

THE STATUS OF WOMEN WITHIN  
B. C. FEDERATION OF LABOUR  
AFFILIATED UNIONS

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### (i) INTRODUCTION TO THIS STUDY

This study began in early 1987 with the mailing of survey questionnaires to B.C. Federation of Labour affiliates who were asked to respond with data in existence as of November 1986.

The survey questionnaire was developed by the Women's Rights Committee of the B.C. Federation of Labour. The raw data was collated and analyzed by Sharon Yandle of Union Services who submitted a report to the Federation. Since the survey stated that the information was for research purposes only and would remain confidential, that report will be retained by the Federation on a confidential basis and the data used to aid in the development of programs and to provide a base for further study. This is a summary of the research document.

Responses were received from over 100 affiliates, some of which incorporated more than one affiliated local. Significantly, responses to this survey cover 81,573 women which, according to the Ministry of Labour's B.C. Labour Directory 1986 and internal data from the B.C. Federation of Labour, represents approximately 76 percent of all women who are members of Federation affiliates.

In compiling and evaluating the data received, it is important to recognize that there is, for example, a significant difference between the autonomy of a local within one union and a local in another.

The disparate nature of Federation affiliates means not only that answers to a question may differ, but that the question itself is of different significance from affiliate to affiliate.

Take, for example, the simple question of the gender composition of a local's executive. This is a question asked to determine the extent to which a key element in a union's decision-making process - its executive - reflects the gender composition of the membership.

However, in raising such a question it cannot be assumed that the answers, whatever they might be, represent executives that are equal to each other in the degree of power each may have. Executives of different locals of different unions are not necessarily equal in effecting significant decisions. The executive of a local which elects its own bargaining committee, decides its own bargaining demands and votes on its own settlement independently and in its own right, and which has the constitutional and often the financial ability to hire staff, has considerable more power in ordering its own affairs than does the executive of a local which has none of the above.

This does not mean, however, that data collected is of the apples/oranges mix from which conclusions cannot be derived. It does mean that certain judgment calls are required in organizing the data.



(ii) BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT STUDY

For many years the B.C. Federation of Labour has sought to encourage and assist women to improve their working lives through trade union activity and involvement.

In the course of developing these efforts, it became apparent to many over the years that while working women and men share a common interest in improving their conditions as workers and the conditions of their work, women face problems and barriers that may not be shared by men or are shared to a much lesser degree.

On-the-job sexual harassment, for example, theoretically and in relatively rare instances can victimize individual men, but the overwhelming brunt of this problem is borne by women. Previous work by the Federation has revealed both the enormous proportions of this once unrecognized issue, and the fact that large numbers of working women encounter sexual harassment as a regular problem often central to their workplace lives and livelihood.

Similarly, both women and men may become parents and hence both have an interest in ensuring that optimum conditions prevail in both pregnancy and birth. Because it is women who conceive, carry and give birth, reproductive issues affect them directly, personally and individually in ways which do not affect men. That women become pregnant, not simply through choice or lifestyle, but because it is necessary for women generally to do so in order to reproduce the human species, is only recently and still not fully accepted or recognized in the workplace. The result is a more or less continuous problem of job security, whether a woman may, after delivery, return to her previous job, whether a pregnant worker may be protected from unsafe job functions without losing her job, and so on. The right of men to become parents without losing wages, benefits or employment is an unquestioned right. For many (if not most) working women, that same right is still so questionable that those few who enjoy it do so almost as a privilege.

As another instance, no law requires women to assume total or major responsibility for maintaining the home and children. The reality, however, is that most women do and the division of household labour between men and women is far from equal. This two-job or double workday syndrome, well-documented by many studies over the years, is another instance of problems of working women, not generally shared by working men and/or not shared to the same degree. Yet this problem affects such central issues as the ability of women to maintain continuous employment (and therefore accumulate job-protecting seniority), to take training to move into higher paid non-traditional jobs, or to otherwise advance within the workplace.



All these examples are only that - examples of employment problems affecting women in addition to the employment problems which affect all workers. This is not to say, of course, that there is no community of interest between working women and working men, far from it. The interests are many and often central: wages, benefits, hours of work, and working conditions in general. Indeed, the only way workers advance their interests is by organizing and by co-operating with each other. Unity of purpose requires recognizing and understanding not only what can unite but also what can divide, what barriers exist and how to overcome them in order to realize the goal of the trade union movement, better lives for working people through a rightful share of the things that work creates.

Beginning from that premise, and in order to ensure that women as well as men can work to realize this goal, the Federation and many within its affiliates have helped design policies to improve the conditions of working women's lives. Many of these efforts have been directed toward developing contract clauses and bargaining demands to convince employers to improve the workplace and the rewards for work.

In general, the labour movement has sided with women's efforts to improve their status in society, including increasing women's representation and participation in decision-making bodies, and furthering causes (such as socially-based childcare) that are particularly important to women.

Recognizing that support, the present study looks inward at the labour movement itself and asks three broad questions:

1. What is the status of women within trade unions themselves, to what extent do they participate in the affairs of the union and particularly in exercising leadership, and what, if anything, are unions doing to increase women's participation?
2. To what extent have unions themselves addressed, within their own structures, specific concerns of women that the labour movement as a whole has embraced?
3. To what extent have unions negotiated in their collective agreements improvements in conditions of employment that solely or especially affect women?

From the survey undertaken, this report documents answers to, and some interpretation of, the first two questions above. For reasons stated later in this study, results on the third question must await further research.

I. THE PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN WITHIN AFFILIATES

In this part the survey asked unions for information on three areas:

1. Whether the affiliate's top position is elected or appointed and whether the position is presently held by a male or female;
2. Total number of executive, table officers or counsellor positions and total number of such positions held by females;
3. Total number of national and/or international positions held by members from B.C. and total number of such positions held by females;
4. Total number of full-time elected business agents/staff representative positions and total number of such positions held by women;
5. Total number of appointed full-time business agents or staff representatives and total number of such positions held by women;
6. Total number of job stewards and total number of female job stewards;
7. Total number of Labour Council delegates and total number of female Labour Council delegates;
8. Total number of delegates to 1986 Canadian Labour Congress, B.C. Federation of Labour, national and international conventions, and total number of female delegates to each; and
9. Total number of participants sent to 1986 CLC Winter School, and total number of female participants.

Reasons for requesting the above information:

1. Defining Power

Unions, like other organizations, have a structure of leadership positions from which people represent the membership in conducting the business of the union.

The survey identified these positions as those of shop or job steward; local executive officer; provincial, regional, national and international executive officer; the "top position"; and delegate positions to local Labour Councils, the B.C. Federation of Labour and CLC conventions; and conventions of the affiliate's own national or international union (where applicable).



Such representative positions, whether elected or appointed, carry with them certain and varying elements of power. For example, the larger the union and the more centralized the decision-making process (especially vis-a-vis collective bargaining), the less significant is the position of shop steward in the structure of leadership and the more significant is the national or (as in this study) the provincial or regional executive.

Similarly, although staff representatives are employees and generally not policymakers of unions, their placement as conveyors and proponents of the executive decisions also instills in these positions important elements of power vis-a-vis the rank and file.

This perspective helped to generate the interpretation of the results of this survey, but in no way affected how the data itself was gathered. Except for the question regarding "top position", affiliates were not asked to rank positions in terms of decision-making power, but simply to provide the data.

## 2. The Issue of Gender Representation

Within the labour movement, the proposition is generally accepted that working people face similar problems and have similar needs because of the fact that they are all workers. A secondary proposition (and one upon which this survey is premised) is that working women face additional problems because of the fact that they are women.

Many organizations which have accepted this premise - that there are issues solely or primarily affecting women - have also had to come to terms with the question of representation. This is not a new question within the labour movement. For example, industrial unions often strive for representation from all the occupations within the membership, in order to ensure that its decisions reflect both the varying interests within the membership and the relative strength or preponderance of each. Similarly, most unionists would think it simple common sense that a union of 90 percent trades and 10 percent clerical should generally reflect that fact in the composition of its leadership. The emerging consensus is that for decisions to be made and accepted as valid, the decision-makers should be representative of those whom they represent.

A central reference point in this study is the gender composition of the membership, that is, the ratio between male and female members of each affiliate. From this basis, an evaluation can be made as to whether and how women are participants in the leadership of the affiliates and the extent to which they are represented in the ranks of the decision-makers.



Organizations such as the New Democratic Party have come to use a "10 percent either way" concept in defining gender equality in decision-making. In other words, demands for equality are seen to be satisfied by a 60-40 split in either direction. Where, for example, the membership is 50 percent men and 50 percent women, the leadership is seen to reflect the gender composition of that membership if it contains a maximum of 60 percent men or 60 percent women.

This formula avoids the rigidity of a strict one-to-one formulation that would require, for example, a membership of 22 percent female to have precisely a 22 percent female representation in all decision-making bodies, in order to satisfy the requirements of gender equality. At the same time, however, it does allow for a benchmark in determining what constitutes gender representation in leadership positions and what does not, that is, what constitutes an over-representation of either males or females.

This report employs the "10 percent either way" formula to evaluate gender representation: If an affiliate's membership is 40 percent female, the leadership is seen to be gender representative if it contains between 30 percent and 50 percent females.

Some examples may help illustrate the point:

Example #1: With a membership of 400 men and 266 women (40 percent female), an affiliate with an executive of 12 is gender representative if it consists of 6 men and 6 women (50 percent female), 7 men and 5 women (42 percent female), or 8 men and 4 women (33 percent female). If it consists of 8 women and 4 men (67 percent female), it is not gender representative; there is an over-representation of females.

Example #2: With a membership of 12 men and 170 women (93 percent female), an affiliate with a 10 member executive of 5 men and 5 women (50 percent female) is not gender representative. It is over-representative of males. An executive of 1 man and 10 women (90 percent female) is gender representative.

Breakdown of Results Re: Female Representation and Participation in Leadership Positions Relative to Membership Gender Composition

a) "Top Position" (67 reporting)

In this section affiliates were asked the question:

"Is the top position in your union presently held by a male or female?"

82 percent of all reporting affiliates are headed by males and only 18 percent by females; this is so even though 45 percent of reporting affiliates indicate a majority female membership.

Of affiliates with a female membership of two-thirds or more 75 percent are headed by men. Of affiliates with a female membership between one-half and two-thirds, 67 percent are headed by men.

b) Executive Positions (65 reporting)

In this section affiliates were asked for the:

"Total number of executive, table officers or counsellor positions in your union and total number held by females."

Less than half of all affiliates (43 percent) reported that the proportion of females holding executive positions were gender representative, that is, their executives accurately reflected the number of females within the membership.

A further 42 percent reported an over-representation of males on their executives and 15 percent reported an over-representation of females.

c) National and International Executive Positions (23 reporting)

Affiliates were asked for:

"Total number of national and international positions held by members from B.C., and the total number held by females."

This question, not applicable to many unions, brought a response from only a third of the participants in this study.

Of these, and in contradiction to the above, gender representation on affiliates' national and/or international executives show a far greater proportional representation of women members. Fully 65 percent report these positions as gender representative, while only 26 percent report an over-representation of males and 9 percent an over-representation of females.

d) Staff Representative/Business Agent Positions (42 reporting)

The survey asked affiliates to provide data on:

"Total number of full-time elected and appointed business agent/staff representative positions in your union and total number held by females."

The number of affiliates reporting data on staff is substantially less than that reporting executive positions largely because most locals do not employ their own staff; instead, they utilize the services of the national or provincial staff offices.



Proportional gender representation fared somewhat worse in union staff positions than in executive positions; and, as with executive positions, the representation of women as staff decreased as their numbers as members increased and, in fact, showed almost uniformly a lower ratio.

Compared to the 43 percent of executive positions, 41 percent of affiliates reported a staff gender composition that generally reflected the membership. But more than half (55 percent) were male over-represented (compared to 42 percent among executives), and a mere 5 percent were female over-represented (compared to the executives' 15 percent).

e) Job/Shop Steward Positions (59 reporting)

Affiliates were asked for:

"Total number of job stewards in your union and total number of female job stewards."

49 percent of the responding affiliates reported that their stewards are proportionally representative of their membership. Males are reported over-represented in 41 percent and females are over-represented in 10 percent, indicating a somewhat greater proportional representation than that found in executive and staff positions.

Proportional representation declines (to 41 percent) and male over-representation increases (to 52 percent) in affiliates with a majority of female members. Female over-representation declines to 7 percent

Carving out from affiliates with a majority of female membership those with more than two-thirds female members, the same executive and staff patterns continue to appear; 36 percent of stewards are gender representative while 64 percent are over-representative of males and none of females.

f) Labour Council Delegates (47 reporting)

In this section affiliates were asked to provide information on:

"Total number of Labour Council delegates from union, and total number of female Labour Council delegates."

A similar ratio exists here as in shop steward positions; 47 percent of affiliates send to their Labour Councils gender representative delegates; 43 percent are over-represented by males and 11 percent by females.

That ratio changes somewhat with affiliates with a majority of female members; 43 percent are gender representative, 48 percent male over-represented and 9 percent over-represented by females.



Again, affiliates with more than two-thirds female membership show significantly different ratios; only 38 percent are gender representative of the membership, 63 percent are over-represented by males and none by females.

- g) Delegates to: CLC, B.C. Federation of Labour, Affiliates National and/or International Conventions, and the CLC Winter School
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Affiliates were asked to supply information on the number and gender composition of delegates sent to the above conventions and the Winter School, specifically:

"Total number of delegates to CLC and B.C. Federation of Labour, National and International conventions and Winter School 1986, and total number of female delegates."

Unlike other areas of representation, the previous pattern of gender composition shifts when affiliates select convention delegates and Winter School participants.

The most significant shift is the increase in favour of proportional gender representation. These provide the only instances where a majority of affiliates assign representative functions on a gender basis that reflects the membership.

However, when affiliates with a majority female membership are separated out, once again it is a minority that proportionally represents its female membership, albeit an increased minority relative to other leadership positions, particularly executive and staff.

## II. INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN AFFILIATED UNIONS

A second part of the survey sought to find the extent (if any) to which affiliates are addressing the question of increasing the participation (and by extension) the representation of women within their ranks. Affiliates were asked for information on the following areas:

1. Whether the union's constitution and/or by-laws contain any provisions specifically designed to promote the involvement of women;
2. Any financial policies designed to increase the participation of women;
3. Any provisions to increase the involvement of women members;
4. Any special attempt made to attract women to union educational functions;
5. Any special programs for women; and
6. Whether a Women's Committee exists within the union.

Reasons for requesting the above information:

A constitutional provision or written policy directed toward the issue of women's participation would signify first, an affiliate's belief that the issue of women's participation is a problem, and secondly, a willingness to address the problem identified. Whether or not such a recognition or willingness is constitutionally based, policies have been incorporated in a number of affiliates designed to achieve the same result, i.e. increasing the involvement of women in the union.

Implicit in the questions posed in this part of the survey are some of the factors that traditionally inhibit the participation of women. These include the scheduling of time and costs associated with many women's responsibilities as the principle mainstay of the home and children, the training and conditioning of women that discourages the pursuit of leadership roles, and the perceived lack of focus within some unions on issues of particular concern and interest to women.

Additionally, the survey sought to determine whether affiliates create and employ women's committees as a means to increase, on an organizational level, a union awareness and involvement by women in the rank and file.



## II. INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN AFFILIATED UNIONS:

### Breakdown of results

In this section affiliates were asked a series of questions:

"Does your union constitution and/or by-laws contain any provisions specifically designed to promote the involvement of women?"

"Has the union developed any financial policies designed to increase the participation of women (e.g. childcare expenses, budget allocation of women's issues)?"

"Has the union made any provisions to increase the involvement of women members (e.g. adjusting meeting times, special speakers)?"

"Has any special attempt been made to attract women to union educational functions?"

"Has the union initiated any special programs for women?"

"Does the union have a women's committee?"

Unlike the results on the participation of women, this part of the survey shows quite a different pattern of responses. Overall, affiliates with a majority of female members tended to have more structural programs or policies related to the participation of women than the sample as a whole.

As well, this part of the survey shows that there is not the same gap between affiliates with a majority and those with more than two-thirds women. All female majority unions report the very similar or the same percentages of constitution provisions, financial policies and programs relating to educational efforts to assist the participation of women. However, there is still a gap in relation to other programs to involve women and the existence of women's committees, showing affiliates with the highest percentages of female members having lower percentages of these programs. More significantly, however, is the great increase in the percentage of affiliates with more than 1000 female members who are undertaking such programs.

Twenty-two of the 23 affiliates with a majority of female members who report making none of the structural efforts identified also reported the gender composition of their membership and executives. Interestingly, fully 59 percent of these affiliates have gender representative executives, 18 percent have executives that over-represent their female membership, and only 23 percent are male over-represented.

Within this group, when those affiliates with a majority of female members are separated out, 29 percent have gender representative executives, 43 percent have executives over-represented by women, and the remaining 29 percent are male over-represented.



The Federation itself took steps at the 1984 Convention to amend its Constitution to reserve a minimum number of positions on the Executive Officers and Executive Council to ensure that these two bodies are also gender representative.

Looking only at those with more than two-thirds female membership, 33 percent are gender representative on their executives and the remaining 66 percent male over-represented.

In general, as has been shown, the staff of affiliates tend to be less gender representative of their memberships than is their executives. Accordingly, it is of particular interest to trace the staff composition of affiliates with none of the above programs or policies in place. Fully 65 percent of the staff of these affiliates are gender representative (the remainder are over-representative of men). This compares to 44 percent of the sample as a whole.

III. RESPONSE OF AFFILIATES TO KEY POLICY ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY WOMEN

A third part of the survey took up two issues identified by many in the labour movement as central current issues affecting women: sexual harassment and affirmative action.

Affiliates were asked three questions:

"Does your union constitution and/or by-laws contain any provisions on how to deal with sexual harassment complaints from one union member against another member?"

"Does your union have a written policy on sexual harassment?"

"Does your union have a written policy on affirmative action?"

Reasons for requesting the above information:

As part of an inquiry as to the status of women within trade unions, it was considered to be of some importance to determine whether issues that many unions are currently raising vis-a-vis employers are being reflected within the workings of trade unions themselves. It also raises the question of whether and to what extent affiliates understand and accept these issues as legitimately within the framework of trade unionism.

One half of the affiliates reported that their union had a written sexual harassment policy and one quarter reported a written affirmative action policy.

If only those unions with 1000 or more female members are examined 60 percent have written sexual harassment policies and 50 percent have affirmative action policies.

In unions with 50 percent or more female membership 75 percent reported a sexual harassment policy and this rose to 75 percent of the unions with two-thirds or more female membership. In both these cases, written affirmative action policies were in place for one-third of the unions.



#### IV. CONTRACT CLAUSES THAT SOLELY OR PARTICULARLY AFFECT WOMEN

An important element in this study was seen to be the provisions affiliates negotiate (or try to negotiate) into their collective agreements. It was anticipated that negotiated language and benefits of particular importance to women would add considerably to this study's portrait of the current status of women in B.C.'s labour movement.

However, affiliated trade unions are very disparate both in their character and in the circumstances in which they function, more so apparently than the survey's architects initially supposed. Initial results of the survey indicate that such issues as pay equity, for example, or equal pay for work of equal value, mean very different things to different locals. Some interpret it as equal pay for equal work, particularly those affiliates whose members function in very similar jobs and whose male and female members have earned the same rates for decades. Others appear to assume that job evaluation programs by definition "resolve" the pay equity issue. Others still, especially those most involved in pursuing the issue, attach extreme importance to what may appear to many as simply minor distinctions in pay grades.

The same disparate views appear in survey responses in many other areas. "No Discrimination" clauses are one such area - what is protection in one industry is not protection in another - while even maternity and parental leave lend themselves to a wide variety of interpretation.

Accordingly, completing this study through relating the substance of collective agreements to the participation of women, and the efforts of their unions to address that question, must necessarily be the subject of a more specific study than the present data allows.



V. SUMMARY OF THE DATA ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN AFFILIATED UNIONS

Despite the efforts of many to increase the trade union organization of women, the B.C. labour movement remains, numerically at least, a man's world. Only 30 percent of paid working women are unionized compared to 47 percent of men (B.C. Labour Directory 1986). (That figure, however, rises to 37 percent of the 219,565 members of affiliates represented in this survey.)

How do women fare in their rates of participation and representation within the leadership of affiliate trade unions? To what extent are affiliates undertaking efforts to increase that participation? And how have affiliates absorbed and acted upon some of the current issues trade union women have identified as important?

Several conclusions present themselves:

1. The participation and representation of women: data summary

First, and in general:

Fewer than half of the affiliates surveyed report a proportional representation of women in their decision-making positions; a usually equal or greater percentage report an over-representation of males; a relatively small percentage reports an over-representation of females.

Secondly, and in general:

The higher the percentage of females among the membership, the lower the percentage of females among the leadership.

Thirdly: and in general:

The overwhelming majority of trade union women are members of affiliates whose leadership generally consists of an over-representation of men.

2. Increasing the participation of women: data summary

First, two-thirds of all affiliates report structural efforts to increase the participation of women, a percentage that increases among affiliates with a majority of women and also in those affiliates where the great majority of women are located.

Secondly, most of the affiliates reported no efforts to increase the participation of women already have either a gender representative or female over-represented leadership.

3. Key issues affecting women: data summary

First, the issue of sexual harassment within the union membership itself is dealt with by half of all affiliates with female members and in a great majority of those with female majorities.

Secondly, affirmative action policies are not widely incorporated generally, but are among affiliates with a majority of female members.



VI. THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN AFFILIATED UNIONS: INTERPRETING THE DATA

Taking together the data from all the reporting affiliates, the consistent pattern revealed is that the majority of affiliates do not reflect the gender composition of their membership in leadership positions. The only break in this pattern is in certain very short-term delegated positions where half of the affiliates report proportional gender representation.

Equally significant is that where there is not proportional gender representation in leadership positions, there is also not an equal division among affiliates between male-dominated leadership in some and female dominated in others. Where balanced gender representation does not occur, the overwhelming majority of affiliates report a persistent over-representation by men.

Proportional gender representation is significantly less in those affiliates where women constitute the absolute majority of the membership, and more so again where the membership is composed of more than two-thirds women.

Because this study is the first of its kind to be undertaken within the B.C. Federation of Labour, there is no systematic historical data against which to compare the survey's results. While the present data establishes a significant male over-representation at present in the leadership of affiliates, the absence of historical data does not allow us to explore the trends in women's participation and representation within the B.C. labour movement. The present survey cannot tell us whether the existing state of affairs is relatively constant or whether women's leadership roles are increasing or declining over time.

Compared to the labour movement thirty or even twenty years ago, there is no doubt that women now constitute a presence that did not then exist, due both to the increased participation of women in the paid labour force, and also due to pressures for change arising out of the women's movement and from individuals within unions.

But the fact that women are present and more visible now than twenty or thirty years ago does not tell us what has occurred within, for example, the last five or ten years. For example, women's involvement in leadership roles may have accelerated, reached a plateau and remained there; or it may have accelerated temporarily and declined, not to previous levels but declined nonetheless; or it may be gradually and steadily increasing; or gradually and steadily decreasing. The present study cannot tell us that, but a similar study five year's hence could.

What the study does give us is a snapshot of affiliate unions at a given point in time. And, as in viewing any photograph, the eye must discriminate in what it sees. Everything in the photo helps to constitute the picture, but some elements within its composition assume more importance than others.



Although all the elected or appointed positions identified in this study do, in the aggregate, constitute leadership, they do not do so to the same degree. Assigning equal significance to all the positions in which women participate in leadership roles is useful only if it is true. Experience within trade unions suggests that such an assignment is not true.

Similarly, a shop steward's role is absolutely essential to the day-to-day functioning of the union and the administration of its collective agreement. But the power of stewards handling grievances is not equal to the power of executives who influence (and sometimes decide) within a relatively very small body of people, some, most or virtually all of the central issues that affect the membership. Executive leadership often includes the very definition of what those issues are and involves recommending to, sometimes persuading, sometimes urging and sometimes galvanizing, the membership to pursue the course deemed by the leadership to be the right one to take.

In addition, for reasons stated earlier in this report, the role of the full-time staff representative, whether elected or appointed, is a powerful position in a union even though it does not represent the power of that individual person. The staff representative is a conduit that carries out the executive's decisions and, as required, exercises a persuasive influence vis-a-vis the membership.

Accordingly, evaluating the data produced in this study requires attaching considerable importance to the composition of an affiliate's executive and staff. Having concluded that men dominate these positions (and therefore significant elements of union leadership) out of proportion to their numbers, the significant question to raise is: why?

Why is it that the higher percentage of women there is in a union, the lower percentage of women there is on the executive or staff (or, for that matter, in any other position)? Why is it that women, who constitute majorities in 46 percent of the respondent unions with female members, lead only 20 percent of them? Why do affiliates with the highest majority of female members (more than two-thirds) maintain gender executives and staffs unrepresentative of the membership when affiliates with the highest majority of male members (more than two-thirds) maintain gender representative executives and staff)?

Certainly it is well beyond the scope of this study to answer these questions definitively, in part because these questions were not asked of the respondents. But what can be gleaned from some of the comments of respondents, and is known from many years of study of the participation of women in other similar contexts, may give some guidance in seeking answers.

There are several factors to consider, not the least of which is the attitudes of women themselves.



It is often suggested that women choose not to pursue leadership roles as often or as vigorously as men do, nor allow themselves to be as persuaded (or, as many locals have found necessary in appointing shop stewards, to be coerced) into positions. More than one affiliate in responding to this survey expressed frustration over a perceived lack of interest among women in involving themselves in the affairs of the local.

Various reasons can be offered to explain such attitudes. Among them are an orientation toward the home and away from the workplace and a sense among women that trade unions are more of a man's domain. Given not only the role of women in the home but the fact that less than a third of them are union members (compared to 43 percent as paid workers) indicates that there are rational grounds for such attitudes.

Added to that is the now well-documented training and conditioning of women as girls. To the extent that females, as girls, are not encouraged to become leaders, it is not surprising to find females, as women, deferring to the leadership of men in the concomitant belief that men are more suited to leadership roles.

A third factor and one that some argue is the most significant is the material reality of the extended workday, the juggling of time and energy involved in working women's domestic responsibilities, and a lack of resources to relieve them from childcare tasks as required.

Many who try to assess the reasons for a systematic under-representation of women as leaders reject the "blame the victim for the crime" logic in an analysis that sees in women themselves the source of the problem. Just as important, it is argued, and perhaps more so, is the attitudes of men.

This focus is in many ways the mirror image of the factors cited above. Just as there are many women who believe that as a general rule men and not women are natural leaders, so are there many men who agree with them. If social conditioning is a factor, it works both ways, and many studies have shown the varied means through which boys more than girls are socialized to learn teamwork and other leadership skills.

Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the fact that more women assume home and children responsibilities means that more men do not. As a general rule, the tensions between home and workplace and the competition between them for emotional energy are not as real for men; and, attitudes aside, there is also the question of time. Everyone may have the same number of hours in a shift, but there is simply more time left at the end of the paid workday for men than there is for women.



The question of the attitudes of men must also be considered in trying to account for another question raised earlier: Why does this study show such a disproportionate low percentage of women leaders among affiliates with the highest percentages of women members?

Certainly one factor may well be the affiliates' own definition of "appropriate representation". It is not without significance that those locals with the smallest percentage of women members have a far more gender representative leadership than their counterparts on the opposite end of the spectrum. The fact is that a union with a 10 percent female membership and, for example, twelve executive positions, can satisfy the requirements of gender representation by incorporating one woman on to the executive. It would be unlikely that such representation would be opposed by anyone and may well be the result of a conscious effort by an all-male leadership to give the female membership a voice and vote. It is certainly not difficult to imagine such a leadership making a considerable effort to seek out and encourage a woman to join its executive.

However, the fact that proportional representation is generally not achieved in female majority unions suggests that the same logic of "giving a voice and vote" may prevail in those affiliates too. It may be that gender representation is seen to be satisfied simply by incorporating one or a few females in the leadership, without regard to the percentage of females in the membership.

The historical reality is that ten or twenty years ago unions were considerably more male over-represented than is now the case. Women now acquire leadership positions that once were the exclusive or nearly exclusive preserve of men. In a union with 10 percent women it is a fairly simple matter to fill a vacancy left by a man with a woman, for the composition of the leadership does not significantly change. In a union made up of 80 percent women it is quite another thing for a traditionally male executive of twenty to tell sixteen of them to vacate the leadership. And it is certainly something else again to expect that such a leadership would not only gladly leave, but would expend the energy needed to seek out and convince women to take their places.

To the extent, however, that executive positions are elected by the membership, the question must also be raised whether the attitudes of women are not more central than the attitudes of men in deciding the composition of their executives. What of the notion that women will not vote for women?

Perhaps a clue to this can be seen not by concentrating on the elected executives of affiliates but on the composition of their staffs.



Many affiliates elect their staff representatives, and it is likely that the same dynamic at work in choosing their executives is at work here too. If women do not vote for women, isolating the data about a union staff that is elected cannot tell us anything different than isolating the data about the executive.

But an interesting element of the data in this survey is that of the staff of the unions with large numbers of women members, a majority of these are less representative of their membership than are their executives.

What may be telling in this is that hiring staff is generally not a decision of the membership but of the executive. Accordingly, it is not a decision that can be seen to reflect a membership of women refusing to vote for women, but is the result of conscious decision-making by executives. Staff selection, then, in a majority of these unions, is reproducing and extending the over-representation of men in affiliates made up of significant numbers of women, and through a process that does not involve the issue of the attitudes of women.

It may also be that the over-representation of men in staff jobs reflects an additional phenomenon, and that is that of the under-representation of women in non-traditional jobs. If so, and if union staff positions continue to be assigned to men as is generally the case in non-traditional jobs, it is unlikely that women will assume those positions relative to their numbers without affirmative action programs.

As a last consideration in the role of attitudes in determining leadership positions, it may be instructive to review the data results on delegate elections to conventions and to the CLC Winter School. Here the male over-representation pattern eased somewhat and more affiliates elected gender representative delegates than they did to other bodies.

Several factors could account for this, among them the fact that such positions are short-lived and can be more easily accommodated into the patterns of women's lives than the long-term commitment of time that other positions require. As well, the decision-making required of such delegates may be of a level commensurate with some women's uncertainty or hesitation about their own leadership abilities. It may also be that because these delegate decisions are generally made closer to the shop floor, than are other higher order decisions, gender representation reflective of the membership is easier to attain. But for any of these possible explanations to be made with some degree of certainty requires further study.



If the survey had stopped at simply identifying the state of gender representation within affiliates, different conclusions could be drawn than those deriving from a study that also looks at efforts of affiliates to alter the status quo. It is certainly significant that almost two-thirds of all affiliates that were studied report the existence of change-oriented structural efforts. These affiliates reported the existence of one or more policies and programs directed toward breaking down barriers that inhibit many women's involvement in union activity.

It would be a simple matter to conclude, however, that some affiliates are concerned about the participation of women and therefore introduce such structural efforts, while those that are not, do not. The data may provide correlations but does not tell us cause and effect. Certainly it appears significant that of the affiliates who have none of these policies in effect, almost three-quarters of them are led by either gender representative or women-dominated executives. And this raises more questions than it answers: Do such affiliates not have such policies because there is no problem of female under-representation to correct? If so, why isn't there? What, if any, are the circumstances of these unions, certainly a minority within the sample, that are different from the circumstances of other unions?

Similarly, the absence of these specific structural efforts at change identified in the survey does not mean that affiliates have never instituted such efforts. One local, for example, reporting that no women's committee existed, also reported as a marginal comment the reason why: that women activists no longer had time to devote to a committee since all their energy was now taken up within the leadership of the local itself.

One of the questions the survey did not ask was whether a women's committee used to exist, and this is unfortunate. From the above comment, it is clear that unions, being living, changing entities, sometimes change the composition of their leadership because of a previous activism among members that succeeded in its goal. There may well be a dislocation arising from different interests, but a new unity can also form through the local changing itself and incorporating varying interests within its own structures and goals. The absence of existing efforts at change, in other words, cannot be concluded as evidence that no efforts (successful or otherwise) were ever made. But reliable answers to these questions will have to await the results of a study that goes beyond the scope of the present one.

What the data does indicate in this regard, however, is not only that some affiliates have greater representation disparities than others, but that some of these same affiliates do not appear to be addressing the problem to the same degree as others. It is one thing for an affiliate with a representative leadership not to make current structural efforts at improving the gender ratios. It is a different order of things when an unrepresentative leadership also reports few or no efforts at change. This may be because of a number of factors: a lack of



awareness of the issue, a belief that an over-representation of men in the leadership does not constitute a problem, a conviction that the membership does not, or should not, or will not change the situation, and various similar perspectives.

In general, however, it appears from the data that many affiliates, including most of those with a majority female membership, perceive that increasing the involvement of women is a desirable goal, as evidenced by their willingness to incorporate ways and means of doing so within their own structures. As the data shows, and as is always the case, some unions do this more than others. With the data from this study in hand, it would be of more than passing interest to conduct a follow-up study within the next few years to see if and how changes do occur.

One change that has clearly emerged according to the data is the awareness among trade unionists of the issue of sexual harassment. Considering that the term itself was not even in usage before the last decade, it is nothing short of extraordinary that half of all affiliates report addressing the issue, either in their constitutions or in written policy, a percentage that (unlike other data) rises in proportion to the percentage of women within the unions studied.

This information follows an earlier B.C. Federation of Labour survey that sought to determine the extent of the problem of sexual harassment among its affiliated women members. That survey apparently touched upon a sensitive but generally concealed nerve, judging from the overwhelming number of responses received. It appears that the present data confirms not only women's concern about sexual harassment but also their unions' responsiveness to developing some means of dealing with the problem.

It remains to be seen whether this issue and the issues that this study have raised will be found to have made their way into the core and main focus of unions' activities, their collective agreements.

Accordingly, this report should be seen simply as Part I, or the preliminary stage, of a more extensive report to come. That report should relate the data gathered through this survey to the very central issue of how (if at all) the participation of women in trade unions translates itself into realizing the improvements women need, and furthering the central goals of the labour movement: sharing the process and products of work to make better lives for workers - women and men alike.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

QUESTIONNAIRE - FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY

1. UNION: \_\_\_\_\_  
LOCAL: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please supply all data based on the categorie(s) checked.)

2. OCCUPATIONAL GROUPING: Clerical - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Service - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Sales - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Medicine and Health - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Teaching - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Management administration \_\_\_\_\_  
Product Lab, assembly and  
repairing - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Agriculture - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Sciences - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Processing and machines - \_\_\_\_\_  
Artistic and recreational \_\_\_\_\_  
Natural Sciences - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Materials Handling - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Other crafts and equip-  
ment - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Construction trades - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Religion - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Forestry and logging - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Fishing - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Hunting and trapping - - - \_\_\_\_\_  
Mining and quarry work - - \_\_\_\_\_

3. (a) NUMBER OF MEMBERS - JANUARY, 1986 \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) NUMBER OF FEMALE MEMBERS - JANUARY, 1986 \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) NUMBER OF MEMBERS - JANUARY, 1982 \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) NUMBER OF FEMALE MEMBERS - JANUARY, 1982 \_\_\_\_\_



QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

4. PERSON ANSWERING QUESTIONNAIRE - CHECK ALL ITEMS WHICH DESCRIBE YOU:

- Male - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- Female - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- Full-time staff appointee - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- Full-time elected officer - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- Elected position - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- Committee member - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- Member - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

5. (a) DOES YOUR LOCAL UNION CONSTITUTION AND/OR BYLAWS CONTAIN ANY PROVISIONS SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO PROMOTE THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN? IF SO PLEASE DESCRIBE.

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(b) DOES YOUR UNION CONSTITUTION AND/OR BYLAWS CONTAIN PROVISIONS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS FROM ONE UNION MEMBER AGAINST ANOTHER MEMBER? IF SO PLEASE DESCRIBE.

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(c) DOES YOUR UNION HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

(d) DOES YOUR UNION HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

6. (a) NUMBER OF JOB STEWARDS IN UNION - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(b) NUMBER OF FEMALE JOB STEWARDS IN UNION - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(c) NUMBER OF EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN UNION - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(d) NUMBER OF EXECUTIVE POSITIONS HELD BY FEMALES - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

6. (Cont'd)

(e) NUMBER OF CHIEF STEWARDS, COUNSELLORS,  
CONTRACT OR LOCAL CHAIR POSITIONS HELD BY  
FEMALES - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

7. WHAT POSITION DOES THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER HOLD? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
MALE \_\_\_\_\_

FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

8. (a) NUMBER OF FULL-TIME ELECTED BUSINESS AGENTS, STAFF  
STAFF REPRESENTATIVES' POSITIONS IN UNION? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) NUMBER OF FULL-TIME ELECTED BUSINESS AGENTS,  
STAFF REPRESENTATIVES' POSITIONS HELD BY  
WOMEN? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(c) NUMBER OF OTHER FULL-TIME BUSINESS AGENTS  
OR STAFF REPRESENTATIVES? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(d) NUMBER OF OTHER FULL-TIME BUSINESS AGENTS  
OR STAFF REPRESENTATIVES HELD BY FEMALES? - \_\_\_\_\_

(e) WHO HAS HIRING AUTHORITY? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

9. (a) NUMBER OF LABOUR COUNCIL DELEGATES FROM  
UNION? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(b) NUMBER OF FEMALE LABOUR COUNCIL DELEGATES? \_\_\_\_\_

10. HAS THE UNION DEVELOPED ANY FINANCIAL POLICIES  
DESIGNED TO INCREASE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN?  
(E.G. CHILDCARE EXPENSES, BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR  
WOMEN'S ISSUES). PLEASE DESCRIBE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

11. HAS THE UNION MADE ANY PROVISIONS TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN MEMBERS? (E.G. ADJUSTING MEETING TIMES, SPECIAL SPEAKERS.) PLEASE DESCRIBE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. HAS ANY SPECIAL ATTEMPT BEEN MADE TO ATTRACT WOMEN TO UNION EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONS? PLEASE DESCRIBE.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. HAS THE UNION INITIATED ANY SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. DOES THE UNION HAVE A WOMEN'S COMMITTEE?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

IF YES - DOES IT HAVE A BUDGET? \_\_\_\_\_

WHO DOES IT REPORT TO? \_\_\_\_\_

IS IT A STANDING COMMITTEE? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

15. IF NO - WHAT COMMITTEE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

16. THE UNION HAS (CHECK APPROPRIATE)

(a) DEMONSTRATED SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY WOMEN'S ISSUES/EVENTS - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(b) INVITED A SPEAKER ON WOMEN'S ISSUES - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(c) MEMBERS REPRESENTING THE UNION IN NON-LABOUR WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS (E.G. NAC). - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

17. (a) NUMBER OF DELEGATES TO WINTER SCHOOL 1986? - - \_\_\_\_\_

(b) NUMBER OF DELEGATES TO CLC CONVENTION 1986? - - \_\_\_\_\_

INTERNATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_ NAT'L CONVENTION \_\_\_\_\_  
CONVENTION \_\_\_\_\_

(c) NUMBER OF FEMALE DELEGATES TO WINTER SCHOOL 1986? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(d) NUMBER OF FEMALE DELEGATES TO CLC CONVENTION - \_\_\_\_\_

INTERNATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_ NAT'L CONVENTION \_\_\_\_\_  
CONVENTION \_\_\_\_\_

18. IN PUBLICATIONS AND LETTERS ARE:

(a) BOTH FEMALE AND MALE MEMBERS ADDRESSED IN CORRESPONDENCE? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(b) PHOTOGRAPHS IN PUBLICATIONS SHOWING BOTH MALE AND FEMALE MEMBERS? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(c) ARTICLES WRITTEN IN NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(d) ISSUES OF CONCERN TO WOMEN DISCUSSED? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

19. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD BE FOUND IN COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS?

(a) NO DISCRIMINATION CLAUSES AND THE USE OF NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(b) PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

(c) ACROSS-THE-BOARD WAGE SETTLEMENTS RATHER THAN PERCENTAGE INCREASES TO ASSIST THOSE (USUALLY WOMEN) AT THE LOW END OF THE PAY SCALE - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_



QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

- (d) EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) EQUALIZATION OF BASE RATES FOR WOMEN'S AND MEN'S  
JOBS - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) ELIMINATION OF INCREMENT STEPS IN SALARY  
SCALES - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (g) AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ENABLING CLAUSES - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (h) JOB EVALUATION PLANS WITH FULL UNION PARTICI-  
PATION TO ENSURE JOBS, SKILLS AND WORKING  
CONDITIONS ARE WEIGHED AND VALUED FAIRLY AND  
APPROPRIATELY - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (i) PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE CLAUSES WHICH STATE THAT  
WOMEN WILL GET TO TAKE PAID EDUCATIONAL LEAVE  
AT LEAST IN PROPORTION TO THEIR NUMBERS IN THE  
BARGAINING UNIT - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (j) CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES AND/OR WORKPLACE CHILDCARE \_\_\_\_\_
- (k) STRENGTHENING OF SENIORITY RIGHTS (E.G. PAID  
PARENTAL LEAVE WITH ACCUMULATION OF SENIORITY  
DURING LEAVE) - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (l) EMPLOYER-WIDE SENIORITY - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (m) IN THE EVENT OF LAYOFFS DURING APPRENTICESHIP  
PROGRAMS, SPECIAL MEASURES COULD BE TAKEN TO  
ENSURE AN EQUAL COMPLEMENT OF WOMEN IN MAIN-  
TAINED - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (n) BROADENING THE SENIORITY BASE ALLOWING ACCESS  
TO A WIDER RANGE OF JOBS TO ASSIST WOMEN TO  
MOVE OUT OF FEMALE JOB GHETTOS - INDIVIDUAL  
UNION LOCALS MIGHT ALSO WISH TO CONSIDER WAYS  
OF DEALING WITH THE DISPROPORTIONATE EFFECTS  
OF LAYOFFS ON WOMEN - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (o) JOB PROTECTION AND RETRAINING FOR ALTERNATIVE  
EMPLOYMENT IN THE EVENT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE \_\_\_\_\_
- (p) PRO-RATED BENEFITS AND PAY FOR PART-TIME WORKERS \_\_\_\_\_
- (q) PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (r) FLEXIBLE HOURS AND LIMITATION OF SHIFT WORK - - \_\_\_\_\_
- (s) NO OVERTIME DURING LAYOFFS - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE (Cont'd)

- (t) STRONGER JOB POSTING PROVISIONS WITH TRAINING  
(BRIDGING) BUILT IN - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
  - (u) SHORTER WORK WEEK WITH NO LOSS OF PAY - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
  - (v) HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDING RE-  
PRODUCTIVE PROTECTION FOR BOTH MALE AND FEMALE  
WORKERS - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
  - (w) WORKPLACE DESIGN, CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT AND  
FACILITIES TO ASSURE ACCESS BY WOMEN WORKERS - - \_\_\_\_\_
20. IS THE LANGUAGE IN YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT NON-  
SEXIST? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_
21. IS ANYONE ON STAFF, OR THE STAFF, THE EXECUTIVE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES? - - - - - \_\_\_\_\_



UNION ACTIVIST'S SUMMARY WOMENS RIGHTS COMMITTEE SURVEY 1987

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey is based on 1986 data reported by over 100 affiliated unions in B.C.  
Survey responses cover 76% of women union members affiliated to the B.C.F.L. The survey focussed on three main areas -:

- A. Women's participation and representation within unions
- B. Structural changes to increase women's participation
- C. Contract language which solely or largely benefits women

Gender equality for the purposes of this survey is defined as "10% either way". That is if there are 50% women in a union's membership, the union's executive is considered gender equal if it has 40% - 60% women (50 % + or - 10 %).

A. PARTICIPATION & REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN UNIONS

*one position*  
Q1. Is the top position in your union held by a man or a woman?

|                                  |                |     |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----|
| In unions with 50%-66% women     | 67% said a man | 33% |
| In unions with 66% or more women | 75% said a man | 25% |

The higher the percentage of women in the membership, the lower the percentage of women in leadership positions. *proportional*

*relative to % of membership*  
Q2. Total number of executive, table officers and councillors positions in your union and the total held by women?

42% of unions were overrepresented by men in their executive

Q3. Total number of national union and international union positions held by members in B.C. & number held by women?

26 % of unions were overrepresented by men  
9 % of unions were overrepresented by women

Q4. Total number of fulltime elected and appointed business agent/staff rep positions & number held by women?

55% of unions were overrepresented by male staff  
5% of unions were overrepresented by women staff

Q5. Total number of job steward and total number of women job stewards?

41% of unions were overrepresented by male job stewards  
10% of unions were overrepresented by women job stewards

Q6. Total number of labour council delegates & total number who are women?

43% of unions were overrepresented by male delegates  
11% of unions were overrepresented by women delegates

(All statistics quoted are for responding unions.)

#### B. STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO INCREASE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

Two-thirds of all unions reported making structural changes for example introducing women's committees or education programs , to increase the participation of women.

#### C. CONTRACT LANGUAGE OR WRITTEN POLICIES FOR WOMEN

Half the unions responding reported bargaining contract protection against sexual harassment despite the fact the term was not even used before the last 10 years. One quarter of all unions report written affirmative action policies.