

POVERTY - CANADA'S LEGACY TO WOMEN

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The Canadian social system is built on the expectations that people have of one another. Membership in this system tends to assign Canadians a place or an occupation. There is also a widely held belief that any person can improve his or her status by achievement and that he or she will be rewarded accordingly by money, power or prestige. In Canada these two aspects of culture conflict because the places assigned to women now yield few rewards. Women have the unsatisfactory choice of accepting a degrading, long term and uncertain dependence on a husband, or of taking one of the few menial or low-paid jobs which our society offers women. Either choice may lead to poverty especially if the woman has children or other dependents.

Historical Role of Women in Canada

The type of work which women do has changed greatly over the last hundred years. In 1871 four out of every five Canadians lived on farms that were basically self-sufficient production centers. The women were active participants in this production. They made clothing, quilts, soap and candles and, as well, they grew and preserved food. The creamery and the henhouse were woman's domain and she kept the butter and egg money for her own use. Today nearly all production is carried on away from the home, even for the quarter of the population that still lives on farms in Canada. This means that a housewife's work now consists almost entirely of service to her family for which she is not rewarded in either money, or power or prestige.

The decrease in infant mortality rates now means that living children tend to be closer together in age. The shift to urban living has meant that a woman with a young family to care for is no longer helped by members of her extended family, and she often feels inadequate because of her inability to cope with the continual demands made upon her. The physical isolation from other adults which she must endure, she regards as a jail sentence, which she must serve for the sin of having children.

The facts that families are completed earlier and that women now live longer mean that there are twenty or thirty years when a woman's family responsibilities are less demanding and she is again able to consider the types of paid work which are available to a woman.

Changing Labour Force Participation

The changes in the role of housewife cause more women to join the labour force each year. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics has published the following estimates: (1)

(1) Frank T. Denton and Sylvia Ostry, Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1967, pp. 22-29

Male and Female Participation Rates in the Labour Force for persons 14 years of age and over.

Year	Male Participation Rate	Female Participation Rate
1901	87.8%	16.1%
1911	90.6%	18.6%
1921	89.8%	19.9%
1931	87.2%	21.8%
1941	85.6%	22.9%
1951	84.4%	24.4%
1961	81.1%	29.3%
1967(1)	77.5%	33.8%

The increase in the rate of participation in the labour force by married women is especially striking. In 1951 (2) it was 9.6%, in 1961 it was 18.5% and in 1967 (3) it was 28.3%. The rate of participation in the labour force for widowed and divorced women has increased slightly. The rate of participation for single women, like the rate of participation for men, declined slightly indicating that a larger number of young people are staying in school longer and that with the lengthening of life and earlier retirement there are greater numbers of retired people.

Education and the Availability of Suitable Work

Labour force participation rates of women vary with the number of years of schooling (4)

Participation in the Labour Force for Women 15 years of age or over in 1961

Education	Participation Rate
Less than 5 years - Elementary	14.3%
5 years or more - Elementary	23.1%
1 - 3 years - Secondary	31.0%
4 - 5 years - Secondary	40.6%
Some University	47.3%
University degree	47.9%

It is very apparent that education is a major influence on whether a woman will work. In their study of high school students, Raymond Breton and John C. McDonald found that "The high school leavers tend to be low status girls regardless of their level of mental ability, and low status boys in the lower percentiles of mental ability." Clearly, education of girls is less valued in low status families.

(1) Canada, Women in the Labour Force, Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, 1968, p. 11

(2) Sylvia Ostry, The Female Worker in Canada, Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968, p. 11

(3) Canada, Women in the Labour Force, Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, 1968, p. 11

(4) Sylvia Ostry, The Female Worker in Canada, Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1968, p. 30.

Place of residence is also an important determinant in whether a woman will work. Sylvia Ostry states "labour force participation was much higher for urban women, at every age of the working life cycle, than for women living in rural areas. The jobs which opened up in numbers for women (the white collar, trade and service jobs) were concentrated in urban centres while employment opportunities remained limited on the farms or in small villages in rural non-farm areas. A marked difference in the extent and nature of job opportunities was probably the chief factor accounting for the urban-rural difference in levels of participation of women. However, other considerations which probably affected the participation of married women, should be mentioned. These would include differences in social attitudes to women working for gain -- people living in rural areas are probably still more conservative in this respect than city-dwellers; the higher birth rate in rural areas, which increases the burden of household duties and the lack, in rural areas, of many household conveniences which also increases the work-load of women in the home and discourages married women from seeking outside jobs."

Presence of Children

Labour force participation is strongly affected by the presence of children as demonstrated in the following chart (1)

Labour Force Participation Rates of Married Women by Family Type and Schooling, Canada, 1961:

Family Type	Education		
	Elementary	High School	University
One or more children under 6	9.7%	12.8%	15.3%
Some Children, none under 6	20.8%	29.8%	33.3%
No children	26.1%	44.0%	51.1%

This chart indicates the very strong social pressures on the mothers of pre-school age children to care for these children themselves, at all times. There is also considerable pressure on the mother of the school age child, and no one else, to care for that child when the school does not care for the child. The theory behind this seems to be that only a mother can love and care for a child. This hostile environment produces an overdependence on the mother which inhibits the growth of maturity of the child. This attitude of society inhibits the establishment of good day care or nursery schools which would benefit many children whether their mothers worked or not. It also inhibits the extension of the use of school facilities for the care of school age children at lunch time and after school and the training and availability of people to care for children. Probably the present attitudes in regard to child care are the cause of the rapidly decreasing birth rate in Canada (2) which in 1921 was 29.3 per thousand and in 1967 was at all time low of 18.2 per thousand.

(1) Canada, Changing Patterns in Women's Employment, Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, Ottawa, 1966, p. 21.

(2) Sylvia Gelber, The New Role of Women, Ottawa, Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, 1969.

Status and Attitude of the Husband

The status of the husband as measured by his income has a great effect on his wife's participation in the labour force as shown by the following chart (1)

Education of Wife and Family Type	Under 3,000	3,000-- 4,999	5,000-- 6,999	7,000-- 9,999	10,000 & Over
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One or more children
under 6

Elementary or less	12.0%	9.7%	6.2%	5.2%	6.2%
High School	19.0%	15.3%	10.0%	5.2%	4.5%
University	36.2%	24.5%	15.7%	8.8%	6.6%

Some children, none
under six

Elementary or less	23.5%	21.8%	17.1%	12.4%	10.6%
High School	38.6%	36.4%	28.7%	18.1%	9.7%
University	56.1%	53.7%	44.2%	29.0%	11.4%

No children

Elementary or less	28.1%	27.0%	21.3%	14.2%	15.6%
High School	46.9%	49.9%	42.4%	27.9%	14.1%
University	60.2%	63.0%	57.3%	40.6%	20.5%

In the lower income brackets the financial need for women to work makes it more acceptable even if they have small children. In 1958, a Department of Labour survey (2) found that three quarters of the women stressed economic reasons for working, a further ten per cent put equal stress on economic reasons and other reasons, and fifteen per cent stressed other motives, such as the need to get away from the household, the need to find companionship, or interest in the work or working organization. In 1966 the United Church of Canada survey (3) found that nearly as many women stressed the use of training as against financial needs, and that boredom and frustration at home and enjoyment of work were given as a reason for working by 20% of these women.

It is obvious that financial need is not the only reason for women to work, and since men's incomes have not fallen, this reason cannot account for most of the increase in the number of married women workers unless the mass media have managed to greatly increase women's ideas of what constitute financial need.

(1) Canada, Changing Patterns in Women's Employment, Ottawa, Women's Bureau · Canada Department of Labour, 1966, p. 22.

(2) Canada, Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Canadian Cities, Ottawa, Department of Labour, 1958.

(3) The United Church of Canada, Survey of 68 Professional and Allied Occupational Female Workers, Toronto, 1966.

A more likely explanation of the great difference of labour force participation between, for example, a woman with a university education and with school age children whose husband earns less than \$7,000 a year and the same type of woman whose husband earns over \$10,000 a year can be found in the attitude of the husband. Patricia Cockburn and Yvonne Raymond in their study of women university graduates found that (1) of those married women who were working, fifty-seven per cent had husbands who were enthusiastic about their working and only five per cent had husbands who were disapproving of their working. Amongst those who were not working, however, only fourteen per cent had husbands who would be enthusiastic about their working while thirty-one percent had husbands who would disapprove of their working.

Psychologist Sylvia Hartman suggests that men do not like their wives to work because they do not wish to look after children or do any housework. Not only is this type of work boring but also it is not valued by society. Men leave themselves free to do socially valued work according to Dr. Hartman (2) "by continually reinforcing the notion that women are sick for wanting what they themselves value so highly".

Income Tax and Other Costs of Working

In their survey of university graduates in Canada, Patricia Cockburn and Yvonne Raymond found that (3) twenty-four per cent of the graduates who were not working were deterred from joining the labour force by the present income tax structure. This inequitable situation arises because wages paid for domestic help or child care cannot be deducted from income before calculating income tax. If a woman has a low margin of profit after paying for these services, income tax frequently exceeds the profits. If industry were subjected to a similar restriction, that is, if it were not allowed to deduct wages paid to employees before calculating income tax, there would be few employees and the entire economic structure would collapse. In effect this means that married women with children are not allowed to participate in the present economy on equal terms.

The terms of the Income Tax Act also discourage women from seeking the necessary education to obtain jobs. Tuition fees are deductible only by the student rather than by the person who pays them. Girls can seldom earn sufficient money in the summer holidays to enable them to claim this expense themselves. Married women are in an even worse position as they cannot even earn their tuition fees if these are over \$250, without their husband's taxes being increased.

If a woman's margin of profit from working is very low, even such small expenses as transportation and suitable clothing will make working unprofitable.

(1) Patricia Cockburn and Yvonne Raymond, Women University Graduates in Continuing Education and Employment, University of Toronto Bookstores, 1966, p. 47.

(2) Sylvia Hartman, Should Wives Work?, McCalls, Vol. XCVI, No. 5, February 1969, p. 150.

(3) Patricia Cockburn and Yvonne Raymond, Women University Graduates in Continuing Education and Employment, University of Toronto Bookstores, 1966, p. 49.

Earnings and Education

There is a strong positive correlation between a good education and high earning capacity, yet J. R. Podoluk states that (1) "Educational differences are not a factor in accounting for lower female earnings." This conclusion is reached from the following tabulation of earnings accorded to sex and schooling of the non-farm labour force for 1961.

Level of Schooling	Average Male Earnings	Average Female Earnings	Ratio of Female to Male Earnings
Elementary	\$3,345	\$1,537	46%
Secondary	\$4,813	\$2,438	51%
University	\$8,866	\$4,067	46%

Further examination of the statistics shows that (2) "for equivalent occupations in the same labour market women invariably are paid at lower rates than men in the same occupation" and (3) "for all levels of schooling the female labour force shows a greater concentration of employment in particular occupational categories."

Occupations of Women in Canada

In 1961 six out of every ten gainfully employed women in Canada were engaged in ten occupations. The following table (4) will also show that most of these occupations were held almost exclusively by women. Ten leading Occupations of Women in Canada - 1961:

Occupation	Number	Per Cent	Women as a percentage of all workers
Stenographer, typist	209,410	11.9	96.8
Clerical	165,613	9.4	51.2
Sales Clerks	133,234	7.6	58.0
Maids, service workers	120,161	6.8	88.1
School teachers	118,594	6.7	70.7
Bookkeepers, cashiers	98,663	5.6	62.6
Nurses	81,868	4.6	96.8
Farm Labourers	66,081	3.7	29.7
Waitresses	61,000	3.5	78.6
Sewers	50,592	2.9	90.5
10 Occupations	1,105,018	62.7	56.3
Total Female Labour	1,753,862	100.0	27.3

In most of those occupations where substantial numbers of both men and women work, farm labourers, clerical, bookkeepers, cashiers, there is still a definite difference in the work performed. School teaching is the only occupation

(1) J.R. Podoluk, Earnings and Education, Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1965, p. 20.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 29

(3) *Ibid.* p. 23.

(4) Canada, Women At Work in Canada - 1964, Ottawa, Department of Labour, p. 26.

in which substantial numbers of both men and women are doing the same job. This was a traditional job for women, which, because of its increasing value to society now commands a higher rate of pay, which in turn is attracting more men to the occupation. A strong teacher's union has insisted on equal pay for both male and female teachers but there is a strong preference given to men in supervisory positions. The female principal or vice-principal is rapidly vanishing and the position of department head in high schools is rapidly becoming a male prerogative. In one Vancouver high school the last two appointments to the position of department head have been less qualified young men who have been promoted in each case in preference to at least two more full qualified, more experienced female teachers who were seeking the post. If the new idea of team teaching or other co-operative teaching techniques becomes widespread there is a distinct likelihood of establishing a pattern of male master teachers and female helpers which would take no account of either teaching or academic ability.

The Tradition of Men's Work and Women's Work

Dr. Oswald Hall states that (1) "the division of labour, according to gender, is rooted in part in the conventions of our culture, in part in the social psychological process involved in becoming a person in society, and in part in the interdependence of social institutions, the kind of interdependence that limits the degree to which one can vary any one feature of a society." There is a widespread belief that conventions rooted in our particular culture concerning the division of labour according to sex result from something inherent in the sex of the person. A study of different cultures reveals great variations in the type of work men and women do. In some cultures women do all the manufacturing and trading, whereas in others this is done by men. In some cultures both men and women engage in warfare. In some cultures men raise the children and even the process of childbirth can be both masculine and feminine as represented by the practice of couvade, where the father is made to share the inabilities of his wife during the confinement period. This variability between cultures indicates no inherent biological basis for specific division of labour between the sexes.

Dr. Claude Levi-Strauss states that (2) "the principle of sexual division of labour establishes a mutual dependency between the sexes, compelling them thereby to perpetuate themselves and to found a family." This division of labour is accomplished in primitive groups by a prohibition of tasks. These prohibitions can range from mild ridicule, calling a girl a tomboy, to death as in the case of Joan of Arc. These taboos are rooted in beliefs about the innate characteristics of men and women. In our society women are believed to be stupid, weak, impractical, emotional and unimportant. Despite strong evidence to the contrary these beliefs still allow men to treat women as subhumans who must be

(1) Oswald Hall, Gender and the Division of Labour, Report of a Round Table Conference on the Implications of Traditional Divisions between Men's Work and Women's Work In Our Society, Women's Bureau, Dept. of Labour of Canada, March 12, 1964.

(2) Claude Levi-Strauss, The Family, Man, Culture and Society, ed. E. Shapiro, New York, Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 277.

constantly ordered about. These differences in status can cause problems in modern work situations which require a system of authority in order to get work done in a co-ordinated manner. Authority is based on ability but if the person of ability happens to be a woman, her authority is nullified by being a woman. The difference in status between men and women makes it highly acceptable for a man to be in authority over a woman, but most unacceptable for a woman to be in authority over a man. This means that women must choose either all female occupations, or they must never aspire to a position which might place them in authority over a man. Men have, by means of technological improvements, taken over most of the socially valued and rewarded tasks in society thus breaking the taboos concerning women's work. Next consideration will be given to the present day effect of the taboos on women doing men's work.

Choosing a Career

Raymond Breton and John McDonald (1) in their study of how young people in Canada choose their occupations found that students observed the prestige and standards of living enjoyed by people with different occupations in their community, then appraised their chances of realizing the alternatives. Young girls must choose an occupation at a time when they are establishing social relationships with the opposite sex, thus there are strong pressures on them to choose a feminine occupation. The above study also found that of the girls in the last two years of high school, 52.1% would prefer to work in the professional and technical field, that 42.8% expected to do so but, of the female labour force with four or more years of secondary education, only 36.8% were employed in this category. Contrasted to this only 14% preferred to work in clerical and sales occupations, and 23.3% expected to work in these occupations, yet 44.5% of the female labour force, with four or more years of secondary education do work in these occupations. This study also states that (2) "Girls are less likely to show a preference for teaching than the actual representation of women in this professional field (nearly a 20% difference). The reverse is the case for 'science and engineering' but with a much smaller difference (a little over 5%)."

Women in the Professions

In 1961, 11.3% of male high school graduates went on to University and 4.6% of women graduates. In commenting upon this situation John Porter says (3) "If the less able of those going on to university were replaced by the more able it would result in a change in the sex ratio in the universities, a condition which could bring about a change in adult sex roles. If the prevailing attitudes about how men and women should fit into the occupational world act to exclude women from higher education, or to send them into one channel rather than another, a considerable amount of intellectual capacity is being irrationally allocated. Many women have shown that it is possible to combine professional roles with family roles, although family life assumes a different form when the mother is

(1) Raymond Breton and John C. McDonald, Occupational Preferences of High School Students, Canadian Society, ed. B. Blisshen, Toronto, MacMillan, 1968, p. 274.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 275.

(3) John Porter, The Vertical Mosaic, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965, p. 178.

working. Women are permitted, married or not, to work in the sub-professions and in lower status occupations. It is their traditional exclusion from the higher professions which is the measure of society's intellectual wastage."

In 1961 only $\frac{1}{4}$ of 1% of the engineers in Canada were women, only 2.64% of the lawyers in Canada were women, only 4.49% of the dentists in Canada were women, only 7.33% of the doctors in Canada were women. According to O. Crompton enrollment in the University of Moscow in medicine is 70-80% women and in dentistry over 90% women. He also states (1) "There are still few women in fields which are generally considered to be those of a man ---the sciences, Engineering, Agriculture, Law, Medicine, Commerce--- At the present time opportunities in this man's world are somewhat theoretical. In practice women graduates run into a bit of a barbed wire fence when they attempt to break into a man's field. Also in few fields is the remuneration equal for man and women doing the same job." In B.C. this barbed wire fence can only be seen by looking at individual cases. Of two women engineers, I was able to find, one married when she was unable to find work and has no plans for further work when her family is grown, another had to move to the United States where she obtained employment as a librarian in a large aircraft plant. A discussion on this subject brought out the following (2) "A few years ago when there was a shortage of engineers, women were turned down, because people were wanted who could be placed in management jobs later. How much of the resistance to women in the professions that are traditionally masculine can be laid to a closed professional trade unionism? Is it a question of a traditionally entrenched group being threatened?" Why does the Engineer's Club in Vancouver not permit women who are engineers to become members?

Of the four women lawyers I was able to locate, three are single and one is married. Only one of those who is single is still a practicing lawyer and she says quite openly that not only does a woman lawyer have to be twice as good as a man lawyer but also she has to work twice as hard for the same rewards. The other three are now teachers.

A group of eight out of nine women graduates in one UBC Commerce class found employment with the federal government, a similar number of men from the same class were also employed but at a much higher rate of pay. In the first few months this was justified as the women did less demanding work, but very soon they were doing the same work with no increase in pay. With each promotion without pay, more of this group of women became discouraged and resigned. Finally two and a half years later the last two were doing the same work as men paid three times as much. One man saw these women as a threat to his job so he falsified their work. The women judged that there was no possibility of proving this or of vindicating themselves so they too resigned.

(1) O. Crompton, Panel on Employment of Women, The Vancouver Council of Women, January 23, 1958, p. 2.

(2) Transcripts from the Discussion - Round Table Conference on the Implications of Traditional Divisions Between Men's Work and Women's Work in Our Society, March 12, 1964, p. 39.

The head of dentistry at UBC appealed for girls to study dentistry. However, when one bright teenage girl asked her dentist what was involved in becoming a dentist, he told her that she didn't want to be a dentist, and told her, in detail, how to become a dental assistant.

Even those professions such as social work, who do employ women, do not consider women for administrative jobs. On October 23, 1968 an advertisement for an Executive Director of the Children's Aid Society appeared in the Vancouver Province newspaper in which they described in detail the man, not the person, they wanted for the job.

In their study of university graduates Patricia Cockburn and Yvonne Raymond (1) found that the only professions in which women, trained for these professions, worked in any substantial numbers were those of physicians and surgeons, librarians, nurses, pharmacists and teachers. The long training period and costs of becoming a doctor, a librarian or a pharmacist exclude all women except the daughters of high status families from entering these professions. However, once having achieved this education, the rewards are sufficient to offset the social disapproval for most women and thus the social disapproval of women in these professions is diminishing.

Women in Clerical Work

Raymond Breton and John McDonald's study indicates (2) that few female students wish to work in clerical occupations in comparison to the number who actually do. The main reason for the increased choice of clerical work is the increase in demand for clerical workers which was well over half a million persons between 1931 and 1961. This was more than balanced by the increased female participation in the labour force and this had a tendency to drive down the wages paid in comparison with the wages paid in other occupations. Since clerical work was less well paid and boys had better choices available to them, most of the increase in clerical workers was female. Education is also a factor in the number of women going into clerical fields. The increased availability of free secondary education meant that more girls could avoid the extremely low paid service occupations by spending a few more years in school. Also, it is possible for high schools to train clerical workers easily and inexpensively. Employers also prefer hiring women they feel justified in assuring are only temporary workers thus they need not consider pension plans and other fringe benefits. The high turnover of employees also enables employers to increase or decrease their staff fairly easily. The short term nature of women's work inhibits the formation of unions and thus women do not benefit from the higher wages achieved by unions to the same degree that men do.

(1) Patricia Cockburn and Yvonne Raymond, Women University Graduates in Continuing Education and Employment, University of Toronto Bookstores, 1966, p. 31.

(2) Raymond Breton and John C. McDonald, Occupational Preferences of High School Students, Canadian Society, ed. B. Blishen, Toronto, Macmillan, 1968, p. 274.

Discontinuity and Mobility

Employers hesitate to employ or train women for higher paid positions because they feel that a woman is not likely to be a permanent employee, and will not be able to accept promotions that mean moving to another city. There is an assumption on the part of society that (1) "the household follows the man to his place of work. Where the wife has no job it is expected that she follows her husband wherever his job takes him. If we assume a situation in which both husband and wife have comparable offers of jobs it is clear that the location of the household is a crucial matter. If the man moves away to a job, it is expected that she and the household follow him. On the other hand if she were to move away from the household to a job, she would be considered to have deserted her family and could be charged with desertion." In effect this means that a man can take the best job available for him anywhere, but a woman can take only the best job available to her near her husband's place of work.

Part Time Employment

In 1967 (2) 33% of women worked less than 35 hours a week as compared with 16% of men who worked less than 35 hours a week. This represents a considerable increase in part time jobs. In 1962 29% of women and 14% of men worked less than 35 hours a week. Most of the increase in the female working force comes from married women who, because our culture demands it, must still carry the major responsibility for running the home and caring for children. These priority demands make it impossible for many to work full time, so they seek part time employment. The shorter number of hours worked in gainful employment is certainly a factor in the lower income of women. Sylvia Ostry notes that in studying male and female wage differentials (3) "the sex ratio based on annual earnings of all wage earners in 1961 was 54.2% but based on earnings of full time, full year workers only, was 59.3%." It is thus apparent that a shorter work week accounts for only a small portion of the differential in pay between men and women.

The increase in the number of women seeking part time jobs has exceeded the number of part time jobs available. Thus, according to the laws of supply and demand, this tends to produce lower wages. One Vancouver store prefers to hire part time workers because these workers do not have to belong to a union and thus can be paid lower hourly wages.

Part time work has advantages and disadvantages for both employers and employees, but in more responsible jobs part time employees are looked down on by full time employees as it is usually not possible for part time employees to take the same degree of responsibility and be as well informed of new developments on the job.

(1) Oswald Hall, Implications of Traditional Divisions Between Men's Work and Women's Work in our Society, Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, Ottawa, 1964, p.31

(2) Canada, Women in the Labour Force, Ottawa, Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, 1968, p. 14.

(3) Sylvia Ostry, The Female Worker in Canada, Ottawa, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1963, p. 40.

Re-entering the Labour Market

In recent years labour force participation rates have shown marked increases for women over thirty-five years of age. Little attention has been given to the problems of these women who are re-entering the labour market. These women find that their education is out dated, their experience as homemakers discounted, and re-training facilities, suitable to their needs, almost non-existent. A study group (1) found that the older female worker showed less absenteeism, less illness, fewer industrial accidents, more accuracy in learning the details of a job and a high degree of reliability and efficiency.

Employers say (2) that the older woman is uncertain of her qualifications and does not want responsibility or promotion. In view of the limited educational facilities available to these women and the discounting of their previous experience this is not surprising. These women generally work in low paid service and clerical jobs.

Poverty of Women

In 1961 (3) there were 272,215 female heads of family in Canada, of these 87,776 had one child, 47,700 had two children, 37,028 had three or four children and 13,756 had five or more children. One out of every twenty women workers is a family head and these women had average earnings of \$2,128 in 1961. This means that the low wages paid to women are a direct cause of poverty for a large segment of the population.

Average earnings of all females in Canada in 1961 were \$2,051 as compared to average earnings of \$4,178 for males. Only 7.7% of the women who were working in Canada earned as much as the average earnings of men that year. Earnings of women at average rates do not enable them to contribute to pension plans or to save in order to avoid poverty associated with sickness or old age. Most non-working women are also in the position of being unable to prevent the onset of poverty.

Political and Legal Consequences of Poverty of Women

Women in Canada are without power even to control their own lives because they are poor. They have been humiliated and degraded so much that they are afraid to succeed, and they are denied the joy of doing socially valued work. Women are effectively excluded from those occupations which seem to be prerequisites for political activity. Thus, they are unable to participate in the making and changing of laws. Because there are few women lawyers or judges, women seldom find justice in their dealings with the law. In January 1968 an Ontario judge was able to ignore overwhelming evidence concerning the equal work of policemen and policewomen, and ruled that a policewoman should not expect to receive equal pay.

(1) The Status of Women Study Group, To the Older Worker, University Women's Club, Vancouver, 1966, p.1.

(2) Mollie Gillen, Women at Work, Chatelaine, February 1969, p. 38

(3) Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Inter Office Memorandum, Aug. 17, 1967

Because she was a Woman

The Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, passed unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on November 7, 1967, states that (1) "Discrimination against women, denying or limiting as it does their equality of rights with men, is fundamentally unjust and constitutes an offense against human dignity". In Canada we are still a long way from according human dignity to women.

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(1) United Nations, Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour, 1968, p. 2.