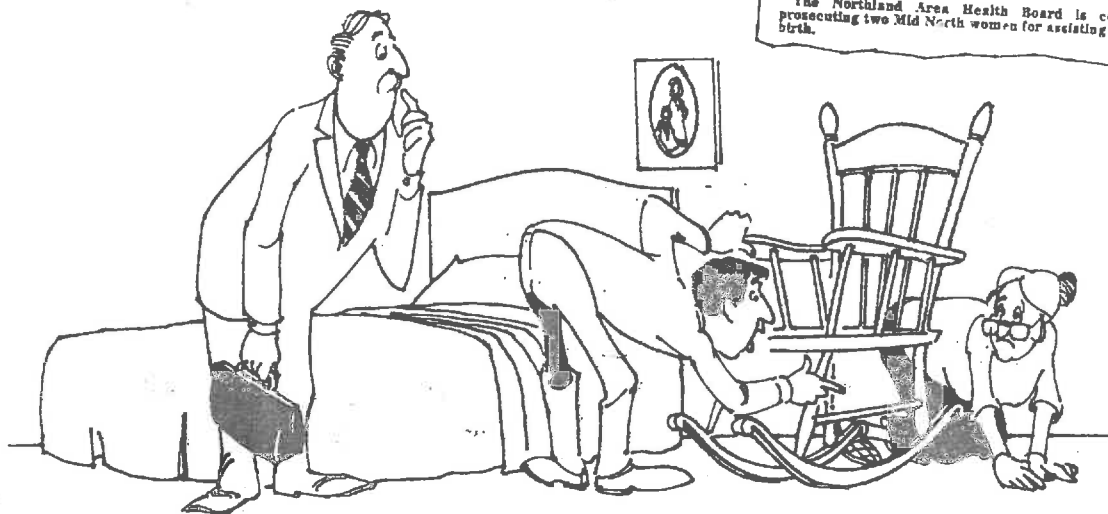


Wihongi's Viewpoint ...

The Northland Area Health Board is considering prosecuting two Mid North women for assisting at a home birth.



"YOU DON'T HAVE TO HIDE GRANDMA, DOC'S HERE TO TREAT YOUR RHEUMATISM,
NOT PROSECUTE YOU FOR ASSISTING AUNTY AT HER HOME BIRTH BACK IN 1933"

BIRTH HELPERS NEED TRAINING

I feel the time and money spent considering prosecuting the young women involved in the home birth at Whirinaki could be better used in offering them training.

They obviously have some aptitude in midwifery and perhaps should be encouraged.

Home births must save the health board money, and that seems to be a priority at present.

People should not be encouraged to buck the system, I agree, but at the same time the system must be flexible enough to allow folk the right to choose.

It seems incredible to me that a mother can become a lawbreaker simply by giving birth, and one could suggest the baby is too by association.

Childbirth is a real milestone in a woman's life, and the right to choose the time and place surely must belong to her.

There should, of course, be some pre-birth examinations, and doctors should have the right to hospitalise women they consider may be at risk during birth, or where danger to the baby exists, but it should be remembered

hospitals are not always the safest of places either.

If there is some feminist-political undercurrent, it will come out eventually, and people will be seen for what they are.

Let's give people a chance to make a contribution where they can, instead of stomping on any initiative with size 10 bureaucratic boots.

Jill Collins
Kerikeri.