

PRAIRIEWOMAN



A NEWSLETTER OF SASKATOON WOMENS' LIBERATION



EDITORIAL

It happens once a year, Good King W. leaps into action with charitable acts of love toward his poverty-ridden serfs, goodwill and camaraderie prevail for a few short-lived days. To fulfil the hopes of expectant friends and relatives consumerism flourishes. This seasonal boom for stores, shops and restaurants creates a proportionate vacuum in the labor pool - and yes, you guessed it, women are the ones to ring your sales receipt, wrap your gifts, sort your mail, cater to your Christmas banquets: in short, meet the greatly increased demand for those services that aren't as necessary during the rest of the year. Needless to say, these casual appointments are made at minimal cost to the employer, so whilst profits peak, women are exploited, after all, we are expendable.

This issue of Prairie Woman is concerned with the abuse of women in the labor market. Even through we make up almost half of the labor pool, we remain disproportionately at the bottom of the ladder in terms of job creativity, salary, responsibility, status and security.

If "women's work" were organized to a greater and better extent than it is now, we could begin to ameliorate those discrepancies which serve to maintain our ghettoization.

Some of our articles examine existing conditions, some advance reasons for inequality in the work force, others suggest solutions.

We must continually explore injustices, refine proposed solutions and most importantly, act against our oppression; as women; as women; as workers.

Prairie Woman Collective
December 1978



Dear sisters,

Now that women had their so-called 'chance' during International Women's Year of expressing their discontent, the Canadian establishment once again pressed on to what it considered more 'important' matters without solving any real problems faced by women today.

Concessions and rights enjoyed by women today have been won only by continued action and organized struggle. Here are a few concessions made recently to women directly as a result:

- (1) Amendments to the Married Person's Property Act.
- (2) Dept. of Social Services providing funding for Rape Crisis Centres across the province.
- (3) Recommendations to include homemakers as recipients of weekly insurance payments in the case of partial or total injury.

It is evident that these concessions are not the answer to the major problems faced by women. They will not liberate or emancipate them from their traditional roles.

Other important reforms which women are fighting for, such as equal pay for equal work, no discrimination against women in any job classification, fully paid maternity leaves, free daycare facilities, free abortion on demand, and family planning clinics, to name a few, have not been sufficiently dealt with. For example, the problem that the majority of women are still in traditionally low-paying jobs has not been solved. Reforms have not been offered on this issue because low-paying jobs are going to remain in capitalist society and women are a cheap supply of labour.

Equal pay for equal work is another issue that has been touched on but no serious action taken. A caretaker's

wages for example, is considerably higher than a stenographer's or clerk's (caretaker's salary at the university starts at \$847/mo as opposed to \$701 for a steno). Why the injustice? One of the reasons given so often is that a woman's income is secondary to the man's.

Alienation and inequality are frequent complaints from women in the workforce. A university professor living comfortably (on approximately \$30,000 annually) and who has some control over his work, cannot understand why a steno or library worker doesn't put everything she has into her work, not realizing that the rewards of gratitude, self-respect, and accomplishment which he attains, are not the same rewards received by the steno. She is alienated from her work --not only is she told what to do but how to do it.

An answer to this, is that more women in the workforce are getting involved in trade unions not only to fight inequalities and discrimination they are faced with everyday but for future goals as well. At the University of Saskatchewan more women have been elected to the union executive. The bank workers in Saskatchewan are organizing despite struggle with bank management. Women in these unions, and all unions, will have to make sure they are fairly represented and insist that their union continues to fight for women's demands.

What other methods are to be used in answering women's problems? Concessions are not enough. More and more women are beginning to realize that besides fighting for major reforms they should also fight to transform unions into instruments of

change. We must fight for real liberation of freedom and equality. From a Marxist viewpoint, freedom means

living life to the fullest; not only by having economic security to satisfy human needs (food, clothing, and shelter) but also by having the opportunity to fully develop one's potential.

In concluding, I have briefly tried to point out that the most we can hope for are concessions under capitalism, which is why I joined the women's movement. The Socialist Women's Movement proposes an alternative for women as opposed to other bourgeois women's groups which appeal only to women in higher echelons of society. Socialism offers a change and an incentive which capitalism does not offer --the incentive to work not just for the betterment of yourself, but for women collectively, and society as a whole. Socialism, unlike capitalism, is not based on the oppression of women and this is why socialist women's movements have the potential of organizing thousands of women to fight for their liberation.

Angela Bishoff

Dear Prairie Women;

Gee . . . it was good (far be it for me to know the definition of the word) to receive a Prairie Woman in the mail after such a long time. I thought I had been cut off for not paying my dues . . . ie. \$4.00.

I might say you are doing a wonderful job you three, or is it really four? But obviously, as your pleas implied - you're not.

So you need help, eh? It was a foreseeable future from a long time ago, that is now happening.

I think it must have something to do with change or to be more specific, the lack of it.

My contribution to SWL has never been more than slight, needless to say. However, even that was somewhat of a privilege . . . in my eyes, only at the time of encounters and when I perchanced to think about this mysterious women's organization who's goals were either established by women who's goals were set for themselves or perhaps never set at all.

Please don't misinterpret what I'm saying . . . it should be obvious (maybe only to those select few) that what I'm saying is that . . . I know I don't know. This seems to be a dilemma I am constantly faced with these days.

I find myself being absolutely repulsed by the notions some people have, the audacity to try to make me believe that one knows.

If I may take this opportunity to make a very poor analogy I would definitely be your guest and be so bold.

How in this world has the concept of existence ever been defined as change due to lack of it? Progression due to lag?

Understandably, you have, will, or never will, perhaps beginning, these exact, but ever so nebulous ideas.

And you see if you ever know what

I'm talking about, I'll know that you think that you know and I'll know that I don't know.

Salut mes copines.

Mary



Piece Work is Shit Work

Most women who work in factories do "piecework." Piecework is a system where the more you do, the more you earn. This article will explore piecework in a local clothing factory.

Hints at a rapidly-increasing paycheque--"the sky's the limit"--lures many a new recruit into one of the crueller forms of exploitation to be found in a developed country.

The new recruit naturally expects to reach "base" (100%) in no time. The first day on the job she might sew x waistbands on x pairs of pants; by her third day the number may have doubled; if she can keep on increasing her output as her instructor exhorts, she'll be above base at the end of her three-month training period. She tries.

A week later, the recruit's face falls when she discovers 100% production is x hundred waistbands attached to x hundred pairs of pants in one day. Home Ec was never like this.

At this point, one more statistic will be added to the turnover count, or else to the number of "girls" the manager can brag, "swear by the piecework system."

The trainee who stays will, under threat of losing her job, learn how to stretch her mental and physical stamina over a solid 40-hour week to sew the requisite number of pants to make base rate, a few cents above minimum. She will learn how dependent supposedly "limitless" output is on the condition of her machine. She will learn a change of even an inch in the pant size can slow her down as much as 20 percent. Dull needles, low-quality thread, bulky cloth, can all knock points off the paramount percentage output.

Her paycheques will be only remotely predictable. Machine problems can occur at any time, and can lop a hefty amount off. The spectre of temporary lay-offs loom close--any drastic increase or decrease in one operation can "bottleneck" the whole factory, and affect the quantities put through on other operations. On top of all this, the company's method of calculating percentage, an operation's average sewing time, average percentage, etc., etc. is too complicated for most workers to know if they're getting a fair deal.

Of course, the company is meanwhile getting an exceptional deal. Base rate is a few cents above minimum, and few women complain above a whisper. The more workers who average over a 100%, the fewer the company has to hire--hence it can save on space, machines, supervisory salaries, benefit funds, uniforms, and so forth. Company savings are lowered slightly by wastage of materials (which occurs on a very small scale by working class women, taught all their lives to be frugal), sabotage (by frustrated workers) and mistakes. Haste makes waste, but unfortunately, not enough to force employers to stop and seriously consider the piecework system.

Although its victims realize it's a rip-off, piecework continues to thrive. Its ideological basis is well-rooted in a society that continues to indoctrinate women with the "three virtues": obedience, silence and passivity. Women are encouraged as well to compete, compete, compete! against one another--in productiveness, appearance and the degree to which their dependency on men has grown. The consequences of piecework read like a litany of "female complaints":

isolation, frustration, confusion, fear of disapproval, helplessness. Piece-workers are physically exhausted not only from straining to meet unrealistic and ever-expanding production goals, but also from the double-days most of us as women are expected to put in. If an employee is known to complain too much, she is shunned by other workers who find it too painful to be constantly reminded of their oppression. She gets boxes of repairs to do from her supervisor,

she may be called to the office, which lowers her percentage.

The union, in the workers' minds, is either "bad, as all unions are", or conjures up images of a sellout: contracts containing "management rights" clauses; union and management going "halfies" on canned turkey for the women as Xmas bonuses.

Problem: daily we know why we should fight--if only we knew how.

by Norma Hersching

Exile for union members!

This poster was circulated in England in the early nineteenth century, warning anyone joining "illegal societies or unions" that they were risking exile to the convict settlements. "Felony" was (and still is) the term used in Britain and the United States for a serious crime.

CAUTION.

WHEREAS it has been represented to us from several quarters, that mischievous and designing Persons have been for some time past, endeavouring to induce, and have induced, many Labourers in various Parishes in this County, to attend Meetings, and to enter into Illegal Societies or Unions, to which they bind themselves by unlawful oaths, administered secretly by Persons concerned, who artfully deceive the ignorant and unwary,—WE, the undersigned Justices think it our duty to give this PUBLIC NOTICE and CAUTION, that all Persons may know the danger they incur by entering into such Societies.

ANY PERSON who shall become a Member of such a Society, or take any Oath, or assent to any Test or Declaration not authorized by Law—

Any Person who shall administer, or be present at, or consenting to the administering or taking any Unlawful Oath, or who shall cause such Oath to be administered, although not actually present at the time—

Any Person who shall not reveal or discover any Illegal Oath which may have been administered, or any Illegal Act done or to be done—

Any Person who shall induce, or endeavour to persuade any other Person to become a Member of such Societies, WILL BECOME

Guilty of Felony, AND BE LIABLE TO BE

Transported for Seven Years.

ANY PERSON who shall be compelled to take such an Oath, unless he shall declare the same within four days, together with the whole of what he shall know touching the same, will be liable to the same Penalty.

Any Person who shall directly or indirectly maintain correspondences or intercourse with such Society, will be deemed Guilty of an Unlawful Combination and Confederacy, and on Conviction before one Justice, on the Oath of one Witness, be liable to a Penalty of TWENTY POUNDS, or to be committed to the Common Gaol or House of Correction, for THREE CALENDAR MONTHS; or if proceeded against by Indictment, may be CONVICTED OF FELONY, and be TRANSPORTED FOR SEVEN YEARS.

Any Person who shall knowingly permit any Meeting of any such Society to be held in any House, Building, or other Place, shall for the first offence be liable to the Penalty of FIVE POUNDS; and for every other offence committed after Conviction, be deemed Guilty of such Unlawful Combination and Confederacy, and on Conviction before one Justice, on the Oath of one Witness, be liable to a Penalty of TWENTY POUNDS, or to Commitment to the Common Gaol or House of Correction, FOR THREE CALENDAR MONTHS; or if proceeded against by Indictment may be

CONVICTED OF FELONY, And Transported for SEVEN YEARS.

COUNTY OF DORSET,
Dorchester Division.
February 22d. 1824.

C. B. WOLLASTON,
JAMES FRAMPTON,
WILLIAM ENGLAND,
THOS. DADE,
JNO. MORTON COLSON.

HENRY FRAMPTON,
RICHD. TUCKER STEWARD,
WILLIAM R. CHURCHILL,
AUGUSTUS FOSTER.

JOB GHETTOS OR...

"there are too many of you and you're the wrong sex"

Job ghettoization is occupational segregation on the basis of sex. It is not a separate-but-equal proposition. Jobs which are considered to be "women's work" are usually very poorly paid in comparison with "men's jobs."

Sex as the basis for division of labour is certainly irrational but statistics confirm that it exists. In Saskatchewan in 1975, 39 percent of all working women were in clerical positions; 21 percent were in professional and technical positions (mostly teachers and nurses); and 15 percent were in service occupations, making three-quarters of all women workers employed in just three groups.¹ Women earned an average wage equal to 55 percent that of men in 1973.²

Even though women comprise a vital section of the labour force they are still erroneously viewed as a surplus labour force. (Think of the economic results if all the so-called surplus workers left their jobs tomorrow.) We are the last to be hired, the first to be fired. Since many employers see our incomes as secondary to the family, they do not appreciate the need of a decent living wage, in spite of the obvious fact that many of us are the sole supporters of ourselves and our families. Too often we are passive and weak, behaving as though we are second-class citizens; instead of demanding the rights we deserve for the responsibilities we accept.

The University Employees Union, CUPE local 1975, Saskatoon, is a good place to examine job ghettos since the university employs a large number of people in a wide variety of jobs with widely varying pay scales.

The three classifications with the lowest pay scales (1977 rates) on campus are:

Clerk I, \$685 per month - \$783 after six years experience;

Clerk Steno I, \$701 per month - \$783 after 5 years experience;

Library Assistant I, \$685 per month - \$783 after 6 years experience.

Exact figures are hard to come by, but it is obvious to any casual observer that the majority of these positions are held by women. The required qualifications for these jobs are completion of grade 12, typing, and familiarity with office procedures such as bookkeeping and filing.

Three jobs at the lower end of the pay scale that are usually done by men are:

Labourer; Gardener I; Caretaker I, all paying \$847 per month - \$875 after one years experience.

All of these classifications have basically the same qualifications: grade 8 and the ability to do physical work.

It is difficult to compare skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions of jobs. The "men's jobs" are often seasonal, involve unsociable hours, and unpleasant working conditions. However, the \$150 a month discrepancy in pay is too wide when the high level of education and specialized skills required in the clerical jobs are considered. The large number of increment steps reflect this.

Women receive low pay because managements know that they are not militant in their demands. They are usually passive in unions and our local is no exception. Although the overall participation by women in union activities is not nearly high enough to reflect the number of women employees, there are signs that this is changing; women are becoming involved in union committees and in

working women's groups. Fifty-seven percent of the 1979 executive are female.

There are several methods which could be employed to upgrade the pay of women in CUPE 1975. First, we could negotiate for bargaining unit wide seniority. At present, our seniority system is within the department, that is, a library employee would get first chance at a promotion in the library, even if a clerk from the hospital with many years more seniority applied. With bargaining unit-wide seniority, that clerk could apply for any job on campus that she was qualified for, even a job that is usually reserved for men. Second, we could make a concerted effort to close the wage gap between the lowest and highest paid union members (often a matter of closing the gap between male and female). Since percentage increases widen the gap and lump-sum dollar increases maintain them, the only apparent viable alternative is a combination of percentage and across-the-board increases. Third, a campus-wide job evaluation project, which would expose glaring discrepancies, could be instituted. We had a project (limited to library assistants only) which lapsed into oblivion because management reneged on the original agreement and refused to allow the union to evaluate education and experience. Properly done, job evaluation would equalize pay rates by placing each job at a level relative to all others on campus.

Unions must be alert to problems connected with some of these solutions. The wage gap cannot be closed at the expense of "men's jobs", a danger inherent in job evaluation and lump sum increases (\$847 a month is only barely a living wage after all). We don't want men's wages lowered--we want ours raised. 550 employees out of a total of 1100 are in the clerical and library group. Management is getting the work done at bargain basement wages and this situation will not change without a long, hard fight.

Many of the problems associated with job ghettos cannot be solved at the local union level, but are the concern of society as a whole. Artificial barriers to full female participation in the work world must be removed. To ensure that we are prepared for opportunities in the labour force, women must acquire a wider scope of educational and technical qualifications. An attitude change is necessary for managers, unions, governments, men and women, before false distinctions between "women's work" and "men's work" are discredited.

Caroline Andre
Janet Hone
Shelley Young



1. Saskatchewan Dept. of Labour. Women's Division. Saskatchewan Women in the Labour Force. F. mphlet n.d. p. 3
2. Ibid., p.4

June

Your face
is at ease on my breast,
Smooth night creature
calmed by the moon.

You stir,
curving about me
in a pelt of timid grace,
and turn.

Soundlessly
your eyes dance open,
Two small restless birds
with dark feather-wings.

Mute flight
I am near frenzy.

~Andrea Walker

GAY NEWS

The Saskatchewan Association on Human Rights at its annual meeting on November 9, in Regina, passed the following resolution:

"Whereas freedom of sexual orientation and expression is a fundamental human right, and

Whereas support for the protection of gay rights is coming from many organizations, among them the Saskatchewan Federation of Labor, Saskatchewan New Democrat Youth, the United Church, Canadian Labour Congress, and the Canadian Bar Association, and

Whereas the struggle for gay rights is part of the struggle against sexism in our society.

Be it resolved that the SAHR:

- 1) continue to promote and defend this freedom through active support of the campaign to include sexual orientation under the protection of Saskatchewan human rights legislation.
- 2) provide what assistance it can to the Saskatchewan Gay Coalition if and when so requested.

Be it further resolved that the SAHR expand the support of this issue to the community general through public education and advocacy at every opportunity."

At the NDP annual convention in Regina on November 19, delegates gave their support to gay rights.

The four part resolution called for amendments to the provinces' human rights legislation and is designed to forbid discrimination not only on the basis of sexual orientation, but marital status, handicap and age.

This is the first time the issue of gay rights has actually been debated by the full convention. It is encouraging in that light, since it passed by a two-thirds majority. The passing of the resolution places increased pressure on the government since it is now a strongly mandated party policy.



"ONLY FOXY PEOPLE NEED APPLY" - COCKTAIL WAITRESSING IN SASKATOON



A vast majority of women have waitressed at one time or another yet little has been said about the problems and situations they are faced with while at work.

This article will attempt to look at some of these problems by having waitresses express their own views and impressions on major areas of concern.

Four important areas that waitresses feel need discussion and which will be dealt with here are: general working conditions, sexual harassment, salaries and tipping, and unionization.

We have prepared a questionnaire (based on these major topics) for waitresses to use as a guideline in expressing their problems. Needless to say, we have found their accounts shocking and have placed them here in hope that they will tell their own story.

Most waitresses indicate that their working conditions are less than adequate. At the A-4 the pace is "very hectic, no breaks, can't sit or smoke. Bills never rung separately at bar so waitress was liable if she miscalculated and was short money at the end of the night . . . (There is) a very high turnover because waitresses can't stand the constant pressure. Management constantly understaffs on purpose, enough women are available but are not given the hours of work. The clientele 'sleazy' - most think waitresses are there to be picked up, they think that women are there because they don't get along with their husbands or they want an 'easy pick-up'. I refuse to work there again because of constant harassment and unfair treatment."

Another waitress wrote

"very seldom did I get breaks other than a half hour for an eight hour shift, other than a few minutes you could sneak off and get away with, it was always a matter of not getting caught.

In the last place I worked (Fast Freddie's) the management was good about supporting your decision (to cut -off customers). In other places I was informed that I had to expect a certain amount of harassment from male customers and was supposed to put up with it, pinching, feeling, etc. but I never did. . . . turnover is high . . . it is a job that has no real future . . . you know you can quit on short notice and hopefully easily get another waitressing job. Even though you try to get another kind of job you end up going back to waitressing because of the money and you know you can get a job. It's a rut!"

"At the Sands with 11 people on the floor no more than two could sit at any given time even if there were only a few customers. Coats, purses and smoking was confined to the tiny room where empty bottles were stacked . . . It's law now for female employees to be escorted home after midnight. Without this option it is difficult to discourage customers who want to "pick-up" waitresses - they hang around, follow you home, etc. and generally make going home without a cab an exercise in paranoia."

Many waitresses are unaware of this last law. Holiday Inn flatly told one waitress that they would not be providing taxis home (she was unaware of the law). They told her the deciding reason in hiring their latest bar manager, a woman, was that she has a car, and would not cost them a fortune in taxi fares. Management will simply hire waitresses who have transportation, or whose boyfriend or husband will pick them up.

Management will generally support their waitresses in decisions to 'cut-off' customers - or else they know they will lose their staff quickly. However, as one woman put it "they'd prefer you to take the drunk's money."

Our survey indicated that the smaller the establishment the more likely it was that conditions were better. Also, there were less hassles and better rapport between waitresses and female bar managers: "The old ParkTown (the ParkTown Folk Club, now defunct) was special and it had a lot to do with the woman who was bar manager. The waitresses would do a fair bit for Lena . . . she backed us up completely on cash hassles and drunk customers (and) she always took our side. . . if you have to waitress the type of people you work under are very important. All the low points of waitressing can be overcome temporarily if the staff are supportive and together. Sisterhood was pretty strong there when I was working."

Many waitresses had trouble with their pay, citing missing hours and other "bureaucratic nonsense". Waitresses are rarely, if ever, paid overtime, yet they have to stay until the last customer has gone. At Fast Freddie's, waitresses were supposed to be paid for time spent at staff meetings. It took repeated complaint by one waitress to the Labour Board before the problem was rectified; even then there was no retroactive pay. At another club, "once money was taken off because the cash register was short. We went to the Labour Board and were reimbursed."

"I look at a person who files, types and answers the telephone for \$4.50/hr. with regular raises and I wonder why I'm working my ass off for minimum wage."

No one is paid extra for training new staff, yet it is part of a waitress's duties, as is clean-up.

Sexual harassment from male bartenders, managers and customers is an occupational hazard. Many clubs require the waitresses to wear provocative and demeaning uniforms, which doesn't help the problem. (A-4, Top of the Inn, Fast Freddie's are especially guilty here). "The bartender (at A-4) is a sexist creep and is constantly making rude comments . . . (he) throws ice-cubes down the waitresses' tops. . . the boss will follow the 'girls' around and harass them in public while she is trying to work. (Management uses) constantly, terms that are sexist and demeaning. 'Baby', 'Would you like it from the front or back?' Questions about personal life etc." Another waitress had been promised, by managers, on various occasions "a nice little raise or better position (or shift or section) in return for a discreet affair!" Anyone who has ever been a cocktail waitress is sick and tired of lewd smart-ass comments from customers when she asks "May I help you?" or "What would you like?" One really wonders if the money is worth all these hassles and put downs. As one waitress put it, "Personally, I would rather be unemployed."

Another problem encountered in waitressing is the typical low wages (usually minimum), and compounding this is the system of tipping, with all its' inherent problems.

"At the time, it (waitressing) was supplementing my student loan. Pay was minimum; raises??? Tips were important, only thing which made it financially feasible."

"(received) minimum wage. Tips are a big help."

"I was supporting myself only, and you depend heavily on tips, because I was always paid minimum wage or close to minimum and it is hard not to let your dependence on tips affect your attitude and the performance of your job."

"(received) minimum wage. Tips are not



all that good in Saskatoon for the average waitress. You have to have a very outgoing personality to receive good tips."

"A lot of people do not tip, in fact, most didn't. Most women didn't, unless they themselves were or had been waitresses. And a lot of people have crazy ideas about how much all waitresses make in tips, (like she's making \$50-\$60 ; why should I tip her). Chances are most of her customers are thinking like that."

"Wages - generally minimum. I worked part-time at the ParkTown for nearly two years without a raise yet there were promises of one. I was supporting myself and relying heavily on tips - managements' constant justification for such poor wages."

"I think the situation of tipping is exploiting both the waitress and the customer; with the business receiving the benefit of this exploitation. It is through the system of tipping that they get away with paying less than adequate wages. The customer is expected to make up the difference with their tips. These jobs do not pay enough to live on without the tips, especially cocktail waitressing. I was working supposedly "full-time" at 25 hrs/wk

\$3.25 an hour. What I don't like is what you have to put up with because of this system of tipping. You're supposed to be really "nice" and put up with jerks; because you might get a tip out of them.. And you're really dependent on them; and the management knows this."

The subject of unionization is one important area that needs to be discussed and debated fully among waitresses. To get the opinions of the majority of waitresses in Saskatoon on this subject would indeed be a much longer and involved undertaking compared with our small project. However, we feel our survey is a start in pointing out some of the problems that waitresses have in trying to unionize. The question we asked was whether organizing a union would be helpful in fighting for better working conditions and a decent living wage.

One waitress at A-4 night club answered: "Yes, but here it is impossible because of high turn over... because waitresses can't take the constant pressure. If the boss doesn't like someone he cuts back their hrs. until they quit (eg. 2 hrs/week)..."

A frustrated waitress answered "yes" to unionization. She went on: "Unskilled male laborers (no training) make \$5-7/hr and I, with some training am still working for \$3.25/hr. We need to be unionized." An interesting point is that the Holiday Inn is unionized but we don't know how successful it's been.

Here is an interesting response from a waitress at the Park Town: "The hotel workers tried to unionize while I was there and the cocktail waitresses were the strongest supporters. The problem was that the process took such a long time that some of us had left by the time it came for a vote and then again we were only part-time and didn't have much interaction with the full-time staff (cleaning women and cooks, etc.). Management also did a real number. The owner-manager went out of his way to encourage a sickly father-figure image and a lot of women bought it. There was talk of firing if a union came in and the owners started making lots of trips to the kitchen to chat to the "girls" and assure them what nice men they really were and yes maybe an air-conditioner could be afforded next year. In the end one of the women who was organizing was fired and morale among the staff was hopelessly split by infighting (encouraged by management) and accusations as to who had informed on who."

Another familiar reply to unionizing was "Yes, but it would be so terribly hard to organize" obviously due to "staff changes being always constant because unless management has some rapport with its staff, problems go unsolved and unnoticed."

Another answer: "Most definitely but management has the upper hand - there are too many women willing to take these jobs or are afraid of losing them that they become passive about unionization."

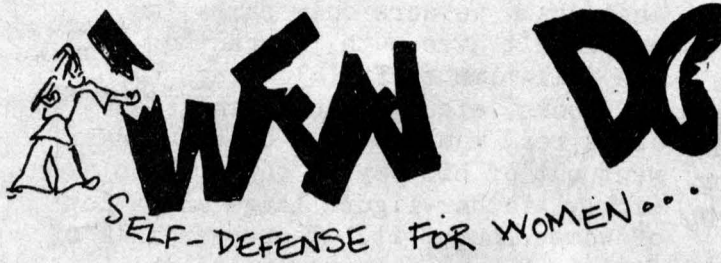


It is evident from these few replies that waitresses are starting to talk openly about the poor working conditions and unfair treatment they are faced with daily, and some are willing to organize to fight to better these conditions.

Not only are waitresses exploited as a cheap source of labour, they are exploited sexually, i.e. they are expected to look glamorous or, as Greg MacDonald, management of Fast Freddie's says "only foxy people need apply." The system of tipping continues to be management's rationale for low wages. We could go on and on and on.....

We would really like to hear about your waitressing experiences and your views on this subject. Write to Prairie Woman, P.O. Box 4021, Saskatoon.

Angela Bishoff
Debbie Woolway
Pam McFie



A woman friend impressed me with a story levelling a 200 lb. drunk in three blows. When she didn't claim to years of experience in self-defence, I wanted to know how she did it, what she used, and where to get it. The weapon came in the form of a weekend workshop on Wen-Do, self-defence for women. It's designed to deal with different levels of aggression against women - from a drunk at a party (soft Wen-Do) to a situation endangering her life (hard Wen-Do). The theory, proposed by a family in Toronto, responds to the needs of women with little time to devote to self-defence.

The basic principles are surprise, (no-one expects a woman to fight back with confidence and skill), circularity, (using the weight and flow of the attacker's motion to your advantage), smoothness of motion,

and self-trust. At the beginning of the workshop I participated in, we were taught to ki yi "hut". This deafening throaty yell is used to frighten the attacker and instill confidence in the woman. It works; several hours into the practice our collective grimaces and kiyis would have frightened off the most aggressive of attackers.

We were taught which areas of the body are most vulnerable, what degree of impact would injure, and what would kill. Practising in twos and threes, we took turns being attackers and attacked. As a group we analyzed the psychology of women as victims, talking about styles of walking and dressing that are most subject to attack.

We learned to be more aware of our surroundings, to plan our routes while walking at night, and to know where to get help. Trust your intuition: if you feel nervous check out the causes - there is often a very good reason. Take all verbal threats seriously - if someone tells you they are going to kill you, believe them. When attacked, respond immediately, run if possible, yell - it's better to be embarrassed than dead. Don't try to run from a gun. Breathe deeply: without oxygen we become weak, our thoughts unclear, and our judgement poor.

Wen-Do teaches us to defend ourselves with our complete bodies and minds. Blows should be delivered to go through the attacker, not just to hit him.

Wen-Do is a rapidly growing network of women teaching women. Many Ontario rape crisis centres are training their workers in Wen-Do and encouraging victims of rape to learn the skill.

An organized group of 20 or more women could sponsor a course here - instructors are eager to welcome Saskatchewan women to the network. The cost would be airfare for the instructor, a comfortable billet for her, and building rental. I have contacts with women in Kitchener, Waterloo, Toronto and Vancouver. Anyone interested in setting up a workshop call Daphne at 664-3638.

Daphne Boyer



Any inequality between the sexes under the Unemployment Insurance regulations are the result of nature, not legislation.

That's what the Supreme Court of Canada said October 30, when they ruled 7-0 against Stella Bliss. Bliss, who had been excluded from regular UI benefits under Section 46 of the Unemployment Insurance Act because she had just had a child, had claimed that Section 46 of the UI Act contravenes the Canadian Bill of Rights by discriminating on the basis of sex.

The Supreme Court decision upholds the discrimination of Section 46. It is a kick in the stomach to all working women, especially those thirty thousand a year who are denied regular benefits because they are pregnant.

Section 46 arbitrarily forces women who are pregnant to apply for maternity benefits even when they qualify fully for regular benefits and would prefer them.

Unions and women's groups across Canada cooperated in bringing this case to the various courts of the land. SORWUC (Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada), Bliss' union, took the case to UI umpire, who found that Section 46 "authorizes discrimination by reason of sex." This judgement was appealed by UIC, overturned by the Federal Court of Appeal and finally squashed by the Supreme Court.

As a result, some recent rules have been announced by Employment Minister Bud Cullen regarding UIC.

- extension of supplementary unemployment benefit plans to include those which cover unemployment caused by

maternity only. Currently, maternity benefits are only allowed under plans which also provide compensation for temporary lay-offs.

Under such plans, the government pays the woman about two-thirds of her regular salary and the employer pays the rest, up to a maximum of 95% of her regular salary. About 400 employers have supplementary benefit plans for lay-offs covering about 400,000 workers.

- Women who receive maternity pay from employers will no longer be penalized when they get government maternity benefits. They now lost two weeks of government benefits if they got employer benefits during a two-week waiting period.
- The qualifying period for women unemployed because of pregnancy would be doubled, easing work requirements. Under current rules the woman must work 10 to 14 weeks in the last year to get regular insurance benefits. Under the new rule she would have to work only 10 to 14 weeks in the last two years if she was unemployed because of pregnancy.
- Women who wish to have their babies outside Canada could collect maternity benefits. The current rules do not allow this.

Maternity benefits are riddled with tricky rules for qualifications. These changes do not go far enough. Women who work and pay UI premiums should not be deprived of benefits arbitrarily in situations where men would not.

The National Action Committee on the Status of Women has sent a telegram to the Chairman of the Federal Human Rights Commission and issued a press release expressing grave concerns with the guidelines which will permit employers to justify wage differences for males and females. "We are particularly distressed by the guidelines which allow employers to pay men and women different wages where merit, training, rehabilitation, red-circling and internal labour force surpluses are factors", Kay Macpherson, President of NAC, said. "The law is meant to end the wage discrimination women in the federal public service have endured for years. Now we have all these exceptions which really mock the intent of the legislation."

NAC has also presented briefs, written to Bud Cullen, and met with Cabinet members to express concern over U.I.C. cutbacks and other job creation programs. "It is clear that these proposals from your Ministry, together with evidence of cuts across Canada, particularly child care and other social services for women, are part of a campaign to drive women out of the work force and back into the home; to lay the blame for unemployment on women; to divide the working people and to divert public attention from the mismanagement and lack of planning which has contributed to the present situation. In fact, Unemployment Insurance will amount to a tax on married women who work, since they will be forced to contribute to the fund but seldom be able to draw from it."

NAC is asking the Government to:

- (1) establish job creation programmes specifically for women, but not limited to the low-

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY



Wonder if we could press a false-advertising suit? o.o.o.o

paid traditional
"female" jobs;

- (2) continue Unemployment Insurance Benefits with training allowances to permit women with dependents to take advantage of training programmes; and
- (3) ensure that eligibility requirements for U.I. are not designed to exclude married women.

- DAY CARE IN CRISIS

The 1978 Child Care Conference was held in Saskatoon Oct. 27-29. One of the important recommendations coming from the Conference has to do with the formation of a Prov. Child Care Association. Despite the need for day care, vacancies at centres are increasing, necessitating staff lay-offs and centres closing down. Almost all daycare centres must charge \$20 - \$30 extra per month to meet basic expenses. Parents who want and need daycare simply can't afford it. In Canada, only 5% of children under 3 and 16% of those 3 - 5 needing day care are in some form of licensed childcare. Where are the others?

One of the resolutions passed at the Conference was a motion that a Provincial Day Care Assoc. be formed to:

- a) cultivate communication between day care facilities and interest groups in an effort to gain a comprehensive view of the problems and needs of day care in the province, and
- b) lobby for a more comprehensive method of funding that better meets the need of day care.

Support quality, free, 24 hour ,
universally accessible child care!

Steering Committee member for the formation of this Association to be set up is Corinne Hollingshead, 136 Avenue F South, Saskatoon (home- 343-0761, work-244-7158). GET INVOLVED. Quality child care should be everyone's concern.

Mary Fisher Cooperative Day Care Assoc. is one of the local Day Cares facing a financial crisis at the moment. A benefit dance will be held February 17th at the Indian-Metis Friendship Centre. Watch for further details and please help them continue to exist!

- The Canadian Council on Social Development has completed a technical study, by Ottawa economist Kevin Collins, on women and pensions. The report examines the conditions for women in private and public pension plan systems.

Mr. Collins reports that elderly women, living on pensions, are the poorest people. In effect they live below any realistic poverty line. Women are penalized by current pension systems, according to the study, by longer life expectancy, high turnover rate in the labour force, low wages, poor jobs, and interrupted employment records.

The Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan are called to task for their regressive benefits in the report: "the lowest income groups pay a higher proportion of their income in contributions than higher income groups. Because women generally have relatively low incomes, this is particularly disadvantageous for them." To obtain a copy of the report write to:

"Women and Pensions"
Canadian Council on
Social Development
55 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 1E5

ORGANIZING

\$700 FOR MEN\$550 FOR WOMEN

(Kinesis, Nov.78) - by Debra Hopkins

I was hired at Budget Rent-A-Car Victoria on Feb. 20, 1978 along with a man of equivalent work experience. He worked at the truck rental office, I at the car rental office. He was paid \$700 per month and I \$550. Working conditions were appalling: no lunch hour or coffee breaks; the young men who washed the vehicles were viciously tongue-lashed by management and paid minimum wage; there were sexist pay differentials; overtime was unpaid; and the general tone of management-worker relations was characterized by fear on the part of the workers and rudeness and beratement on the part of the management.

Workers have a legal right to organize and are protected by the Labour Code, so I contacted a Business Agent for Teamsters Local 351. Word got out, and I was fired. I immediately started a drive for signatures on union cards. Although only 55% of the workers are required, we had a healthy 65% signed up and applied for certification with the Labour Relations Board.

I then filed charges against Budget with the British Columbia Human Rights Commission for discriminating against female employees with respect to wages and convinced two former Budget employees to do the same.

I also started proceedings with the B.C. Labour Relations Board charging Budget with unfair labour practices under the Labour Code. Under Section 3 of the Code, no employer shall "discharge, suspend, transfer, lay off, or otherwise discipline an employee for the reason that the employee participates in the promotion, formation, or administration of a trade union ..."

So theoretically and legally, I had a perfect right to try and start a union if I so desired. But the question I kept asking myself was, "Why, with this seeming wealth of enlightened labour legislation, was it possible for my employer to summarily dismiss me in contravention of the law of the land?"

The cynics are right. The rich get the peaches, and the poor the punches. After much work and waiting the outcome of my cases before the Human Rights Commission and Labour Relations Board was to show that the law is not totally irrelevant, just cumbersome and slanted towards the powerful at the expense of the weak and unorganized.

Legal avenues take a great deal of time, and wars of attrition favour management. I was forced by financial pressures to settle out of court for a cash settlement equivalent to a month's pay. Admittedly, this was a hollow victory, made ever more hollow later when the Budget employees' attempt to unionize was beaten by management's counter-attack of lies and threats orchestrated by a very high pressure law office that specializes in breaking fledgling unions.

However, it was a learning experience for me and the other Budget workers. Consciousness was raised, even in the good fight was fought and lost. The battle will be fought again, and next time, maybe The following are some observations and thoughts based on my experiences that may be useful to someone faced with a similar situation.

CARDINAL RULES

A few cardinal rules of union organizing: Keep your mouth shut until you have your ammunition. Get as much dirt on the

company as you can, such as quotes to use in the complaint to the Human Rights Branch and Labour Relations Board. Make sure you have a complete list of employees and their addresses. And remember, if someone is acting like a company suck, he or she IS one. This is where I made a mistake. Never get confidential with someone who is being groomed for management.

Another important consideration is analyze the set-up of your company. Are there groups of employees who could conceivably have a different vested interest from the bulk of the workers? In Budget's case, we should have applied for exclusion of the book-keepers and mechanics in our application for certification. It can be argued that these people are a professional interest group, higher paid, and therefore not representative of the average worker. Only apply for this exemption if you're pretty sure they won't sign up. Professional people are hard for management to replace, and if they support the union it will be more powerful because of their support. Management may try to favour one group of employees and denigrate another, the principle being to divide and conquer. Can you conquer this game?

WILL THEY FIRE ME?

Before you begin talking to people about a signing of union cards, sit down and analyze answers to the types of questions they will ask of you. Some examples are: What will happen when they find out that there is an application for certification before the Board? Will they fire us? Explain that you are protected from harassment under the Labour Code and that it is absolutely illegal for them to fire you. The only way management

can get at the workers is by undermining their solidarity. The most important thing is to stand together.

Can management shut down areas of the operation or perhaps mechanize or eliminate jobs? Remind the person that if mechanization would have already been made. There is also a degree of protection offered under the Labour Code. Under a collective agreement any introduction of technological change may be referred to an arbitration board by either side.

Another fear expressed was that Budget would just shut down completely. Again, appeal to common sense. Owners do not profit when the doors are closed.

Management will also attempt to amend past injustices. Promises of high wages are whispered in ears and rumours of promotions abound. Illegalities will also be concealed from the law. For example, the minute management received notice of the Human Rights charge, one member of management hired his male roommate for the car office at \$550 per month. Nice try!

Although this organizing effort failed, there were several beneficial results. The Human Rights Branch deemed that the men's and women's jobs were substantially similar and the women received cash settlements ranging from one to several hundred dollars as compensation for the discrimination they suffered.

The most important result, I feel, is that Budget really got a shake-up. Management for the first time was forced to look at their behaviour and from all reports, they are being much more polite and sympathetic to their workers. All the workers received a raise, and men and women now have wage parity.

BREAD AND ROSES

The Massachusetts state legislature, in its closing session of 1911, passed a law limiting hours of children under eighteen to 54 hours a week. The textile corporations, in retaliation for the worker victory, cut all employee hours to 54 per week, with wages cut correspondingly. The workers in the Lawrence, Mass. textile mills began a nine week strike, January 1, 1912. Women workers carried banners: "Bread and Roses" in their walkout marches. Just as in the family, where women had the role of keeper of morals and upholder of beauty, the women fought not only for workers' rights but for the quality of life.



As we come march-ing, march-ing in the beau-ty of the day, a mil-lion
dark-ened kitch-ens, a thou-sand mill lofts gray. Are touched with all the
ra-diance that a sud-den sun dis-clo-ses, For the peo-ple hear us sing-ing,
Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses."

2. As we come marching, marching, we battle too, for men,
For they are women's children and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes,
Hearts starve as well as bodies:
Give us bread but give us roses.
3. As we come marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient songs of bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
But we fight for roses, too.
4. As we come marching, marching, we bring the Greater Days,
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler, ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories,
Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A new version of Global Issues course will be offered in the new year at One Sky. From Feb. 8 to March 8 Micheal Murphy will do a synthesis of the material in the first course. From March 15 to April 15 Kelly Murphy will do a five part series on women. For example:

- Women in Agriculture, Canada and Africa.
- Women in the Trade Union Movement, Canada and Africa.
- Women in the Revolution, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea - Bissau.
- Native Women in Canada.

You may register for either half, or for all of the course. Cost for the entire course is \$25.00. For more information, call One Sky, 652-1571.

How's this for a Christmas gift idea - feminist records! Available at Onion Books.

Dec. 27 - Dec. 30.

Children's International Film Festival

Dec, 27 - The Magic Kite (filmed in France & China) Main Lib. 2:p.m.

- For Boys Only is for Girls Too (Czechoslovakia) J.S. Woods Lib. 2:00 p.m.

Dec 28. - Just Because You're Grown Up Main Lib. 2:00 p.m.
Who's Got the Horse (Hungary) J.S. Woods Lib. 2:00 p.m.

Dec. 29 - Who's Got the Horse Main Lib. 2:00 p.m.
Just Because You're Grown Up (Czechoslovakia) J.S, Woods 2:00 p.m.

Dec 30 - For Boys Only is For Girls Too Main Lib. 2:00 p.m.
The Magic Kite, J.S. Woods 2:00 p.m.

National Action Committee on the Status of Women are holding their annual meeting March 23 - 25, 1979 at the Skyline Hotel in Ottawa - followed by a lobby of Parliament on March 26th. Each paid up member organization is entitled to send two delegates. Observers are welcome.

The next Prairie Women Newsletter meeting will be on January 9th, 1979, at

Planned Parenthood Saskatchewan (404 245 3rd Avenue South) at 7:30. Everyone welcome

The next Saskatoon Women's Liberation meeting will be on January 15th, 1979 at 7:30, at Onion Books. Once again, everyone is welcome.

On January 8th, 7:30 at Onion Books there will be a General Meeting to discuss further action on the abortion issue. Please attend - this meeting will be an important one, and a follow up of our December 15th action at One Sky.

Renewals and Subscriptions

This is a special reminder to you to renew your subscription to *Prairie Woman*, and help us keep our books straight. Also we are on the lookout for new subscribers, so pass the word on to friends and relatives. And here's our Christmas pitch - a subscription to *Prairie Woman* would make a great gift at this time of year.



Subscriptions: \$4.00/yr.
Box 4021 Saskatoon.
Please make cheques payable
to Saskatoon Women's Liberation

BOOK REVIEW

BOOK REVIEW, SEXISM AND SCIENCE

Electing to review a book with the title Sexism and Science leads one to expect a general text about the prevalence (or, more likely, scarcity) of women in all branches of science. You know: rows upon rows of wide-ranging statistics to prove specifically what is already generally known; the sort of reference work developed on the basis of questions like, "do you wish there were more women in your field?"

Sexism and Science is not that kind of book. The author, Evelyn Reed (Woman's Evolution), presents her readership with a collection of articles from 1957 to 1977 that she has written on mainly anthropology and feminism/socialism. In her introduction she states, "The activities and theorizing of the scientific community do not proceed in a vacuum. They are subject to all the biases current in the established social system; these affect, and sometimes warp, their conclusions."

"The influence of prejudice tends to be strongest in those branches of science that are closest to human life and its history and values..."

"Much has been written in recent years about the racism to be found in the conclusions of certain geneticists and other writers. Less attention has been paid to the presence of sexist stereotypes in the biological and social sciences dealt with in this book. Some of these are being brought to light by partisans of women's liberation, who are more likely to be sensitive to them and aware of the harm they do both to the pursuit of scientific truth and the cause of social progress."

Not only does Reed make her "slant" clear from the outset (more than can be said of most wishy-washy social science books), but she is quite prepared to back them up when confronted with the criti-

cism of another expert in her own field. The debate, printed in full, between Howard Haymes and Evelyn Reed I found to be the most interesting section of the book.

Reed's reply to Desmond Morris (The Naked Ape), Robert Ardrey (The Territorial Imperative), and Konrad Lorenz (On Aggression) was just as valuable. Any woman who has read one or all of the above, and, upon completion, has sat there puzzled and said, "yes, but...there's something not quite right here" will bless the mind that has given such an eloquent, thoughtful rebuttal.

The strength of this rebuttal, and of this entire book examining sexism/capitalism, is that it deals with the backward forces more from an offensive, than a defensive, position. Reed explains the theories of evolutionism, the matriarchy, and kinship relations (none of which I shall misrepresent in an attempt to enclose them in a nutshell). She discusses why these theories are not popular with numerous "modern" professionals who adhere to the functionalist school, for fear of having to think about anything other than the existant capitalist patriarchy. From Reed's position on these matters and a solid base of theory (which she elaborated in Woman's Evolution), she then critically analyzes and seeks out inconsistencies in opposing arguments. Her "replies" go beyond merely answering another's ideas; she strikes out new paths on her own.

Detracting points? you ask (ah yes, I can't maintain the paradoxical image of objective reviewer if I only sing kudos). Well, she does repeat herself a fair amount from one article to the next, although I found this drove her main points home well. It's slow reading, heavy, and at times choppy. And last but not least, the title is misleading.

by Norma Hersching



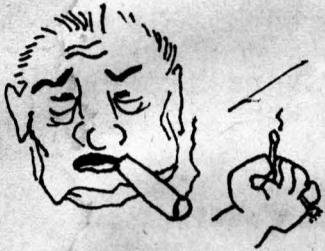
①



REALLY GOT INTO THE SPIRIT OF XMAS THIS YEAR...

ALMOST

②



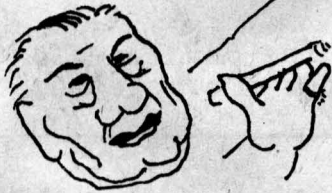
GAVE THE GIRLS AT WORK A NICE BONUS...

A \$10 BONUS AND A CAN OF XMAS PUDDING



TAP TAP! TAPPETY TAP! TAP PUDDING?

③



BOUGHT THE OLD LADY A NEW DISHWASHER...



IT'S OUR SECOND...

SHUT UP, THIS IS MY CARTOON

④



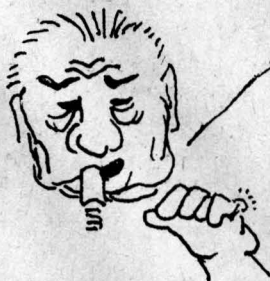
WISHED THE GIRLS IN THE STORE A MERRY XMAS. WISHED THE WAITRESS A MERRY XMAS.



BANQUET OF TWELVE AND HE LEAVES A \$1 TIP?

... YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL

⑤



BUT THAT CUTE-ASSED LITTLE SANTA'S ELF IN THE RED AND GREEN HOT PANTS RUINED IT ALL...

⑥



TOLD ME TO... FUCK OFF

PRAIRIE WOMAN is a newsletter of Saskatoon Women's Liberation. Contributions in the form of articles, news items, poetry, graphics, cartoons, and photographs are welcomed from women. Interested men are invited to contribute letters or funds. Because the newsletter is put out by voluntary labour, financial donations are encouraged.

PRAIRIE WOMAN is run as a collective. Writers have had their efforts acknowledged with their articles. Others working on the paper are:

DEBBIE WOOLWAY
VICKI BARCLAY

PAM MCFIE
ANGIE BISHOFF

MAYLYNN WOO
LYNDA SHEPHERSON
ANDREA WALKER

ORIGINAL GRAPHICS BY: TAM, MAYLYNN AND VICKI

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