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SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

A Discussion Paper

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SECTION I. INTRODUCTION	1
- Planning the Study	1 & 2
- Approach to the problem	2
SECTION II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE	3 & 4
- Problems with distribution	5 & 6
- Age range of respondents	6
- Occupations	6 & 7
- Marital Status	7
- Male respondents	7
- Respondents willing to be interviewed	8
- Attitudes toward the Study	8 & 9
SECTION III. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT	10
- Displaying nude and/or suggestive pictures of women	10 & 11
- Staring	12
- Derogatory or demeaning remarks	12 & 13
- Sexual remarks	13 & 14
- Touching	14 & 15
- Supervisors/bosses asking for dates in return for benefits	16 & 17
- Supervisors/bosses threatening if sexual requests refused	17 & 18
- Other problems	18 & 19
SECTION IV. EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT	20
- Feelings	20 & 21
- Methods used to deal with sexual harassment	21
- Repercussions	21

	<u>Page</u>
SECTION V. SUGGESTED REMEDIES AS STATED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE	22
- More discussion among women workers	22 & 23
- Assertiveness/self-defense training	23
- Legislation	23
- Union Committee	23 & 24
- Clause in contract	24
- Education for men	24
- Public education	25
- Additional suggestions	25
SECTION VI. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM	26 & 27
SECTION VII. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION	28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, & 34
APPENDIX I. - Policy Statement on sexual harassment endorsed at the 1978 B.C. Federation of Labour Convention	35 & 36
APPENDIX II. - Questionnaire	37, 38, 39 & 40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	41 & 42

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment of working women is a problem that is becoming of increasing concern to, and is claiming the attention of, greater and greater numbers of women and women's groups. Over the last two years several major studies have been published in the United States and one this past year in Canada (Backhouse and Cohen, The Secret Oppression: Sexual Harassment of Working Women). Cases are being brought forward in both countries under human rights legislation in attempts to seek remedies for this kind of harassment. Workshops and conferences have been and are being held among women's groups in various provinces. Articles and interviews are being published on this topic in newspapers across Canada, in the feminist press, and in national magazines. The Canadian Labour Congress has done a study involving its full time union staff women.

What is becoming clear is that sexual harassment of working women has been one of the most pervasive but so far ignored features of working life for women. As the facts begin to come into the open and the implications begin to be understood, there is an increasing challenge to workers and the unions that represent them to develop ways of dealing with this problem.

In response to this need, the B.C. Federation of Labour's Women's Rights Committee prepared a policy statement defining and opposing sexual harassment that was overwhelmingly endorsed at the Annual Federation Convention in 1978 (See Appendix I).

This study initiated in the summer of 1978, represents the next step toward understanding and taking action against the problem. It is hoped that the information, analysis and recommendations presented in this report will serve as a basis for discussion.

Planning the Study

The B.C. Federation of Labour's Women's Rights Committee held meetings over the summer of 1978 to design a research project to look at the problem of sexual harassment among organized working women in B.C. The Committee asked the Women's Research Centre for assistance with the project.

Representatives of the Women's Research Centre and Women's Rights Committee, working together, decided that the instrument for the study would be a written, open-ended questionnaire in which women could describe their experiences. A questionnaire (see Appendix II) was designed and an Ad Hoc Planning Committee, comprised of union women who volunteered to assist, was struck to pre-test and evaluate it, and to plan ways of carrying out the project within the limits of the resources available.

While a written questionnaire was felt to provide the easiest way to reach the largest number of women, it was also planned that the questionnaires would be supplemented by personal interviews and group discussions. These latter methods were felt to be particularly important in learning about the situation of immigrant women who could not handle a written questionnaire. This, unfortunately, turned out to be beyond the resources of the project.

The experience of immigrant women remains one of the most important areas for further study. The problems of these women did surface in response to our questionnaire but not to the extent where we could evaluate special problems. Other research (see bibliography) indicates it is an important area to look into.

Approach to the Problem

There is already sufficient evidence to indicate that the problem of sexual harassment is widespread. What we wanted to see, in this study, was how the problem is constituted, how women define it, what they experience, how it happens, and what they are able to do about it.

The study is a descriptive one. Further, it is a description from the point of view of the women themselves, using their own accounts to begin to discover how the problem is constituted in actual practice. Direct quotes from the respondents are used extensively throughout and are distinguished by being in quotation marks or being indented from the rest of the text and single spaced.

The planning, research and analysis were carried out by both the B. C. Federation of Labour's Women's Rights Committee and Women's Research Centre. In addition, the B.C. Federation of Labour's Women's Rights Committee, after consideration of all the data, has formulated some preliminary recommendations and suggestions for action which are included in this report.

SECTION II. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Ad Hoc Planning Committee had two aims in carrying out the study using a questionnaire: First, that as many union women as possible should know about the study and have a chance to respond to it, and second, that the study would serve as an initial way to increase awareness and discussion of the problem. Given the limitations of resources for the study (it was minimally funded and the work of distribution, collection, and analysis was done by volunteers) not all union women could be included. Further, since it was not possible, under the circumstances, to carry out a survey based on random sampling, the procedure adopted for distribution was the one that best served the needs of the project. One additional point should be noted. The questionnaire had to be circulated through the appropriate people in the union structure at each appropriate level. At many points therefore information about the study was mediated by people with little or no direct knowledge of it or initial contact with it.

A wide variety of sources for providing information and for circulating the questionnaire were used to maximise contact with the study and information about it. Among the resources used were the following: all local affiliates of the B.C. Federation of Labour were notified by letter and were asked to notify and inform their members; the project was advertised in a letter to all delegates to the Women's Rights Conference (September 15th & 16th, 1978); the project was described in the B.C. Government Employees' Union's newsletter of November, 1978; Astrid Davidson (Women's Rights Director, B.C. Federation of Labour) appeared on the Vancouver Show (November 30th, 1978); Astrid Davidson and Maureen Headley (B.C. Government Employees' Union's Women's Committee) appeared on a second show to discuss the issue; and the project was reported in the Vancouver Express. The project was reported in a wide variety of areas consonant with the aims of providing a basis for general discussion and providing as many union women as possible with a chance to respond.

The outcome is that 351 questionnaires were sent out by the B.C. Federation of Labour in response to requests. Some requests for them came from individuals wanting to fill them out themselves, others came from women wanting to distribute more copies at union meetings or at their place of work. Of this total, 75 (or 21.4%) were returned completed. In addition, the Women's Committee of the B.C. Government Employees' Union sent out copies of the questionnaire to all stewards in the Hospital and Administrative Components. A total of 769 questionnaires were sent out of which 114 (14.8%) were returned completed. The results of this group of questionnaires have already formed the basis for a position paper (1) on sexual harassment recently endorsed by the B.C. Government Employees' Union executive.

Fourteen additional questionnaires were completed by the group of union women who volunteered to pre-test and evaluate the questionnaire, bringing the total completed for this study to 203.

The responses to the questionnaires, given the mode of circulation and that they are self-administered, is adequate (a ten to fifteen per cent response for this kind of questionnaire is considered average (2)). However, it is important to note that this approach to sampling means that the results are generalizable only for the population responding. That is, the account that follows defines and describes what sexual harassment means to the women who chose to respond. These responses, while they do not constitute a basis for generalizing beyond the respondents, can be seen to represent their experience. This study then represents the women who participated in it, as respondents and workers for the study in articulating the concerns, in working to design the questionnaires, in circulating them, and finally in the process of analysis. Although generalizability is limited this study aims at providing an initial description of the character of the problem of sexual harassment, of experiences at work, and suggestions as to how the difficulties might be alleviated and ultimately overcome. In these terms it provides basic information which can, and indeed, should lead to further and more thorough investigation of the problem at hand.

1. Sisterhood, 3 (3): 2, August, 1979.
2. Parl, Boris, Basic Statistics (Doubleday, 1967), p.14
Riley, Matilda White, Sociological Research. A Case Approach (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), p.190

Problems with Distribution

The following problems were noted:

There is no way of knowing how effective the publicity for the project was; that is, how many women members were notified within their locals about the project within the time limits.

Media coverage generally reached only the lower mainland.

Distribution to shop stewards, as was done by the B.C. Government Employees' Union, also presented problems. One shop steward commented:

"I realize that the Shop Steward is the link between the component and the Union. However, to get a true assessment of the situation there should have been a 100% mailout of the questionnaire. There are things to which people will admit anonymously, but wouldn't admit otherwise, even to their Shop Steward. Therefore the Steward may not be speaking for all his/her members."

One shop steward, a male, who stated he found the project "biased" and "a joke" circulated the questionnaire selectively. He reported:

"I was glad to find that almost all female workers that I let read this (questionnaire) were in full agreement with me." (emphasis ours).

Three shop stewards concluded, after verbally checking with other workers or because of a lack of complaints in the past that there was no sexual harassment.

One questionnaire was circulated with a covering memo stating "We have never had any harassment on the job". Nine workers initialled it; a tenth commented, "Bullshit". The memo then added, "except for circled" referring to items on the questionnaire dealing with sexual remarks and touching.

In two cases the questionnaires were answered by more than one person (5 people and two people). This made it impossible for these respondents to answer any but the questions requiring a yes or no.

Distribution at the workplace did present a problem in some cases. One woman stated that some women in her office did not want to fill in the questionnaire because they saw women who did so as "libbers".

Another woman reported the following:

"After the questionnaire was given out by one of the young women in the office, one of the men picked it up and began reading it loudly, with comments, to the uproarious laughter of several young women. I was embarrassed and angry that this problem, as defined in this questionnaire, could not be taken seriously."

It is interesting to note that in spite of these problems the project received a good response.

Further research in this area should be done more directly with women, perhaps as originally suggested by the planning committee.

Age Range of Respondents

The age range was between 20 and 62. In addition, one fourteen-year-old returned a questionnaire in which she described an experience while employed as a baby-sitter.

The largest number (61%) were between 20 and 34. In the Canadian labour force as a whole 58% of the women are under 34 (Federal Department of Labour reports).

Median age was 31.

Occupations

Workplaces described included a financial institution, retail stores, post office, sawmills, administrative offices of a large University, government offices, a military establishment, hospitals, restaurants, plants.

Occupations listed:

Office staff - clerks	122
Secretary	9
Unemployed	2
Technical	3
Professional/Managerial	9
Health Care Worker	7
Data processing	2
Miscellaneous (factory, warehouse etc.)	15

(N.B.: 64 out of 203 respondents did not fill in this category)

Of the respondents who filled in this category 72% were in the clerical field. In the Canadian labour force as a whole 35% of the women are classified as clerical. Our study reflects the number of questionnaires circulated to the Administrative Support Component of the B.C. Government Employees' Union.

Marital Status

Married	71
Single	57
Divorced	16
Widowed	3
Separated	13
Common-Law	9

(N.B.: 64 out of 203 respondents did not fill in this category)

Of those who filled in this category, 47% were married or in a common-law relationship, 34% were single, and 19% were divorced, widowed, or separated.

In the Canadian labour force as a whole approximately 61% of the women are married, 29% are single, and 10% are divorced, widowed or separated.

Of the divorced, widowed, and separated women who responded to our study, several felt that some men made assumptions about their lifestyle, for instance, they drank more, and were more "available". If these observations are accurate, that may explain the higher percentage of women in this category who report sexual harassment.

Also, it is clear that married status is not a protection. Sexual harassment appears to be of concern to women of all ages, whatever marital status, and from many different occupations.

Male Respondents

Five respondents identified themselves as males. Four of these answered the questionnaire seriously, though one was heavily critical of what he felt to be the biased nature of the study. Two men raised the issue of homosexual harassment, and one mentioned "sexual harassment of management" by women as a way of gaining favours. One man reported that he knew of three different instances where women had been sexually harassed but were afraid to report it.

One male respondent answered in a hostile manner, indicating that women really wished to be sexually harassed, and if they weren't were either unattractive or frustrated.

Respondents Willing to be Interviewed

We asked for volunteers for personal interviews in order to supplement the questionnaires by obtaining information in greater depth and detail. However, there was a far greater response than we had anticipated in what we felt was a difficult area for women to speak about, and was beyond the scope of this project. Fifty-eight women and one man indicated their willingness to be interviewed. This is a sufficient number to justify a second project based on these case studies in order to learn more of the dynamics of sexual harassment.

Attitudes Toward the Study

In general, attitudes toward the study were very positive, indicated by such remarks as:

- "This could not possibly be more timely.
- "I'm grateful that this has been made available as a start."
- "...glad to see it being done. Will look forward to seeing a report in Sisterhood."
- "I think your questionnaire covers everything important."
- "I would really like to see sexual harassment and what constitutes sexual harassment defined from a woman's point of view, and brought up as an issue, and a work issue that creates emotional and mental hazards for women."

There were comments on the questionnaire itself. Several women commented on the difficulty of answering a questionnaire on such an emotional subject, and a subject that required a lot of thinking and writing. Some felt this might discourage women from answering. One woman found answering the questionnaire a useful process in itself:

"The questionnaires do a lot of good for the person answering the questions as well as for the cause."

Several women expressed the view that the questionnaire should be circulated more widely.

As well there were eight respondents who expressed hostile or negative views, usually anonymously, toward the project and the problem:

"This questionnaire is a waste of time and money. Most women encourage the problem whether they realize it or not."

Other comments were that the questionnaire was biased in that it was directed toward women only, and that it was biased in that it only asked for "bad experiences".

SECTION III. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In the questionnaire women were asked to indicate what kinds of sexual harassment, if any, they had experienced. They were then asked to give an account in their own words of what happened, when and how it happened, and how they felt. Not all respondents who indicated what kinds of sexual harassment they had experienced chose to describe it. Many women had experienced more than one kind.

Ninety percent of the respondents had experienced sexual harassment. Of the 10% who had not experienced it themselves, over half saw it as a problem for working women and/or knew of incidents happening to others. Of the remaining, most recognized that it occurred but felt that it was the woman's fault, illicit by behavior or mode of dress.

The questionnaire defined seven kinds of sexual harassment as decided by the Ad Hoc Planning Committee. Respondents added others in their written comments.

This section discusses each type of sexual harassment separately, as described by the respondents.

Displaying nude and/or suggestive pictures of women where they can be seen by women workers.

Fifty-one women replied that they had experienced this form of sexual harassment.

Twelve of these women described in writing situations where nude or obscene (women masterbating) pictures, calendars or post cards were displayed in a jointly used work area or coffee room, and in one case placed on a woman's desk. These women made it clear it was not the nude pictures that they objected to, but their display in a common workplace:

- "There is a man in the office who likes to display post cards of south-seas nude women. I do not feel that the work place/people should be subjected to such sexual fantasies."
- "Many of the men hang pictures of nudes in their offices which I find offensive."
- "Nude centerfolds were displayed in the coffee room. Being the only female in the office, I felt rather embarrassed."

Asking that the pictures be removed had little effect; in fact it sometimes made the situation worse. For example:

"We have a man who insists on displaying a rude type of nude calendar on his desk. Most employees (mainly women) have to pass his desk several times a day and find it embarrassing. One woman told him she objected to it so he dressed it with panties and bra that he made out of paper ... I think he should display a non-controversial calendar in the work area that is frequented by both men and women, and outsiders."

Another woman who insisted that "pornographic" pictures be removed reported that "this resulted in some very unhappy men who proceeded to put me down at every available moment."

In one instance a woman removed the picture, only to have it replaced by another. For the men involved in these situations, display of the pictures in the common work area seems important.

In two instances the women retaliated by putting up pictures of nude males. In both cases these pictures were torn down; in one case, all pictures were removed.

Some respondents felt this area of sexual harassment was trivial and not worth mentioning. One stated she had no problem with nude pictures since the men themselves "posed no threat." Others felt that they should try to adjust, particularly in a situation where the majority of workers were male.

Two women, however, saw it as fundamental to their self-respect in the work environment. One who stated she used to try not to "bother" her co-workers about it now has changed her attitude:

"I have my rights as well as they have theirs. I don't know what or if there's a solution."

Another woman states:

"I became aware that there are individuals who don't really care about other people's self-respect. They are out to get a laugh."

Staring

Fourteen women mentioned specific examples of men staring in an offensive manner, the "undressing you with their eyes" look. The women were not talking about admiring or interested looks, but described an "aggressive" staring that went on "too long" or was concentrated on breasts or hips.

The women saw these situations as being deliberate and conscious attempts to make them feel uncomfortable. They described these situations as "annoying" and "degrading."

Most felt it was difficult to deal with, since it was hard to prove.

Derogatory or Demeaning Remarks

Seventy-eight women reported experiencing this problem in the workplace.

Women placed in this category remarks that were disrespectful, snide, insulting, hostile, and derogatory to women as a whole. These remarks were about other women (including men speaking about their own wives) or to the women themselves.

Women described situations where such remarks went on "constantly", "almost daily" and so on. For example, one woman said that her immediate supervisor constantly made remarks about:

"...how stupid women are, how hysterical, how domineering, etc. His desk was next to mine and I had to put up with this verbal abuse without a break ... There is such a thing as a self-fulfilling prophecy. When someone told me I was stupid, I felt myself becoming stupid. My self-esteem was badly damaged."

Other examples given include such remarks as "I'm not having a god-damned woman on my shift" and "If you can't support yourself on a woman's wage, get a man to move in with you", or "Bend over, baby, and I'll give you a raise."

Also included in this category are remarks referring to sexual characteristics but in a hostile or derogatory fashion. Women mentioned remarks made about menstrual cycles and menopause; calling a woman names such as "Turtletits" and so on. One woman describes it this way:

"Sometimes this (remarks referring to a woman's figure) goes beyond sexual harassment to pure vicious cruelty. Again and again women have been the butt of an office joke due to the size of her breasts, buttocks, etc."

Only one woman thought that such remarks were "usually made in good fun." Others saw them as a deliberate attempt to make women uncomfortable, to "get their goat" or "to see if you will stand up for your rights and fight back."

Women usually responded by trying to ignore the remarks, "not living up to them", by "swallowing" their anger. One woman expressed the belief that men "would never get away with such day to day lack of respect to any man."

Sexual Remarks

This, along with touching, was one of the most commonly discussed problems. Seventy-seven women stated that they had experienced this problem. Half of them described incidents in writing.

In this category women described ordinary conversations and situations being turned into uncomfortable and embarrassing ones by men who made sexual jokes or remarks with double meanings. For example:

"One girl was wearing a red-cross pin for donating 10 pints of blood. He walked up to her and said "So now you've been laid ten times."

Other women described the telling of dirty jokes to or in front of women describing sexual fantasies or dreams, making speculations about one's sexual life, asking personal questions about one's sex life, circulating untrue stories, talking about other women's bodies, (e.g. of a woman with large breasts "Boy would she make a great work bench"), making sexual remarks and suggestions directly to women ("God, I'm feeling horny" or "I would love to get in the sack with you"). Comments ranged from mild remarks to obscenity.

Only two women said they thought that such behavior was "in good fun", though occasionally "going too far and becoming annoying." One woman stated that in her experience women told more dirty jokes than men.

No one found this behavior from men flattering, pleasing, or exciting. Most reactions ranged from annoyance and embarrassment to deep humiliation. One respondent described it this way:

"...When I was waitressing my male co-workers would make very obscene comments about me (and sometimes women in general) directly to me... I came home one night feeling so horrible and dirty just by their comments to me ..."

Women generally described a lack of success in changing this behavior. Most women reported that they "tried to ignore it", others left the area. Some women protested directly or "blew up." Most often this was seen as indicating a lack of good sportmanship or a sense of humour. Worse, the women's protests became the cause for more jokes. There was some indication that provoking the woman to anger or embarrassment was the goal. For example:

"He would say how he loved the reaction on the ladies faces when he said this to me, and how I would go red in the face."

Touching

Seventy-seven of the women experienced this kind of harassment. Forty-nine of them described their actual experiences, making this the most discussed problem.

This kind of sexual harassment was described as happening in the following ways:

- Openly, blatantly, and often in front of others. This included casual slapping on the behind; poking and tickling; patting of shoulders, hair, hips, or "any place they see fit to touch"; hugging and kissing; putting things down the front of blouses; snapping brassiere straps. Often men who did this to one woman also did it to others in the workplace, sometimes to the amusement of other men.

One woman suggested that such behavior from men was "probably friendly", however, none of the others thought it was friendly, flirtatious or flattering. One woman said "I don't like men putting their hands on me even if it's meant to be a friendly gesture."

- Touching that appears accidental - including brushing or squeezing against the body, or touching the breasts. Women describe this as happening when men pass by in the workplace, when bosses lean over them as they are typing, and so on. Women feel there is not much they can do about this since it is covert, but try to avoid it. One woman reported that in her office several of the women had got together to watch a certain man's behavior to try to protect each other.

- Sexual advances made out of sight of other employees. These occurred in elevators, stairwells, hallways, stock-rooms, and during overtime hours when other employees were not present. These were often aggressive, serious

advances; occasionally, in fact, they were outright attacks:

"...I had an incident happen to me where a male employee followed me into a small storeroom and grabbed me making sexual advances toward me, I pushed him away and ran out..."

"...I have been forced (physically) in the corner of an elevator by a man much stronger physically than I. I was totally enraged and frightened. (I was 42 years old)."

Others reactions besides fear and anger were shame, embarrassment and disgust, sometimes to a severe degree:

"...it made me go home and cry or go to the washroom and be sick it revolted me so much..."

"...I was 28 and married at the time. I actually became physically nauseated."

As in other areas, women tried many ways of dealing with the problem. Some avoided the situation with "a smile and a quick side-step," or were able to get the man to stop by stern looks or straight forward objections. Others found this ineffective:

"...the more obviously embarrassed she is the more he does it..."

Direct confrontation and a demand that the behavior stop sometimes worked. On other occasions it brought accusations of poor sportmanship, misunderstanding, or of having unnatural reactions to men. One woman reported:

"I don't feel they have the right, but the few times I've made an issue of it I've ended up being the one in the wrong or feeling foolish. I don't know how to cope and so end up playing the 'good sport'."

In the case of this kind of sexual harassment by co-workers, women occasionally found it effective to go together to tell the supervisor or together to deal with the man directly. Several women mentioned that they had thought they were the only ones being bothered until they talked to other women workers.

In the case of bosses, the situation is not so easy. Women reported that after having confronted a supervisor/boss about his behavior they would then be treated very coldly, or assigned unpleasant tasks, or treated even more drastically, as in the following stories:

"I was working as a cashier for one of the large chain drug stores. The boss was continually positioning women. There was a narrow pathway between where the cash register was and a wall. One time I was walking through the pathway and he was coming through the other way. He continued and instead of allowing me time to back up he pressed me against the wall and as he went by he grabbed my behind. I told him to take his "paws" off me. He looked rather stunned and walked away. Later the assistant supervisor came over and told me I was fired. I ended up staying after pulling some strings but the whole incident was very upsetting."

"...I rebuked a supervisor for hugging me repeatedly, i.e. I told him to keep his hands off me, such a gesture was welcome only at my choosing. He later ... sought to have me released from probation. I filed a grievance and in it reported the above incident. I won."

From the incidents reported in this section of the questionnaire, the study does not support the proposition that the women who experienced these incidents either "asked for it" or encouraged it. They happened to older and younger women, married and single. Often the men involved were harassing more than one woman. Often the incidents happened in spite of repeated, clear, and forceful objections by the women concerned. In every case the woman was surprised by the advances and in no way welcomed them.

Supervisors asking for dates in return for implied job benefits or improvement in the work situation.

Twelve women had experienced this problem. Some expressed the view that requests for dates from supervisors generally presented problems, even if no promises were made or implied, since refusal always presented the possibility of retaliation. The following example sums up many of these women's concerns:

"I have been asked out by supervisors as well as fellow workers. The supervisors present a problem because if they like your looks they're likely to give you better jobs, want to talk to you, etc. If you don't respond they then ignore you or give you stricter supervision or send people away who have been talking to you. It's a constant battle to know why you've been given extra attentions..."

One woman reported being fired after refusing a date: one reported that her refusal (done "diplomatically") made no difference.

What became clear in the examples given is the constraints on women in dealing with supervisors honestly because of the risk. Consequences of refusal could not be foreseen and therefore were difficult to prevent.

Supervisors/bosses threatening if sexual requests refused.

There were six responses that were concerned with "dating" and with physical threat as the result of non-co-operation. It is not possible to describe a pattern of behavior or response since the descriptions are so few, four of "dating" and two of physical threat, however, the incidents reported are explicit and make clear that women in these circumstances have little if any protection.

For example:

"...At age 15, in my first job, my boss very strongly hinted that if I didn't play along I'd lose my job. He was constantly putting his arms around me and trying to kiss me. I was frightened and didn't want to lose my first job - however after about 2 weeks of this I finally became very upset and angry and quit. I'd held the job about 5 weeks in total."

"...Supervisor tried to fire me because I would not go out with him, another also followed me home when I was on afternoon shift."

"...In 1966 I worked in Gold River which was just an isolated construction camp at the time. I had just got married and very lucky to find a job up there to be with my husband. The boss made quite a few advances which we finally ended up arguing about. He fired me when I told him to shove his advances and that nothing was going to come of it."

"...Question F (a supervisor (or customer) says that if you do not sleep with him you will lose your job or benefits) on the previous page has happened three different times, but women are afraid to report this."

These four responses describe social pressures on women to comply with requests from men to respond to their advances. Married status offered no protection, nor did leaving the workplace. The fear of losing the job is apparent in two of the responses.

The responses here suggest areas that further interviews might explore and elaborate.

The following response gives a description of physical threat:

"My experience occurred during the first few months of employment. It happened in a locked supply office. The man was very strong, picked me up and took me into a little room (with me protesting), I didn't think he would actually do anything, I thought he was just fooling around. He held my arms and proceeded to feel my body. After I finally convinced him to put me down (in tears), he informed me that before he got transferred he would make love to me whether I wanted to or not."

Again, it is worth noting that the women have no protection on the job, or off the job. Quitting by choice or under pressure is the only alternative. The frequency of this pattern of quitting work by choice or under pressure would be an important issue to investigate.

Other Problems

Women mentioned other forms of behavior that they considered sexual harassment, but that were not specifically addressed in this questionnaire.

These included:

- sexual harassment at social functions connected with the workplace; or being expected to take part in social functions with employers;
- sexual advances made on business trips;
- condescending attitudes because of sex; being called "hon", "dear", "baby doll" etc.;
- inappropriate cards and gifts; and
- a man masturbating where he can be seen.

A special area that could be investigated in the future is that of women entering non-traditional fields of work, occasionally being the first or only woman in such a job. Four respondents were in these kinds of jobs and discussed their problems. Two felt they were not wanted as co-workers, and were treated accordingly. One felt accepted at her job and felt she had not had any problems with sexual harassment. However, she worked very hard at monitoring her own behavior so that she did not do anything that would invite a sexual response. She tried to be "sisterly".

Since more women are going into or want to go into non-traditional work, it would be important to learn of the experiences of women already in these areas.

Another area for further investigation is the specific experience of young women on their first jobs. Though this was not addressed in the questionnaire, a number of women described their worst experiences as happening on their first job or when they were in their late teens. They referred to these incidents as being particularly frightening since they did not have the experience to deal with them and they were particularly vulnerable to threats. One of the stories indicated that compliance to sexual demands from employers as a result of threat did not offer protection either, in that the woman was fired anyway.

SECTION IV. EFFECTS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Women who had experienced sexual harassment were asked in the questionnaire to describe their feelings and actions following these incidents, what support they got from others, and what the consequences were.

Some of these areas were discussed in the preceding section but are enlarged upon here.

Feelings

The most prevalent feelings reported by women who experienced incidents of sexual harassment were those of anger and embarrassment. Often these feelings were coupled and women reported feeling "furious and personally degraded". The anger was often very intense and described by one woman as being "almost uncontrollable rage" and then "a lingering anger after the rage had subsided."

Many women reported feeling frustrated and "powerless" as a result of these incidents and not being sure how to handle them:

"...(I felt) absolutely humiliated and powerless, there was very little I could do and the feeling of helplessness and frustration only adds to the intensity of the experience."

"...very frustrating and I don't know how to combat it."

"...every job is like a whole new battlefield all over again. I get tired of being angry..."

Several women reported feeling afraid. As with the feelings of frustration, the fear seemed to stem from their inability to deal with the situation:

"...frightened - felt very inadequate, didn't know how to handle the situation."

"...I was frightened because I did not wish his attentions and did not know what to expect next. I needed the job and so I pretended nothing happened."

Feelings of disgust were reported frequently - often coupled with anger - as were feelings of insult:

"I feel that my personal rights of working in a non-offensive atmosphere are being overlooked. It makes me feel belittled, objectified and demeaned."

Only one respondent reported any feelings of guilt and in her case the guilt was temporary - she was later able to look back on the incident and put it in perspective.

Methods used to deal with sexual harassment

Responses of women to sexual harassment ranged from keeping quiet and accepting it - usually out of embarrassment or shyness - to actually aggressively confronting the offender. In many of the cases an assertive response was effective in alleviating or eliminating the problem, although five of these women reported retaliatory job action.

Most women who reported being sexually harassed talked about the problem with others - either their families, colleagues or supervisors - though some were too embarrassed. Two women stated that they had not told their husbands, feeling they would not get a sympathetic response. In most cases family and co-workers offered sympathy and support while supervisory personnel tended not to take the issue entirely seriously.

Of the women who reported seeking help from their unions, there was a fairly even split of those who received aid and support and those who did not.

Repercussions

A few women who dealt with the harassment in an assertive manner reported that they are now labelled as "trouble makers" or made fun of.

Twelve women reported that they are now far more wary of men and nervous on the job and a few say they can no longer bear to face the offender.

Seven women reported that their behavior had changed; they had become "colder", more "unnatural", "no longer laughed or smiled", were very conscious of the way they dressed, and kept to themselves.

Fifteen women told of being fired or denied promotion for reacting against sexual harassment - one of whom has been unable to find work elsewhere. Six women quit their jobs rather than put up with sexual harassment.

SECTION V. SUGGESTED REMEDIES AS STATED IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In this section of the questionnaire we asked women to consider possible ways of dealing with sexual harassment. The questionnaire presented seven suggestions, based on recommendations that have been made from other groups and as a result of other studies. As well, we asked women to make other suggestions of their own.

One of the purposes of this section was to learn what women felt would be appropriate to their own situation and would work in their own workplace.

A second purpose was to learn the reactions of women to remedies that have been suggested elsewhere to a problem that individual women often experience as hopeless.

The remedies discussed here are not to be confused with the recommendations of the report though the responses of the women were taken into account when the final recommendations and suggestions for action were formulated.

More discussion of the problem among women workers:

This was seen as being the most useful and important suggestion. 135 of the respondents indicated that discussion and a chance to share their experiences were very necessary both in helping them to deal with the problem personally and in increasing awareness of sexual harassment generally:

"Extremely good idea. A lot of women are ignorant of the problems that other women have in the same work location."

"It probably happens to a lot of women, but they need encouragement to speak up."

"This would definitely help raise the awareness of women in that they do have the right to object to familiarity and harassment."

It was felt that discussion and workshops could lead to an "exchange of ideas and answers" and increase confidence.

One woman suggested workshops on specific topics such as "ways to handle the more subtle sexual innuendos and coffeeroom type sexism."

A few of the respondents expressed skepticism and felt that less assertive women, who would stand to benefit the most from such discussion, would not attend.

Assertiveness/self-defense training at the place of work:

This was considered to be important by 108 of the respondents, with four of those specifying only assertiveness training. Those who answered affirmatively on this question tended to see such training as being extremely important:

"I feel that assertiveness training is a must to begin with. I have had assertiveness training and I know exactly what constitutes sexual harassment, yet I bungle the job of handling these situations properly and in an assertive manner in 75% of the cases. So try and imagine what it would be like if you were not aware of what to look for, or if you are aware, you have never been told or shown how to be assertive."

Self-defense training was seen as very important - particularly by women who worked late shifts.

Legislation:

This was the least popular of all the suggestions with only 51 respondents considering it important. Typical responses on this question were "it is impossible to legislate attitudes" and legislation "would be difficult, if not impossible, to enforce." One woman replied that she saw sexual harassment not as a legal problem but a social problem "best dealt with through education of both men and women."

One woman in favour of this method of dealing with the problem of sexual harassment felt that Human Rights Legislation and the U.I.C. act were the areas to concentrate on:

"Both B.C. and Canadian Human Rights Legislation should be changed to cover sexual harassment. In addition, women who quit or are laid off due to sexual harassment should get special provision to be included under the U.I.C. act."

Union Committee should be struck:

This was considered to be a possible solution by only 56 of the respondents. Those in favour of this method felt that it was very necessary for women to have something like this to turn to:

"In cases of persistent harassment, there should be some group to which one can complain without fear of reprisals or embarrassment."

"It is such a widespread hazard to working women that we should use every means at our disposal to combat it and help women subjected to this harassment."

Some felt that the men in their unions would not go along with such a proposal:

"Impossible in a male dominated and sexist union. Committee of women unthinkable."

"Much perseverance needed here. Male brothers regard such committees as treacherous, threatening."

There should be a clause in the contract:

73 respondents believed that a clause in the contract would be a good way of dealing with sexual harassment. As one woman pointed out "then the issue could be grieved as a contract issue removing the stigma of sexual discussion."

Some women expressed doubt as to the effectiveness of such a clause:

"This is fine if it were just management, but unfortunately it is our fellow workers who are very often the culprits."

One person expressed concern that some women would abuse such a clause.

There should be education for men:

This was seen as being very necessary by 115 of the respondents. Several women pointed out that the majority of men don't realize there is a problem or don't realize when they are being abusive and offensive. The following were typical comments:

"...Most definitely. Maybe they think they impress us or flatter us by constantly making remarks about our bodies. If they saw what they do they might change."

"...Men seem to think women should feel complimented by sexual advances. Their general lack of understanding and sensitivity is appalling."

More public education on the subject:

There were 133 positive responses to this suggestion. Many people stressed that this education should start very early on in school in order to "get to the young people before they get to the workplace." It was felt that public education is "needed to expose and defuse the myths about sexual harassment."

Additional comments put forward:

"...A special complaint form for women to fill out for their stewards if a sexual harassment clause is ever included in the contract."

"...Perhaps pamphlets could be made up and sent to all employees relating to certain incidents of sexual harassment, as to the follow-up of cases and how they could be avoided, if possible."

"...Something should be done to help unorganized workers who, it seems to me, would be more subjected to sexual harassment than organized ones."

What is significant in this part of the questionnaire is the indication that the woman involved gave most support to those remedies that involved women themselves, such as discussing among themselves and assertiveness training. There was a corresponding lack of faith in other structures as having little concern about the problem and little desire to eradicate it.

Education of men and of the general public was seen, with a great deal of hope, as being the way toward commitment to eradicate this problem.

SECTION VI. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

From the information gathered through this study we are able to contribute to the continuing discussion of the nature of sexual harassment.

Much comment has been made in the past about the difficulty of defining just exactly what constitutes sexual harassment. Some people feel that at least some aspects of what is called sexual harassment are hard to distinguish from the "normal or flirtatious" aspects of relationships between the sexes.

For those women planning the study, and for those responding to the questionnaire, however, the distinction between sexual harassment and mutually desired relationships between men and women in the workplace, was the matter of choice.

Some women felt there was no choice; that sexual harassment was a part of work, "that women have to put up with it - like the weather". They simply learn to tolerate it:

"...I don't really notice that many forms of sexual harassment that I haven't already grown used to."

Several women expressed the opinion that the fact that they had not experienced sexual harassment was a matter of "luck" rather than any effort or choosing on their part.

In the actual accounts that women gave of incidents that had happened to them, the common feature was the lack of choice or control in the situation. In all cases the behavior was unwelcomed and unwanted. The women did not believe they had done anything to encourage such behavior and, indeed, in many cases active attempts to discourage it had little effect. More seriously, attempts to oppose it sometimes brought retribution.

It is this aspect of the situation, this failure to recognize the woman's rights and autonomy, that constitutes offense. As one woman said, "when she wants them to stop and they don't, that's harassment."

For those women who wish to take part in sexual banter, or in other kinds of sexual behavior, there is no problem. What emerges as important from this study, however, is that women have little right to say either yes or no, and neither their conscious or unconscious behavior really alters this situation. As one man is reported to have said, he would continue with physical harassment toward the woman in question whether she liked it or not.

A number of women responding to the questionnaire felt that this apparent lack of concern on the part of men reflected their ignorance of women's feelings, or a mistaken belief that their behavior was flattering. Others felt that this behavior on the part of men reflected the low status of women generally, or the specific perception that all women are made to be fondled. Whatever the motive attributed to the men it did not have any relationship to the perceptions of the women.

The situation is one of glaring inequality. Occasional comments were made about women harassing men in return for benefits, but the extent to which women initiate this kind of behavior is not at all in proportion, and is not constituted in our society as being acceptable.

Many women were hurt and disillusioned at the extent of indifference to this problem, but nevertheless stated the importance of working toward greater equality in this area. One woman commented:

"I feel in a place of work men and women should be friendly to each other without expecting any romantic or sexual response. I feel alone and empty sometimes when I see the barrier built up because men do not respect women as human beings."

The purpose of this project is to be a step toward removing the barrier. Equal employment opportunity includes the right to a climate at work that is free from derogatory treatment related to a group factor, whether race, colour, age, or sex.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

Based on responses to the questionnaire, the Women's Rights Committee of the B.C. Federation of Labour has decided to put forward, for consideration and discussion, several recommendations and suggestions for action to deal effectively with the problem of sexual harassment on the job.

In formulating the recommendations and suggestions we have incorporated responses we received by letter or telephone that were not included in the returned questionnaires, and we have taken into account information from the research listed in the bibliography. Therefore, these recommendations and suggestions extend beyond the responses to the questionnaire:

1. Establishment of a Workable Definition of What Comprises Sexual Harassment and Development of Policy on Remedial Action

It is clear from the responses to the questionnaire, that not everyone has the same understanding of what sexual harassment entails. For example, we received additional comments from several respondents after they had completed and returned the questionnaire. Quite often the respondent had remembered instances which at the time of filling out the questionnaire, she had not considered to be incidents of sexual harassment. In other instances, women said they delayed filling out the questionnaire thinking initially that they had nothing to report. In addition, it is clear from the responses that sexual harassment on the job does not necessarily appear only in the form of harassment by management against union member: the offenders were often fellow union members:

(a) Policy Applying to Union Members

The B.C. Federation of Labour has developed policy which clearly applies to sexual harassment of union members by management. There is no policy, however, to cover harassment by a fellow union member. A Policy Statement on Sexual Harassment on the Job applying to union members should be developed to include a definition of what sexual harassment on the job is and to outline procedures for remedial action.

(b) Policy Applying to Management

B.C. Federation of Labour affiliates do have policy which outlines steps to be taken to deal with sexual harassment by management. (See Appendix I). This Policy Statement was adopted at the 1978 Annual Convention of the Federation.

We would urge that this Policy Statement be adopted by all union locals.

2. Suggestions for Victims of Sexual Harassment on the Job

It is not clear from the questionnaire responses whether or not victims of sexual harassment did keep private records of their experience of harassment. Most research to date does indicate that this is a necessary procedure to follow:

(a) What to Include in Documentation

Victims should document the date, time, place, names and a detailed description of each incident. On the advice of a union representative, or where unorganized a lawyer, the victim might also seek out other victims at the workplace who will serve as witnesses, provide information or support collective action.

(b) Importance of Keeping Documentation Private

Documentation should be kept by the victim herself for her own use in her efforts to have the harassment stopped, not for public consumption. One difficulty in dealing with cases of sexual harassment is the possibility of charges of slander against the victim, if documentation is misused. We can't emphasize enough the importance of going directly through a union representative whenever possible to have the matter resolved.

(c) Use of Documentation

At some point the victim may be required to fill out a grievance form, or a human rights claim. Personal records of harassment will be very useful at that time. In the event a victim quits her job because of the harassment, the documentation might aid in obtaining U.I.C. benefits or a new job.

3. Education on the Issue of Sexual Harassment on the Job

Among the responses from the questionnaire, particularly from the section dealing with remedies, came an overwhelming call for education and discussion in one form or another. It is evident that education should be directed to all people in the workplace. As well, the discussion must go beyond the workplace to include the many other organizations and institutions that govern our daily lives. Within a union, education in the form of workshops, pamphlets, articles in newsletters, etc. etc., could deal with the following:

(a) For the Victim:

- verbal self defense;
- self-defense (physical);
- how to deal with feelings of anger and guilt;
- the idea that the victim is not alone;
- knowledge and relation of various laws including Provincial and Federal Human Rights Legislation, U.I.C. etc.;
- how to document sexual harassment on the job;
- assertiveness training; and
- union structure and the channel for dealing with these problems.

(b) For the Offender:

- what sexual harassment is;
- how victims feel;
- what is acceptable conduct; and
- what the penalties are.

(c) For Both the Offender and Victim:

- development of an understanding of sex-role stereotypes and the conditioning process that both men and women go through.

(d) For the Job Steward:

- all of the above, plus;
- how to properly document cases;
- what questions to ask the victim;
- how to be supportive;
- how to advise on cases which have been defined in union policy;

(d) (Cont'd)

- knowledge of human rights laws;
- knowledge of U.I.C. requirements;
- knowledge of legal implications; and
- knowledge of the criminal code.

NOTE: Stewards should not deal with cases of sexual harassment themselves unless they have been given that mandate by their union.

(e) For Union Educational Programs in General:

- social services courses should include discussion on this subject wherever applicable.

(f) For the Public:

- all agencies (social and governmental) should examine their mandate to include programs on sexual harassment on the job. Certainly, those in the field of employment, counselling or training should be informed on this issue.

Ideally, to be most effective, education on this subject should begin in the public education system.

4. Support Systems for the Victim

It was clear from the reports that had various respondents been able to go to anyone, the pain they had suffered, feelings of inadequacy, lowered self-confidence, - all would have been lessened.

A support system in the workplace could be set up in a variety of ways:

- (a) One person, appointed or elected, to be responsible for dealing with incidents of sexual harassment on the job.
- (b) A committee might be established with the responsibility outlined in (a) above. The committee might formulate policy and make recommendations on the question of sexual harassment on the job and/or hold workshops on the issue.

4. (Cont'd)

- (c) Articles discussing the issue in union newspapers is another supportive device that could be used.
- (d) Inviting speakers to talk to union meetings about sexual harassment on the job will also demonstrate concern and provide support.
- (e) In other cases, the Director of Women's Programs at the B.C. Federation of Labour should be available to assist women who face sexual harassment on the job, and have no place to go with their problem.

It is most important that victims of sexual harassment have recourse to support, encouragement and sound advice.

5. How to Deal with Cases of Sexual Harassment

From the responses to the questionnaires and from other communication we received during the course of our research, we learned some respondents were reluctant to suggest ways of dealing with sexual harassment, because they felt different forms of harassment required different forms of preventive action.

An objective of this research was to find out what women themselves felt constituted sexual harassment on the job. Analysis of the responses shows that women have included a long list of behavioral traits to be objectionable. From these responses we have a clear picture of what sexual harassment is. How to prevent it, however, is more problematic.

(a) Suggestions for Union Representatives

It is a myth, widely held, that a union representative can resolve a problem, such as sexual harassment of a worker by a manager, by simply bringing it to the attention of the manager. Even when a contract clause exists to cover harassment, resolution of the problem can be difficult.

If the company ignores, argues or refutes the claim, the union must be ready with alternative methods. Formal grievance procedures, arbitration, job action, negotiation are just some of the procedures that may be necessary. When the union representative requests

(a) (Cont'd)

that sexual harassment stop, he or she must be armed with the facts of the case, witnesses, and knowledge of other possible recourse, such as counselling; a transfer for either employee; penalties, for example, demotion or loss of promotion or wages. Categorization of sexual harassment and awareness of procedures to deal with them are necessary if union representatives are to be effective in prohibiting both simple and complex cases.

(b) Consultative Service

In the future the B.C. Federation of Labour might consider developing a consultative service for its affiliates. This type of service should include procedures for dealing with incidents of sexual harassment. The service should be available to union representatives and when no recourse or support system is available for individual members, the Federation could assist in those cases as well.

6. Further Research

Throughout this report we have noted areas for further research, such as:

- case studies, to learn more of the dynamics of sexual harassment;
- the situation of immigrant women;
- the specific experience of young women on their first jobs;
- the situation of women in non-traditional jobs; and
- the frequency of the pattern of women quitting work by choice or under pressure as a response to sexual harassment.

In addition, research should be considered regarding:

(a) Unemployment Insurance Benefits

One issue the questionnaire did not cover was the difficulty some women experience in collecting unemployment insurance benefits when they have lost their jobs, as a result of sexual harassment at the workplace. To what extent does this happen? What can women do about it? These are just a few of the many questions requiring answers.

6. (Cont'd)

(b) Human Rights Legislation

The answers to the questionnaire showed little faith in recourse through legislation. However, cases are only beginning to come to human rights agencies. Currently only one case in Canada has reached the Board of Inquiry stage (Ontario, 1979 - Maria Ballesta vs MacIver and Lines of Mississauga). How effective current legislation is in prohibiting sexual harassment on the job remains to be seen. As well, pressure for changes to these laws can only come about when the effectiveness enforcement or lack of enforcement has been clearly analyzed. Decisions which emanate for all human rights jurisdictions both in Canada and in the U.S.A. must be monitored.

(c) Contract Language

Within the labour movement, the experience of dealing with cases of sexual harassment is relatively new. As unions become accustomed to dealing with these cases, methods and procedures for dealing with them will be developed. Until this is done, we would caution unions to proceed carefully in presenting contract language to cover sexual harassment on the job. We believe it is an area that requires further research and study. We do, however, see it as a remedy in the future.

APPENDIX I

POLICY STATEMENT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is difficult to define. It may range from sexual innuendo made at inappropriate times, perhaps in the guise of humour, to coerced sexual relations. Although there may be instances of employees who initiate or encourage sexual activities with male supervisors, clients or co-workers, harassment is distinct from "acceptable" flirting; however, on occasion this line may be difficult to draw. Harassment at its extreme occurs when a male in a position to control, influence, or affect a woman's job or career uses his authority and power to coerce the woman into sexual relations, or to punish her refusal. It may include:

1. Verbal harassment or abuse.
2. Subtle pressure for sexual activity.
3. Sexist remarks about a woman's clothing, body or sexual activities.
4. Unnecessary touching, patting, or pinching.
5. Leering at a woman's body.
6. Constant brushing against a woman's body.
7. Demanding sexual favours accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's job.
8. Physical assault.

Because the male is in a position of authority, as a supervisor, a woman, therefore, may be at great risk if she objects to the behaviour or resists the overtures. It is this context which underlies the gravity of the problem of sexual harassment.

Whereas in rape cases, the man overpowers a woman with a weapon or threat of loss of life, in sexual harassment he overtly or implicitly threatens her with loss of economic livelihood. A woman cannot freely choose to say yes or no to such sexual advances. The fear of reprisal looms formidably for many women when deciding how to react to sexual harassment. To refuse sexual demands may mean jeopardizing her future or her career. In the case of working women, the decision to simply quit a job is a luxury she may not be able to afford.

Like rape, sexual harassment has been a hidden problem, treated as a joke, or blamed on the victim herself. Because of a long history of silence on the subject, many women feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or ashamed when they talk about personal incidents of harassment. They are afraid it will reflect badly on their character, or that they will be seen as somehow inviting the propositions.

APPENDIX I - POLICY STATEMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Cont'd)

When women do speak out they are often ignored, discredited or accused of "misunderstanding" their superior's intentions. Many women attribute their silence to practical considerations. The most common reasons given for not reporting the incidents are that they believe nothing will be done, that it will be treated lightly or ridiculed, or that they will be blamed or suffer repercussions. Unfortunately, these fears are justified. A study conducted on this subject in 1975 showed that in 50 per cent of the cases where complaints were registered no action was taken. In one-third of those cases where the complaints were filed, negative repercussions resulted.

Many of these women are organized and we have a responsibility to protect them from this very real threat to their livelihood. Unfortunately, in many instances they do not believe that anything can be done or that the union would be willing to protect them. The labour movement must clearly demonstrate that it is not prepared to allow any of its members to be intimidated or coerced. To this end the Women's Committee makes the following recommendations:

Internally:

- affiliates should adopt policies opposing sexual harassment;
- stewards and officers should be trained to deal with this type of problem in an effective manner; and
- the membership must be advised that the union is opposed to sexual harassment and that union officers and stewards are trained to handle the problem.

Externally:

- negotiate language in collective agreements to provide protection against sexual harassment;
- develop a separate grievance procedure if necessary for these complaints to ensure protection for the members;
- insist that the employer issue a statement prohibiting sexual harassment on the job and post this on bulletin boards; and
- issue a pamphlet advising women of their rights and warning male supervisors of the repercussions of incidents of this nature.

Sexual harassment is not a joke. It's an issue that will not go away. The labour movement must recognize the seriousness of the problem and effectively represent our members who are its victims.

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON THE
JOB

The B.C. Federation of Labour's Women's Committee and the Women's Research Centre are sponsoring a project concerned with sexual harassment on the job. This seems to happen to a lot of women, either from supervisors, co-workers or customers that they may have to deal with. A woman in a union in Alberta, when she questioned women in her local, found out that they had been waiting to talk about sexual harassment for a long time. A recent case in Campbell River resulted in a wildcat strike as union men supported their sisters who were being sexually harassed by a foreman. We want to learn about the extent of this problem and to consider ways of dealing with it. We are asking your co-operation with this questionnaire which is directed at finding these things out.

1. Which of the following would you see as being sexual harassment? We are beginning by giving you some examples of harassment on the job to see if this is how you would see the problem. Circle one or more:
 - A. The men where you work stare at you and put nudes and suggestive pictures where you can see them. yes/no
 - B. Men at work make derogatory or demeaning remarks about women. yes/no
 - C. A man or men at the workplace make sexual remarks to you and other women and/or tell you sexist jokes. yes/no
 - D. Men or a man) at work seem to find excuses for touching (hugging or pinching) you and other women. yes/no
 - E. A supervisor (or customer) of the company hints that if you go out with him he'll see that your work situation improves. yes/no
 - F. A supervisor (or customer) says that if you do not sleep with him you will lose your job or benefits. yes/no
 - G. Can you think of any other examples which we have not included? Please give them in the space provided below: yes/no

APPENDIX II - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT
ON THE JOB (Cont'd)

H. Any other comments you would like to make in relation to this question?

2. Of these examples, which if any have happened to you? Circle the letters below as appropriate (the letters refer to the examples just given).

A B C D E F G

3. What we want to learn about are the actual experiences of sexual harassment on the job; what happens, how it happens, and between whom. Think of the examples you have just read and then again of your own work-life. Would you describe any experiences or incidents of this kind that have happened to you, and/or women who you have worked with. These can be recent or earlier experiences. Write the account in your own words telling us what happened, how it happened, when it happened, and how you felt. You don't have to identify those involved or the work situation specifically if you feel uncomfortable doing so.

4. Many women who report suffering incidents of this kind also report their sense of isolation and feeling of personal failure. If something like this has happened to you, would you answer the following questions in your own words:

A. How did you feel? (If you have included this in your account already just note that by checking here _____).

B. Did you tell anyone? If not, why not, and if so, what was the response?

C. What kind of help or understanding did you receive at home/or work, or from your union?

D. What happened to you as a result of the incident?

APPENDIX II - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT
ON THE JOB (Cont'd)

5. In seeking to improve working conditions for women, we want you to think about what could be done in this area. Which of the following do you think should be done? Check one or more and give your reasons if you wish in the space below.
- A. More discussion of the problem among women workers, for example, workshops to talk about the problem at the local or labour council level, etc. _____
 - B. Assertiveness/self defense training at the place of work. _____
 - C. Legislation. _____
 - D. Union Committee should be struck. _____
 - E. There should be a clause in the contract. _____
 - F. There should be education for men. _____
 - G. More public education on the subject. _____
 - H. Any other suggestions you would like to make, please write them below:
6. If you have any comments relating to the questionnaire and the questions we have asked, please make them below. Can you think of other ways of asking for this information or of discussing the problem?
7. This information will not be used for individual identification.

AGE:
MARITAL STATUS:
OCCUPATION:
UNION:
DATE:
PLACE OF DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

APPENDIX II - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT
ON THE JOB (Cont'd)

8. Would you be willing to be personally interviewed by one of the project workers? yes/no
9. If yes, give your name and address:
10. Thank you very much for your co-operation with this questionnaire. We appreciate your help and will let you know when our report is ready. Please return the questionnaire to the address below:

Astrid Davidson,
Director of Women's Programs,
B.C. Federation of Labour,
3110 Boundary Road,
BURNABY, B.C.
V5M 4A2

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