

# Bill 89 — compromise for labor

Joan Osborne contacted a number of people involved in the labour movement for their reactions to the labour law amendment including Jim Hayes, labour lawyer who worked on the Radio Shack and Fotomat cases.

By JOAN OSBOURNE

All Ontario workers who enjoy union protection must help pay for that protection through com-

pulsory dues checkoff. The Rand Formula is in.

Union women who fought against notorious campaigns to crush their newly-organized locals made compulsory dues checkoff an essential issue. (Fleck, Radio Shack, Blue Cross, Fotomat.) Under pressure from labour, the Conservatives introduced Bill 89, making the Rand Formula law.

But there's a catch. The amending legislation also empowers employers to have non-union help participate in votes, even during a strike. To get the all-important mandatory dues checkoff, the retrogressive catch clause had to be accepted.

Terry Meagher, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour, stated that the Federation will fight to get rid of

the negative section. He pointed out that, in the past, unions have had to trade off wages and benefits to get union security. Now its automatic.

Views of a sample of labour experts ranged from cautious optimism to outright condemnation. Most expressed hope and also concern. There are locals taking negative views, though their par-

ent unions consider the amendment positive on balance.

Some unionists fear that during a strike business may hire hordes of scabs, then call a stacked vote on a ridiculous offer. Labour would lose ground.

On June 11, the Globe and Mail quoted NDP MPP Evelyn Gigantes as saying the Ontario Labour Relations Board would

• Continued on Page 3



## UNION WOMAN

PUBLISHED BY ORGANIZED WORKING WOMEN (TORONTO AREA)

VOL 3 NO. 3

SEPTEMBER 1980

**OFL  
Day Care  
Meet  
Oct. 16-18**

### Labour Day greetings

Labour Day greetings from Organized Working Women to all our sisters and brothers in the labour movement!

For OWW, as with the rest of the labour movement, the Annual Labour Day parade signals the start of a busy year of activities. It's time for us again to take up actively the fight for women's equality in the workforce and the rest of society.

With the continuing economic decline, a prime focus for all unions is unemployment. We in Organized Working Women will be doing our share to make the crisis in employment a visible public issue. Plans are already underway for a conference on Women and Employment to deal with unemployment insurance, access of women to skilled trades and retraining programmes, equal pay for work of equal value and other issues.

Day care is a continuing concern for all working parents. OWW members will be following up on the work begun at our March 1980 Conference on "Day Care and the Union Movement". The next big event on day care for union women will be the conference of the OFL Women's Committee to be held in October.

As we march alongside our sisters and brothers in the Labour Day parade, we are reminded of the importance of solidarity in achieving the goals of the union movement. OWW would like to thank all those who have supported us in the past and hope you will agree that our work for women's equality is worthy of continuing support.

In the coming months, Organized Working Women will be approaching union locals to ask for financial contributions to our work. Money is needed to help support our paper, *Union Woman*, our skills training workshops and our educational conferences and evening meetings. We ask you to support our fund-raising appeal.

Organized Working Women extends an invitation to all union women to become members of our organization and to take part in our educational conferences, meetings and other events. Membership entitles you to a voice in our proceedings, a subscription to our paper and regular mailings on events and issues concerning the fight of working women for equality.

We call in our union brothers to support the work being done to advance the interests of women in their unions and to attend our public meetings and fundraising events. Inform the women in your locals of the work of Organized Working Women and encourage them to join.

Copies of *Union Woman* are available at reasonable cost to unions that wish to distribute them to their members. The OWW office is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. every week day. Sisters and brothers in the union movement are welcome to call for information on the struggles being waged by women for equality. We are anxious to learn of the problems and the achievements of women in your union.

Best wishes for a successful year of union activity. Together we are strong!



One of the many rallies held by the Public Service Alliance to back their demands for decent wages.

### PSAC in pay fight

By HOLLY KIRKCONNELL

"The federal government clerks can no longer afford to sit back passively and accept increases which are less than the cost of living. Treasury Board's offer would push more and more of these workers below the poverty line", according to Anne Swarbrick, a regional representative in the Toronto Regional Office of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

The 52,000 member clerical bargaining unit may have to go out on strike to back their demands as early as the end of September. Treasury Board may be banking on the clerks not striking. They also may be in for a rude awakening.

Seventy-five percent of this bargaining unit are women. The majority of clerks make less than \$13,000 per year. The last pay increase that the clerks received was in November 1978. This increase was 7.5%. In 1977 the clerks received a 6% increase. Inflation over the time period of these increases was 9% annually. At the time of writing this arti-

cle, the CRs are in the conciliation process. Stephen Lewis, former leader of the NDP, is the union's nominee on the conciliation board. The clerks are demanding 11% and 9% plus cost-of-living allowance, over two years. They are also going for a 35 hour work week; 4 weeks vacation after 10 years, 5 after 20, and 6 after 30; among other improvements in shift premium, meal allowance, weekend premium, bilingual bonus, severance pay and sick leave.

The Treasury Board's latest offer is 7% and 7% over two years (up from 5% and 5%), with no cost-of-living allowance and little or no improvement in other areas. This is in sharp contrast to the 9.5% increase that the highly paid Executive Group recently received. In dollar terms, this in-

crease amounted to a range of \$3,800-\$5,400 per year, raising the average annual salary of this group to \$48,000. The 7% offer to the clerks amounts to an average increase of \$640 per year.

Four thousand of the 52,000 clerks have been "designated" by the employer. This means that, in the interest of the safety and security of the public, these workers are denied the legal right to strike.

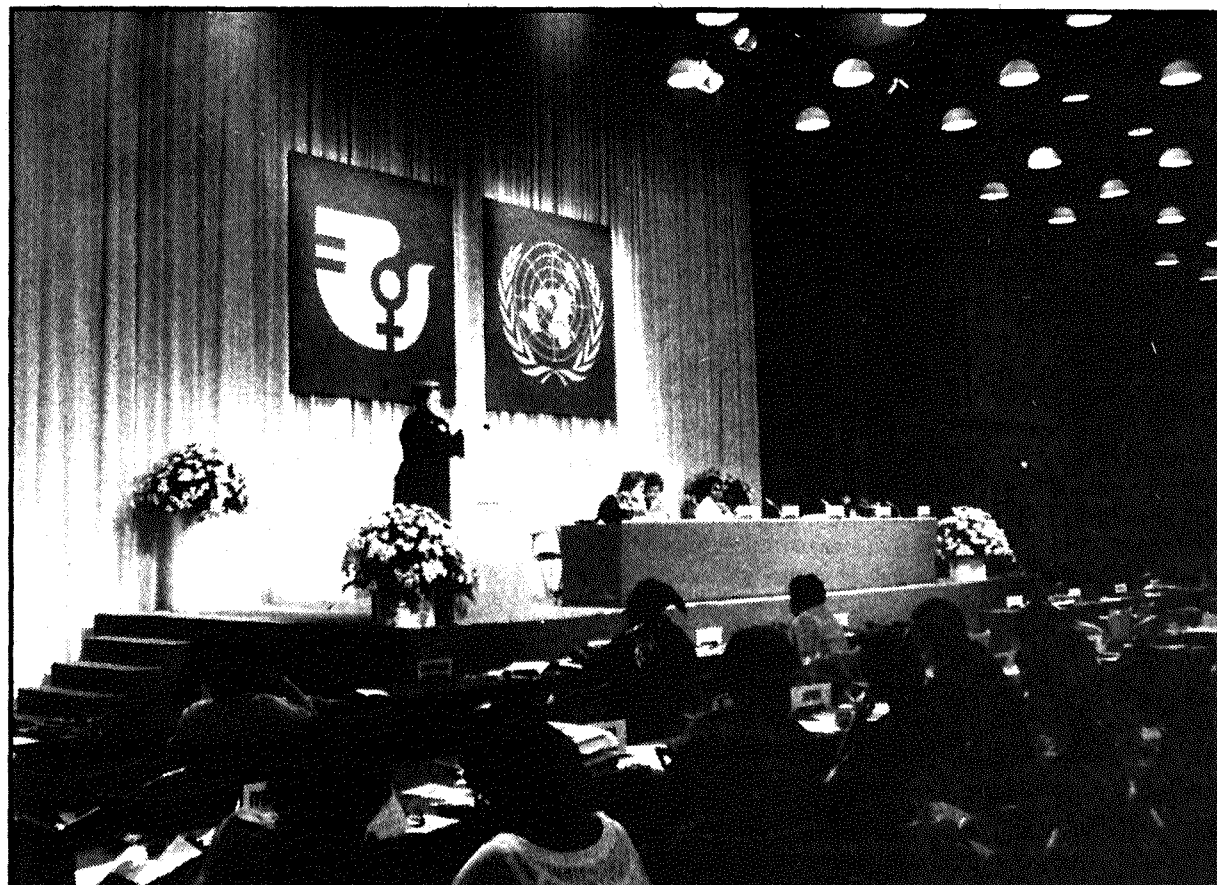
Large rallies and lunch-time demonstrations have been held in centres all across the country since May. Strike preparations are going full steam ahead with co-ordinators being appointed and strike training courses being conducted.

All indications are that the clerks are very serious about their demands. And they have every reason to be so.

#### AVERAGE INCREASE IN BASE WAGE RATES

	Public Service (%)	Private Sector (%)
1978	6.7	7.8
1979	8.3	9.7
1980 (first quarter)	8.2	10.8

CUPW National Journal July 1980.



The United Nations World Conference on the Decade of Women held in Copenhagen this July gathered delegates from around the globe to discuss women's rights to equality, development and peace. Canada's Lloyd Axworthy while deploring the situation for women has given little evidence that he plans to put his words into action since he got back home.

# Women in the skilled trades

Opponents of women working in skilled trades often maintain that these occupations are too hard on women physically. But technique can be substituted for brute strength in most physically demanding jobs. The major problem for women in entering these traditionally male occupations is the difficulty in obtaining adequate training. This was one of the areas of agreement in a panel discussion on Women and the Trades sponsored by Organized Working Women on June 12.

One of the two panellists at the meeting was Joan Davis, a registered draftsman as well as one of two women in Ontario who are directors of technology in secondary school. She sees Ontario facing a major problem in the workforce where 60% of Ontario's skilled tradesmen are between 40 to 60 years of age or over, most are European-trained, and the average age of skilled trade apprentices is 27 years. Ideally, people should be learning these skilled trades in their late teens and early twenties, she said.

The Ontario Government has left apprenticeships primarily in the hands of private companies, with far too few government counsellors available to police the program. Sister Davis was concerned that the vast majority of employers seemed unwilling to employ trainees in their shops despite the acknowledged shortage of skilled workers in the province. Most companies appear to prefer to compete against one another for the limited number of skilled workers rather than invest in a comprehensive trades training program.

For women, this difficulty is intensified. More girls must get involved in technical programs at the high school level, she maintained, yet there is a severe shortage of role models to encourage girls to do so.

The other speaker in the program was an apprentice carpenter with the Carpenters' Union, who took a more personal look at what it means to be a woman working at a non-traditional job. Nancy Bayly has worked on a number of construction sites where she was the only woman. She described some of the fears she had had about working in a "male" occupation: harassment from co-workers, lack of physical

strength, and inability to find work. Her actual working experience revealed that, although her worries did have some basis in fact, there were also some very positive aspects to her job that she had not expected. Membership in the union has provided some protection against discrimination in hiring. Many of her co-workers have been both supportive and helpful, and she discovered that often a strenuous task would become much easier once she had learned the skill or technique involved.

Sister Bayly has found that a major problem for her has been the lack of adequate on-the-job training. "While the apprenticeship program may look good on paper," she said, "in actual practice the trainee spends an inordinate amount of time doing menial tasks." Apprentices are too often regarded as simply a cheap pair of hands. While many male apprentices are introduced to carpentry at an early age, the panelist said that she felt the need for much of this background information that she had missed by getting into the field as an adult.

The panel presentation generated some lively discussion from the floor, thanks to the participation of a number of women who were also employed in skilled trades. Women from the Electricians' Union, the Brotherhood of Railway Workers and the Carpenters' Union shared their experiences and discussed some of the problems they encountered. A common concern was the difficulty involved in getting more women into the trades, as a result of discrimination in hiring.

Encouraged by the excitement and interest generated at this gathering, OWW's Women in Trades Committee has since held an open meeting, and expanded to include more women who want to work on issues concerning unionized women in the trades.

In another aspect of OWW's summer program, a student sponsored to study unions and women in non-traditional jobs has completed her research and will have a report prepared by the end of August. This information will hopefully be used as one of the background papers in a conference on "Women and Employment" planned by the organization for the spring of 1981.

## Equal pay battle still on

By CATHI CARR

"Women are the most unequal among unequals. The 1980's must bring an end to women's social and economic victimization" stated Employment and Immigration Minister, Lloyd Axworthy to the recent United Nations Conference on women held in Copenhagen. A recent survey of nineteen nations conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development found that, on average, Canada pays its women workers only 50% of the average earnings for a male worker. In fact, this shows a decline over the period from 1968 to 1977.

Compare this statistic to that of Sweden, France, Denmark and Australia where women earn approximately 87% of pay for men. In Britain, women earn 72% of a man's average wage and in the United States this figure is 65%. Axworthy states that it is his intention to review the federal action plan, 'Towards Equality for Women' adopted last year to ensure that there is true movement in all policy areas of the federal government. We'll wait for an improvement in those equal pay statistics before bursting into applause.

According to the OECD, on the whole, men and women have different occupations and therefore do not compete strongly with each other in the labour market. "Women tend to be concentrated in clerical and service occupations and men in production and transport." The segregation of employment by sex helps to make women's jobs less well paid, less stable, less skilled and with fewer promotional opportunities than the jobs normally held by men.

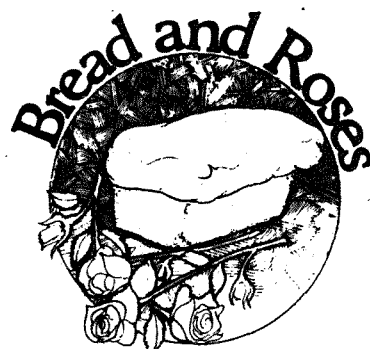
Direct and indirect discrimination still exists; young girls continue to make educational choices which close off certain opportunities to them. Societal attitudes continue to steer women into the traditionally female careers. Once women have entered a traditionally female area of the labour market, it is very difficult for them to break out.

Women now make up 37.8 percent of the labour market and it is certainly time that governments started doing more than paying lip service to the concepts of equal

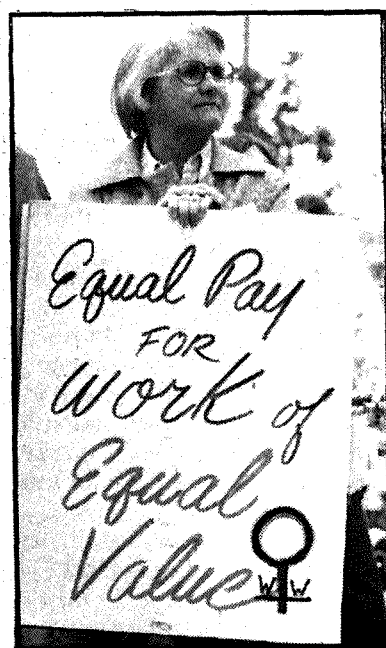
pay and equal opportunity for men and women. Axworthy stated that progress will be slow without a commitment from the provinces. In Ontario, Dr. Robert Elgie, Minister of Labour is on record as saying that he is not prepared to see Bill 3, the proposed legislation which would provide equal pay for work of equal value passed into law. Although Bill 3 is not technically dead in that it is still on the order paper, the decision as to whether or not it will be re-introduced when the Legislature reconvenes is a political one. Mary Cornish of the Equal Pay Coalition stated that when members of the Coalition met with Elgie in June, he told them that he did not intend to bring the Bill back. The Coalition will be redoubling its efforts this Fall to have the Bill made law.

If Canada's shabby record with regard to women and employment is to improve, all of us must be part of the struggle for change.

Cathi Carr is the Health & Safety Representative with the Ontario Nurses' Association Staff Union.



"Yes, it's bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too."



—photo T. Morris

OWW executive board member Joyce Rosenthal takes part in equal pay rally before labor minister Robert Elgie's office.

## Fall line up of labour studies

The Centre for Labour Studies, Humber College starts its Fall Programme in the end of September. The following courses are being offered this semester:

Industrial Hygiene  
Labour Economics  
Trade Union Organizing  
Workers Control  
Effective Communications  
Instructional Techniques

Labour History II  
Working Class Literature  
News Media  
Collective Bargaining  
Alcohol and Drug Abuse  
Building Effective Union Leadership.

For further information and details contact the Centre for Labour Studies at (416) 675-3111 ext. 467, or the Labour Council of Metro Toronto at (416) 441-3663.



The OWW conference on Women and the Trades learned that the difficulties facing women can be overcome, particularly if the union is willing to help.



# Up against Fotomat

By RUTH GOLDTHORPE

Approximately two hundred employees of Fotomat Canada have been on strike since October 22, 1979. These workers, members of the United Steelworkers of America, are protesting what they feel are unfair wages and working conditions.

Ninety-nine percent of the workers are women. Most receive only the minimum wage of \$3.00 per hour. Some have worked up to three years with no increase. And some are receiving only minimum wage while training new employees and taking messages for supervisor in addition to their regular duties.

There are very few full-time employees. The company prefers to offer only part-time work of five hours a day. There is no employer contribution to OHIP coverage, nor is there a dental plan. Not only are there no sick leave benefits, but a worker is responsible for finding a replacement when they become ill. If unable to find a replacement, they can be fired.

Duties include handling large sums of money; cleaning windows; washing floors; janitorial duties around the outside of the booths; weekly stock taking; monthly inventory; and, most important, customer relations.

There are no washroom facilities in the booths which means that the women are put in the embarrassing position of having to prevail upon nearby businesses to use their washrooms. This can be very degrading.

The strikers have been harassed by the scabs in the booths and portions of the public while picketting. They have had their cars damaged, windshields broken and baseball bats thrown through their house windows. They have been chased to their homes at high speeds and have been accused of vandalism.

Union security has been a major issue as well as wages and working conditions. However, after the union security bill (Bill 89) was passed by the Legislature on June 17, Fotomat withdrew their monetary package from the bargaining table. The company has been cancelling negotiation meetings on an ongoing basis.

The union is now in the process of charging Fotomat with bargaining in bad faith. At the time of writing this article, the case is still in the courts.

The strikers feel that Fotomat has a very low opinion of the intelligence of their workers. This, combined with the low wages and terrible working conditions makes Fotomat a prime example of the exploitation of women in the workforce. The workers' response in the past has been to quit — there is a 200% turnover rate on average. The recent response has been to organize.

At present there are sixteen areas in Ontario that are out on legal strike. All of the strikers are more determined than ever, after these ten long months, to win a contract. Public support will be decisive in

## PUT FOTOMAT IN FOCUS

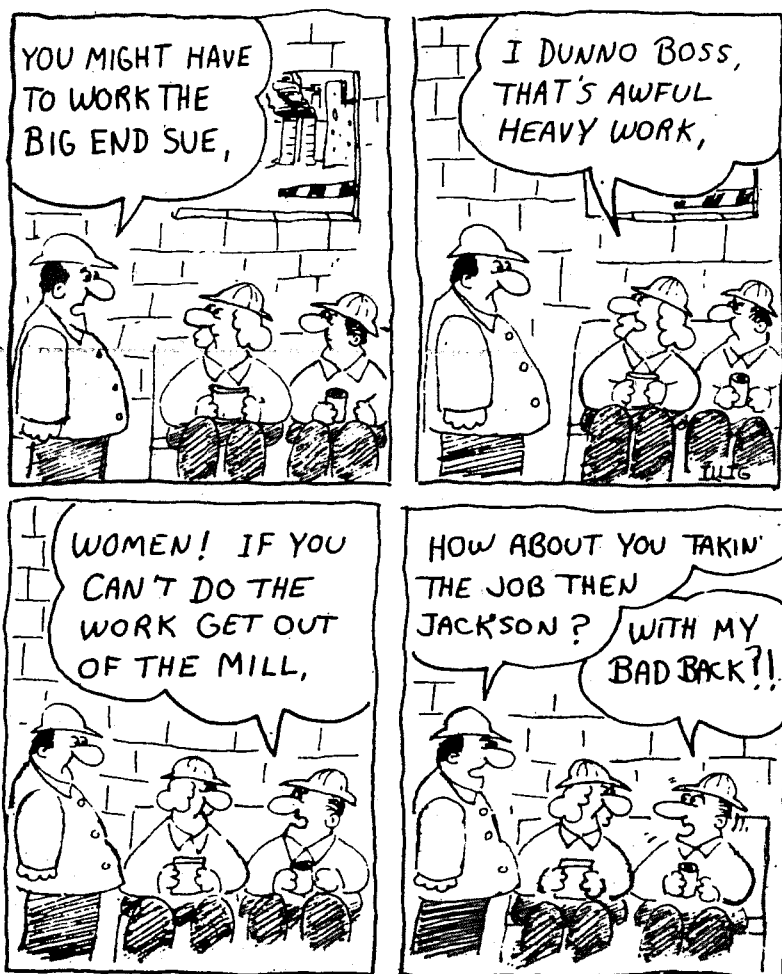


Fotomat striker Cris Auble and son, Gerald

**Take your business elsewhere**  
Support the employees who were forced to strike

determining the success of the strike. Please support your union sisters by boycotting Fotomat. Take your films elsewhere for processing for the duration of the walkout.

Ruth Goldthorpe is a striking Steelworker at Fotomat.



US60, Local 1488 Pipeline, McKeesport, Pa.

## Bill 89 a compromise

Continued from Page 1  
rule this an unfair labour practice. Board rulings, then would determine the fairness of the law.

I was told that the Board has shown progressive tendencies and that a very effective publicity campaign could be launched against scab-padded votes. There have been two decisions on decertification which can be used as anti-scab-vote precedents: one, that temporary help does not share sufficient "community of interest" with regular workers and another that scabs hired during a strike when the firm was not shipping were not hired for "normal business purposes" and could not be included in the vote.

Delays in receiving decisions on unfair labour practices must be faced. Labour can be expected to apply its considerable resources to cleverly set up scab participation and delay Board rulings.

Meanwhile workers suffer economically and psychologically.

In a test case in July, Worthington (Canada) Ltd. in Brantford was allowed a secret vote on its last offer. The result — no change from the strike vote. But this was a blue-collar strike involving an established local.

We will have to wait and see how the catch clause affects newly-organized women struggling for a first contract while trying to overcome intimidation. Women are conditioned to accept less. Canadian Union of Public Employees' Lucie Nicholson voiced the hope that, once women sample the benefits of unionization, they will grow bolder and demand more.

Joan Osborne is a member of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Toronto Local and a shop steward.

## Processed last, lower pension, menial jobs

# Women double victims at WCB

Sexism is one of the major complaints being levelled at the Ontario Workmen's Compensation Board. Women workers exposed the following complaints.

- Injured women workers' benefits are often slower to arrive; women have been told that, "we process men with families first, then the less important claims".
- Injuries to women workers are considered less serious, especially for women workers in job ghettos. Pensions are lower, even though they are supposed to be based solely on medical criteria.
- Women who complain are categorized as "typically hysterical."
- The need for upgrading and training is considered less seriously. As a result, when women get assistance, it is directed towards placing them in menial jobs at low pay.

The incidence of deaths by industrial accident is the highest in Canada as compared to ten western industrialized countries. There are more worker days lost through accidents than strikes, and Ontario leads the country in the number of more serious accidents.

Many thousands of injured workers will never be able to return to work because of the discriminatory practices of employers; and most injured workers are terminated or fired after the accident occurs or once the Workmen's Compensation Board doctors send them back to their jobs.

Although the Compensation Board was setup in 1975 to provide protection for workers injured on the job, it has become a cheap insurance policy for the employers and most injured workers are forced to live below the poverty line.

Finally, in the light of this very blemished record in occupational health and safety and in workers compensation, and after many years of complaints by injured workers, unions and others involved with workers' compensation, the Ontario government has appointed Professor Paul Weiler to study every aspect of Ontario's compensation system and to make recommendations for amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Professor Weiler is currently teaching law at Harvard University and was formerly chairman of the British Columbia Labour Relations Board.

However, Dr. Robert Elgie, Minister of Labour has refused to allow public hearings during the study. There is speculation that part of the reason for the refusal to allow public hearings is the potential for embarrassment to the government and the Workmen's Compensation Board of having injured workers expose their plight and thus bring to light the many injustices and inadequacies inherent in the compensation system as it exists today.

The Committee on the Weiler Study is a group comprised of labour and community legal groups representing injured workers which was formed to force Weiler and the Ontario government to open the hearings to the public, to deal openly with the important issues in workers' compensation and to make public all submissions including those of the Workmen's Compensation Board or of Business. Judging from the already released Wyatt Report and the 'Grey Paper', it seems clear that the interest of business and the government is to further restrict compensation benefits in spite of the demonstrated need by injured workers for more benefits.

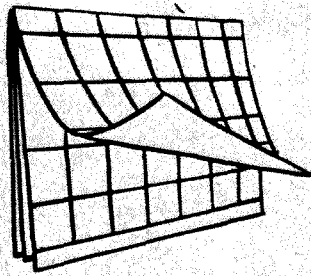
Cathi Carr is the Health & Safety Representative for the Ontario Nurses' Association Staff Union.

## OWW's new executive

The Fourth Annual Meeting of Organized Working Women was held on Saturday, May 31, 1980. The mandated work for the past year was accounted for, constitutional amendments dealt with, and proposals for OWW activities for the year 1980-81 adopted. A panel discussion on first contracts was part of the day's agenda. The panelists were sisters Susan Edgar (Communications Workers of Canada), Ruth Goldthorpe (strike Steelworker at Fotomat), and Joanne Michael (OPSEU).

The annual election of the OWW Executive Council was conducted. The following is the Executive Council for 1980-81:  
President: April Coulton  
Vice-President: Dorothy MacKinnon  
Treasurer: Joyce Rosenthal  
Secretary: Cathi Carr

Executive Council Members: Evelyn Armstrong, Nancy Bayly, Lois Bedard, Holly Kirkconnell, Irene Kuusela, Barbara Linds, Joan Morris, Barbara Neyedly.



## CLEAR YOUR CALENDAR

<b>September 10</b>	<b>Membership Meeting</b> , Organized Working Women 1901 Yonge Street, 8th floor, 7:30 p.m.
<b>October 16-18</b>	<b>Ontario Federation of Labour Day Care Conference</b> Don Valley Ramada Inn
<b>October 25</b>	<b>OWW Skills Building Workshop</b> 1901 Yonge Street, 8th floor, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
<b>November 12</b>	<b>Membership Meeting</b> , Organized Working Women 1901 Yonge Street, 8th floor, 7:30 p.m.

# Women's caucus pays off

By BARBARA NEDLEY

The rank and file women and men of the Toronto Women's Caucus of OPSEU have been the driving force behind every advance in equal opportunities made by this Union in the last two and a half years.

After a presentation by the Caucus in February, 1978, the Executive Board adopted our proposal for child care at the next Convention. After lobbying by the caucus and friends in other regions, an omnibus equal opportunities policy was carried by the June 1978 Convention.

The far-reaching proposals called for the union to: centrally encourage the creation of women's caucuses at all levels within OPSEU; to strive through all necessary means to eliminate job ghettoization; bring about equal pay for work of equal value; attain a workable form of employer-paid child care at the workplace; and to actively pursue policies to bring about a higher level of participation of women members in all union activities.

These policy changes were essential to offer our members an effective alternative to the government's (our employer) ineffectual "Affirmative Action" programme. But first, we had to win over our own internal opposition to equal opportunity.



Members of OPSEU's Women's Caucus have actively participated in all the major issues facing women.

The need for membership pressure for these changes became apparent during the OPSEU June 1977 annual convention, when moderate resolutions calling for child care at conventions, and support for "flexible" work hours were easily defeated. A meeting billed as a "women's conference" was chaired by an openly chauvinistic board member.

In protest, a Centennial College librarian took a list of names from the meeting, and the embryo of the Caucus was formed.

In her first letter to her new contacts that Fall, Heather MacFarlane said: "We can expect nothing until we are organized and act together at every level of this Union."

After the first major success of caucus activities marked by the passage of the equal opportunity policies, a low point in Caucus fortunes was reached when a backlash developed. Some members saw the Toronto Caucus as a divisive force, caring only for "privileges" for women. During this period, for five staff representative positions created, five men were hired, though qualified women had applied and 50% of the membership is female.

The Women's Caucus proved that women's issues are union issues by advocating policies of broad grass-roots interest, and in aligning ourselves with OPSEU Metro Area Council, to work for progressive changes.

Once again, (in Oct. 79) this time together with the Metro Area Council, the Caucus made presentations to the OPSEU Board which were strong critiques of the staff hiring policy, and requests for a promised OPSEU Women's conference.

Within three months, the staff hiring policy was changed to reduce possibilities for discrimination, and the Women's conference was held in April, 1980.

With the impetus of ideas generated at the conference, and greater acceptance for equal opportunity in the union, we now have: a comprehensive child care policy; a comprehensive sexual harassment policy; a commitment to improve the ratio of female staff representatives; and a provincial women's committee.

Barbara Neyedly President Local 532 OPSEU member Women's Caucus Policy Committee.

## Sexual harassment: no laughing matter

The following material is taken from *Impact* — a newsletter published by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, and the Toronto Typographical Union's Bulletin. It was researched by Susan Attenborough, Irene Hodgson and Paul Coast.

Sexual harassment is not joke. Yet, countless quips and cartoons about women and sex in the workplace are part of popular humour. Sexual harassment has become a socially acceptable practice, which, until recently, has been virtually unchallenged.

### WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

Sexual harassment is any sexual advance that threatens a woman's job or her well-being. It can take many forms: verbal harassment or abuse; unnecessary touching or patting; leering at a woman's body; physical assault. The following are three typical examples of sexual harassment in the workplace.

- Sandra, a 35-year-old divorcee with two small children, is a receptionist in a small government office. Two weeks after she started her job, her boss propositioned her and told her that if she refused he would fire her. Sandra rejected his advances. The boss began to overload Sandra with work and publicly criticized her work and her "attitude." Within three weeks, Sandra was fired.

- Karen is a single woman in her late 20's. She got her job on a 10-member forestry team where she was the only woman. On the job, her fellow workers made suggestive comments and repeatedly pinched and patted her. Karen began to dread going to work. She visited her doctor complaining of frequent headaches. Her doctor attributed her headaches to her work situation and advised her to find another job. After two months, Karen finally quit her job in frustration.

- Jane, a married woman in her 40's, had been a social worker for 10 years. She was transferred to a larger office where her opportunities for advancement were greater. Her new supervisor was a good social worker and Jane looked forward to benefiting from his experience. He was very helpful and often invited Jane to lunch to discuss her caseload. He began calling her at home and asking her to stay late to discuss work. Soon, however, the phone calls became frequent and increasingly personal. Jane was hesitant to ask him to stop because he seemed to think the phone calls were part of the job. Finally, one evening, he informed Jane he wanted to have an affair with her, and that if she agreed, he could help her career. Jane refused his offer.

On Jane's next performance appraisal her supervisor gave her a poor rating and did not recommend any promotion.

Sexual harassment means being treated as a sex object first, and a worker second. It means being judged on physical appearance rather than ability or job experience when seeking a job, a promotion, a raise or training.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is practised by colleagues or supervisors trying to express their power or authority in a sexual manner. Most victims of sexual harassment are women. This isn't always the case. However, in our society, it is men who are usually in the powerful or authoritative positions in the workplace. They are able to use this power to extort sexual favours from their female employees.

Some people tend to confuse workplace flirtation with sexual harassment. It is important to recognize the distinction. Workplace flirtation is a consensual relationship based on mutual attraction — there is no intimidation involved. However, sexual harassment is a coercive relationship. It is one-sided, initiated by a boss using his power or authority to force compliance with his sexual demands.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Many unions are deeply concerned with the problem, and they offer the following solutions:

- Be aware of the problem and make others aware. If someone complains of harassment, be supportive. Don't fall into the trap of blaming the victim. Alert your shop steward and encourage him/her to take action.

- If you are the one being harassed, speak out. If possible, lay charges with your union against the offender (some collective agreements and union bylaws outline the procedure). In addition, or if you work in a non-union plant or office, contact your local women's centre and/or your province's human rights commission or ombudsman.

- Advise a union officer and co-workers immediately if a situation appears to be getting out of hand, so that appropriate action can be taken.

- If you are a student and are being sexually harassed by a professor, contact your student association and your campus women's centre. Action should be taken through the faculty association, not the university's administration.

The Canadian Labor Congress (CLC) recommends that all collective agreements should contain clauses allowing workers to file grievances related to sexual harassment. As well, the Congress asks unions to make provisions for group grievances so that employees feel more at ease when bringing the issue forward.

The CLC also supports the formation of women's committees in union locals so that this and other problems facing women can be worked out. In some cases, district labour councils can be called upon for their help too.

## Join OWW!



Membership in OWW is open to all women in the Toronto area who are members of bona fide collective bargaining units or a bona fide organizing committee of a union. Membership is \$10.00 per year.

To join OWW, send in this application form with proof of union membership to the OWW office, address below.

Name .....

Address .....

Telephone .....

Union ..... Local .....

Organized Working Women,  
15 Gervais Drive, Suite 301,  
Don Mills, Ont. M3C 1YB.