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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
OTTAWA CANADA

GROUPE DE RECHERCHE
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dawn Black, MP

December 10, 1990

FROM: Denise Blinn
NDP Research

SUBJECT: Note on Women and Poverty for Liberal Opposition Day

The Facts

Women are more likely to be poor than men. Poor children come from poor families. Therefore, programs must address the higher incidence of poverty among women, in order to address child poverty. They must also recognize, that for many women the choice is between financial security and motherhood. Women are poorer if they have children. They are also more likely to be poor if they are single, divorced or widowed.

"Women and Poverty Revisited", by the National Council on Welfare, recommends that mothers receive adequate support from society, which should include affordable child care and equal access to well-paying jobs. They also recommend better criteria for support payments and stricter enforcement laws. Pro-rated survivor benefits for widows and common-law survivors would help these women at risk avoid being trapped in poverty. The council continues to call for major improvements to child care, pensions and welfare.

The reasons for change speak for themselves:

- * a women's standard of living in the year after divorce drops an average of 74 percent. A man's standard of living rises an average of 42%.
- * 56% of all divorced single mothers are receiving no financial assistance from the fathers.
- * in 1987, 57% of single parent mothers and their children were poor. In addition, the depth of their poverty is striking, their average family income was \$10,400 which represents 61% of the poverty line.

- * never-married single mothers have the highest poverty rates of any family situation. 75% live in poverty.
- * single-parent mothers only represent 3% of Canadian households, yet they account for 17% of households living in poverty.
- * women continue to make only 66% of male wages.
- * 59% of all poor adults are women
- * 44% of the workforce in 1988 were women, but they only received 35% of the income. Men received 65%.

In addition, the National Council on Welfare comments on the important role which advocacy groups play in fighting women's poverty. It recommends that the government reverse the 1989 cuts to women's programs. New Democrats should continue to support reinstating funding to NAC, women's research and publications cut in 1990.

Some Contrasts - taken from The United Church Observer

1. Amount spent by one company on a pinstripe suit for one of its senior executives, claimed by company as a tax write-off for a "uniform" - \$1,000.

Amount spent by a nurse, nursing assistant or ward clerk on their own (cheapest available) uniform, not claimable as a tax write-off - \$30.
2. Amount of money spent by two federal governments in 10 months in 1984 on the Scientific Research Tax Credit program - \$2.8 billion.

Amount of SRTC money that was paid to financial go-betweens - \$200 million.

Amount of SRTC money estimated to be wasted in fraudulent deals or projects that failed to qualify - \$925 million.

Number of poor children for whom the wasted \$1.125 billion would provide lunches for the next three years - 1.1 million.
3. Amount of money spent by one Canadian company for a burglar alarm for the president's house, claimed as a tax write-off on the grounds that he sometimes brings home valuable corporate documents - \$6,000.

Amount of money comprising the entire average annual income (as of 1987) of a lone-parent mother in Canada - \$10,400.

NDP moves to extend pay-equity legislation

Amendments cover 400,000 women currently excluded

BY RICHARD MACKIE
Queen's Park Bureau

TORONTO — Ontario's pay-equity laws are to be changed to cover more than 400,000 women in both the public and private sectors who are now excluded from the system, according to a Labour Ministry document.

Under the proposed amendments, all women working full-time for companies with at least 10 employees would receive salaries comparable to those received by men at the firms, the ministry says.

In the public sector, the changes would make it possible to ensure that all women receive equal pay for work of equal value.

The existing Pay Equity Act of 1987 allows only for direct job-to-job comparison. As a result, an estimated 770,000 of Ontario's two million working women are not covered under the act.

Under the draft legislation released by the Labour Ministry, more than 200,000 women in the private sector will be covered by "proportional value comparisons."

Under proportional comparison, jobs in the female class will be evaluated and paid on the same terms as jobs in the male class, even though

their value may be only a proportion — two-thirds, for instance — of the value attributed to jobs in the male class.

This will get around the difficulty in the current law whereby women in mainly female jobs were effectively excluded from pay equity if there was no job performed mainly by men which was comparable to their job.

It is expected to benefit women working in clothing manufacturing and other areas of manufacturing, the financial and insurance businesses, those providing personnel and business services and those working in tourism and retail.

Labour Ministry officials say firm estimates of the number of women to be covered by proportional comparisons are difficult to provide because not all women have their work undervalued.

In the public sector, the ministry is seeking discussion of use of the proportional value method of determining by how much salaries need to be increased.

The ministry is also seeking discussion of a proxy approach, whereby an organization would use salaries in another organization to determine what increases, if any, should go to the women it employs.

Introducing the proportional value system for the private sector is government policy that will be presented as formal amendments to the Pay Equity Act in the spring. The proxy system outlined in the ministry's document, *Extending Pay Equity by Proportional Value and Proxy Comparisons*, is meant for discussion and the ministry says it is seeking input from unions, employees' associations, employers and individuals.

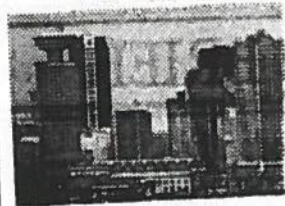
Publication of the document keeps a commitment Labour Minister Bob Mackenzie made on Dec. 18, 1990, when he promised to provide details before spring on how pay equity will be extended to women whose occupations can't be covered on a job-by-job basis.

Methods for including these women in the legislation were suggested in a report by the Pay Equity Commission on Oct. 18, 1989.

Mr. Mackenzie said the government also hopes to extend pay equity to the estimated 240,000 women who are now excluded because they work for firms with fewer than 10 employees. But no plans to do so were discussed in the latest document.

A Labour Ministry statement said the latest changes would cover at least 420,000 women.

VANCOUVE



Spy-agent guardian fuzzy about fac

BY DEBORAH WIL
British Columbia Bu

PROTESTERS gathered outside the Vancouver offices of the Canadian Security Intelligence last Friday to demonstrate against what they said was assessment of Arab Canadian the intelligence agency a continuing surveillance peace movement.

Paul Pasternak, an or Friday's protest, said C ties had created an "at of intimidation."

Unfortunately for the testers, they were a day make contact with the of their civil liberties ag unwarranted intrusion Major John White Hu; sett, chairman of the S.