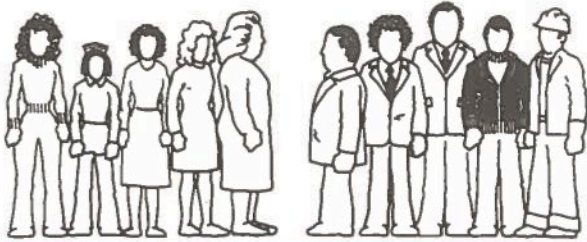


Sexual Harassment at Work



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OTHER BOOKLETS IN THIS SERIES:

Your Job at Convention

Sexual Harassment at Work was researched and written by Susan Attenborough.

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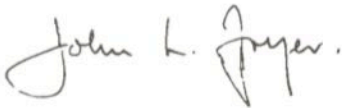
Preface

Unions are committed to improving the social and economic well-being of their members. Sexual harassment on the job threatens that well-being.

It is important to understand and attack the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. The elimination of sexual harassment will bring us one step closer to the goal of equal opportunities for working men and women in all aspects of social and economic life.

This booklet is designed to present a union perspective on practical solutions to the problem of sexual harassment. It is meant to provoke thought, discussion and action.

In solidarity,



**John L. Fryer,
President,
National Union of Provincial
Government Employees.**

Sexual Harassment: What Is It?

Sexual harassment is any sexual advance that threatens a worker's job or well-being. It is usually an expression of power made by someone in authority.

Most victims of sexual harassment are women, primarily because most people in powerful or authoritative positions in our society are men. They are able to use their authority to take sexual advantage of their female employees.

Sexual harassment can be expressed in a number of ways:

- Unnecessary touching or patting
- Suggestive remarks or other verbal abuse
- Leering at a person's body
- Demands for sexual favours
- Compromising invitations
- Physical assault

All of these may or may not be accompanied by direct or implied threats to the victim's job or career.

Sexual harassment means being treated as a sex object rather than a worker. It means being judged on physical attributes rather than skills and qualifications when seeking a job, a promotion, a raise or training.

Sexual harassment should not be confused with workplace flirtation, which is generally based on mutual consent and attraction. Sexual harassment is coercive — it may be accompanied by threats, promises or abuse. Sexual harassers bring sex into the workplace to use it as a tool of control or abuse.



PHOTO: B.C. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES UNION

Women who work in non-traditional, male-dominated occupations are often victims of sexual harassment.

The Effects of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is *not* harmless and it is *not* fun. It can have serious effects on the victim's working and personal life.

HEALTH

Victims of sexual harassment suffer tension, anger, fear and frustration. These psychological effects often manifest themselves in such physical ailments as headaches, ulcers, and other nervous disorders. In some cases these ailments are so serious they may require medical treatment and even hospitalization.

JOB PERFORMANCE

The psychological and physical effects of sexual harassment may have a negative effect on job performance. The victim's work can suffer to such an extent that the employer may begin to question her abilities. The employer may even fire the victim without seeking the real cause of her deteriorating performance.

Women who work in non-traditional, male-dominated occupations are often victims of sexual harassment. Fellow workers may use sexual harassment as an intimidation tactic to discourage women from applying for, and working in, traditionally male bastions. When women quit, the reaction is often "I told you so"!

However, it is frequently not the job the women can't handle, but rather the constant pressure that goes with being the only female in a male-dominated workplace.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Most incidents of sexual harassment occur between an employee and a supervisor. If the victim reports the incident, or refuses to comply, the harasser often has the power to affect her working conditions, training and promotion opportunities, and job security. Even after firing her, the harasser may jeopardize the victim's future job opportunities by giving her bad references.

A worker who quits because of sexual harassment may have difficulty convincing the Unemployment Insurance Commission officers that sexual harassment is "just cause" for leaving a job.

The conditions that contribute to women's vulnerability in the labour force — high unemployment and restricted employment opportunities — make quitting a job to avoid sexual harassment (or risking dismissal for reporting it), a step most women cannot afford to take.

The problem of sexual harassment does not end when a woman is fired or quits her job. Harassers are often repeaters. The next woman hired to fill the victim's position may soon become a victim herself, as may other women in the same workplace.

Why Does Sexual Harassment Persist?

TRADITIONAL SEX ROLES

Historically, males have been sexual aggressors in our society, while passivity has been the female's role. From an early age, women learned that their sexual and reproductive capabilities were to be exchanged for economic security in the marriage market place.

To a certain extent, these values still exist. When they are transferred to the work environment, inappropriate behaviour often results. For example, women may try to use their sexuality to get jobs or promotions from their boss, and men may see their role as economic provider and expect sexual favours from their female employees. Attitudes created by traditional sex roles contribute to the persistence of sexual harassment.

WOMEN'S POSITION IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men in the labour force:

Women are not yet recognized as being "bread winners."

- Yet 40 percent of women in the Canadian labour force are single, divorced or widowed, and are therefore self-supporting or sole supporters of a family.

Women work in job "ghettos," where wages and status are low.

- In 1976, 63 percent of women workers were concentrated in three occupations — clerical, sales and service.¹



Forty percent of women in the Canadian labour force are single, divorced or widowed, and are therefore self-supporting or sole supporters of a family.

- In 1977, women earned only 57 percent of what men earned, and this gap is widening.²

Women suffer higher unemployment rates.

- In 1979, the unemployment rate for men was 6.6 percent; for women it was 8.8 percent.³
- The existence of job "ghettos" limits job opportunities available to women seeking employment.

High unemployment rates, a widening wage gap, and limited labour force opportunities combine to keep women in a vulnerable position in the labour force. Sexual harassment persists because of this vulnerability. Sexual harassment will only be reduced or eliminated when the conditions which ensure its perpetuation —

traditional sex roles and women's second class status in the labour force — are changed. Traditional sex roles must be expanded to allow women the option of full participation in all aspects of social and economic life. Women must demand to exchange their labour for compensation without bartering their sexuality. Women must achieve equal opportunities and full participation in the labour force.

Women must not isolate themselves in fighting for these demands. The problems identified here — high unemployment, limited labour force opportunities, and restrictions on the right to exchange labour for compensation — affect all workers. These are problems for all trade unionists regardless of sex, and we must use our united strength to solve them.

PHOTO: SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION



Sexual Harassment: the Solutions

Ignoring sexual harassment doesn't work. An American study found that for three-quarters of the cases that tried to ignore sexual harassment, the harassment continued or became worse.⁴

Concrete solutions are necessary to combat the problem.

What Can I, as a Union Member, Do?

SUPPORT THE VICTIM

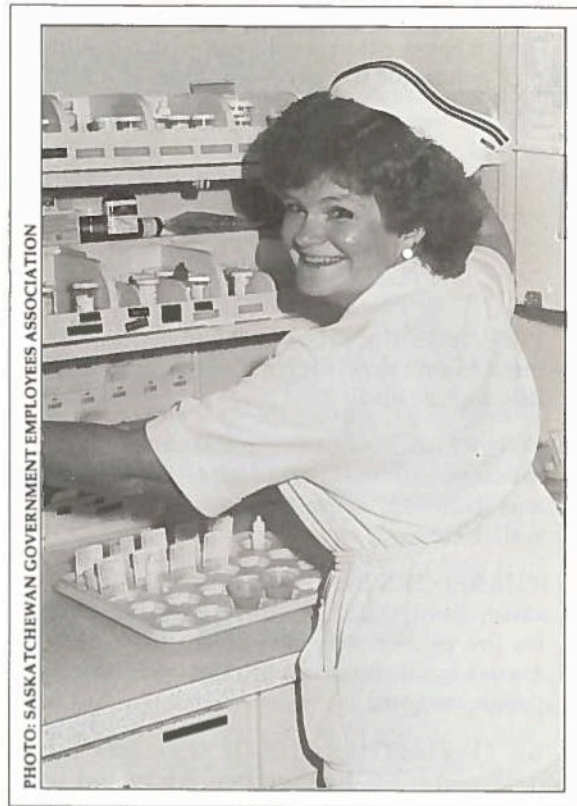
If you see a co-worker being harassed, approach her and offer some support. Let her know that you sympathize with the problem. Just talking about it can help. Management and co-workers may interpret your silence to mean you condone the harasser's actions. Too often, the victims of sexual harassment are ostracized by fellow workers who blame the victim. Don't fall into that trap. Remember that sexual harassment is a *social* problem. Tell the victim that solutions are available and refer her to the union steward.

DISCUSS AT MEETINGS

Raise the issue at local union meetings. If you find there is concern, organize those concerned and use your union structure to raise the issue at a policy-making level.

APPROACH UNION OFFICERS

Tell your elected officers you are concerned about sexual harassment and want your union to do something. Those officers are elected by you to be responsive to your problems and concerns. They want to know what the issues are so they can do their job better. If they don't respond, find another route but remember their attitude at election time!



EQUAL RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Most unions have established women's/equal rights/human rights committees to deal with issues such as sexual harassment. They should be able to make recommendations to the union executive on what action the union can take to solve this problem.

AT NEGOTIATIONS TIME

Suggest and seek support for a protective clause against sexual harassment in your collective agreement. In most unions, recommendations for bargaining must come from the local level. If you are not sure how to get an item to the table, consult your steward or staff representative. Don't worry about the precise wording of the clause — union staff will be able to help.

AT CONVENTION TIME

Draft a convention resolution which outlines a plan of action for the problem. Here is a sample resolution.

SAMPLE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the problem of sexual harassment is one that affects many members of this union; and

WHEREAS sexual harassment can threaten our members' jobs, promotions and training opportunities, health and well-being;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this union undertake to educate its members on the problem by including the topic of sexual harassment on all steward training programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this union educate the members by including an article on sexual harassment in the union newsletter within the next six months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a protective clause on sexual harassment be identified as a priority for the next round of bargaining with the employer.

This resolution should be adapted to suit your union's needs and structure. You may also want to deal with each motion separately if you think that one part may lead to the defeat of the entire resolution.

Remember, your job doesn't stop when the resolution goes to convention. Try to seek support for your resolution among your fellow delegates. Select some supporters to speak to the motion on the convention floor. When the resolution is passed, make sure action is taken.



PHOTO: PHOTO FEATURES LTD., OTTAWA

Union members should support resolutions at convention that outline plans of action against sexual harassment.

What if I'm the Victim?

DON'T IGNORE IT!

Sexual harassment does not go away if it is ignored. Too often your attitude may be interpreted as compliance. Seek help. Your union steward should be your first step.

APPROACH YOUR STEWARD

Your steward can help you. S/he can act as a mediator and approach the harasser on your behalf. The steward can assess if the action is grievable and can initiate the grievance process.

KEEP A RECORD

Maintain a record of each incident of harassment — where, what time, what was said or done. This can be used in confronting the harasser and/or building a case for a grievance.

APPROACH OTHERS

Harassers are often repeaters. Mention the problem to other people you work with — they may also have been harassed. Try to contact previous employees and ask them why they left their jobs. If, for example, three secretaries quit because of harassment over a six-month period, a pattern of abuse by the harasser can be established. Because of the expense of the recruiting process, it is in management's interest to discipline the harasser.

SAFETY IN NUMBERS

If a number of women in your work place are victims of harassment, seek the co-operation of your steward in organizing them to seek a solution. Confronting the harasser or lodging a grievance is much less threatening in a group than as an individual, and the more evidence you have the stronger the case for disciplinary action will be.

ARM YOURSELF

Make a record of your work — compliments, accomplishments — in case of reprisals. Harassers often use the excuse of poor work for firing an employee who will not comply with their sexual demands.

DON'T FEEL GUILTY

Sexual harassment is an expression of power. Studies have shown that it is usually practiced with little regard for age, appearance or marital status. Harassers may accuse you of enticing dress or actions in order to justify their aggressive behaviour. But remember: in sexual harassment cases it is the harasser who is wrong, not the victim.

What's My Role as Steward?

LISTEN

When a worker comes to you with a complaint of sexual harassment, the first step is to listen to the complaint. Remember that it is often difficult for a victim to report the incident.

REASSURE THE VICTIM

Victims fear they will be blamed, publicly shamed or threatened with reprisals. Let the victim know that you are concerned, and that the union wants to help solve this kind of problem.

BUILD A CASE

If you think the incident is grievable, begin to build a case. Encourage the victim to make a record, including time, place and details of the incidents.

Try to get witnesses. This may be difficult because most harassment occurs in private.

Inquire discreetly to see if there are other victims at the workplace.

MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY

Remember, the victim may still have guilt feelings, however unjustified.

If the harasser feels threatened by accusations of sexual harassment, he may consider suing for libel.

Also remember that the harasser may not be aware his actions are offensive. Part of your job

will be to show him that his actions are threatening and destructive.

GRIEVANCE SETTLEMENT

The tendency may be for management to solve the problem by transferring the victim. Depending on the victim's wishes, you should insist that if anyone is to be moved, it should be the harasser, *not* the victim. If the victim requests a transfer, you should demand that the job be of equal status and pay.

It should be emphasized that transferring the harasser may only create an harassment situation in another workplace. Other forms of discipline should be examined (e.g. threats of firing if he sexually harasses again).

TRAINING

Take advantage of training courses offered by your union. Training in dealing with sexual harassment cases will help you be more effective in presenting grievances, building a case, etc.

EDUCATION

Part of your role as union steward is to educate the members. Introduce the topic at coffee break, for example. Distribute any educational pamphlets or materials supplied by the union. A solution to sexual harassment in the workplace begins with an understanding of the problem.

PHOTO: NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA



SAMPLE POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The National Union of Provincial Government Employees is actively concerned about the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace.

We define sexual harassment as any sexual advance that threatens a person's job or well-being.

The Union recognizes that most victims of sexual harassment are women. We realize that high unemployment, a widening wage gap and limited job opportunities combine to place women in a vulnerable position in the labour force. It is this vulnerability that ensures the perpetuation of sexual harassment in the workplace.

We support the contention that women's position in the labour force must be upgraded before the problem of sexual harassment will be eliminated. The National Union is committed to ensuring women equal status in the work force.

Surveys have shown that a high number of women in the labour force have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their working lives. Recognizing that sexual harassment is a prevalent problem affecting many of our members in the workplace, we adopt the following program initiatives:

1. The National Union will continue to be involved in research and education on the issue of sexual harassment.
 - (a) In co-operation with the components, the Union will develop a protective clause against sexual harassment that may be included in collective agreements.
 - (b) The Union will develop a training module for stewards in dealing with sexual harassment cases. The module will be available for inclusion in component steward schools and NUPGE Labour Schools.
 - (c) The Union will provide co-ordinative services to assist the components in establishing a means to monitor sexual harassment cases in the membership.
 - (d) The Union will continue to supply research information on sexual harassment to the components for use in educating the membership on this issue.
2. The National Union, in co-operation with the components, the CLC and federations of labour, will lobby federal and provincial governments to have legislation enacted to deal specifically with the problem of sexual harassment.

What Can the Union Do?

Sexual harassment is a problem that affects the health and well-being of many union members. It is a subtle and divisive form of discrimination that persists throughout the workforce. Surveys have indicated that up to 80 percent of women workers have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their working lives.

For these reasons, unions should be taking up the fight against sexual harassment and taking active steps to control it.

Unions are committed to the long-term goals of ensuring better working conditions and ending discrimination in the workforce. The realization of these long-term goals will contribute to the solution of the problem of sexual harassment. Meanwhile, there are *short-term* solutions that unions can use.

POLICY

The union should develop a policy on sexual harassment that defines the problem and outlines program objectives to deal with it. An example of a policy statement is on page 16 (opposite).

EDUCATE MEMBERS

Accurate, up-to-date information will help to dispel the myths surrounding the topic of sexual harassment, and will encourage union members to use their union to solve the problem.

Unions should:

- Develop and distribute educational material to inform members of the nature and



Up to 80 percent (four out of five) of women workers have experienced sexual harassment at some time in their working lives.

prevalence of the problem, and what to do if they become victims of sexual harassment.

- Include articles on sexual harassment in the newsletter.
- Encourage discussion of the topic at local and executive meetings.
- Sponsor seminars.
- Include the topic of sexual harassment at women's conferences.

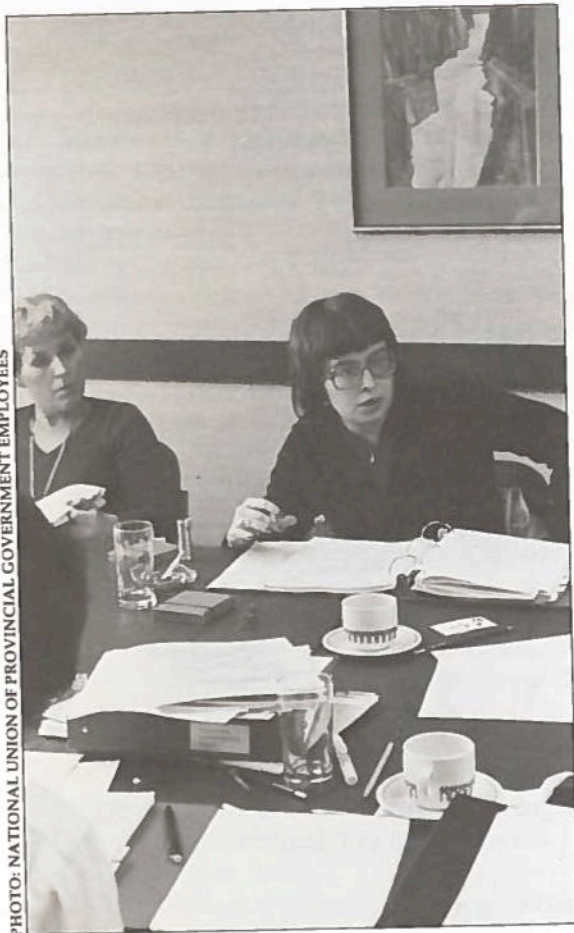


PHOTO: NATIONAL UNION OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

During negotiations, union members should ensure that the contract provides adequate protection against sexual harassment.

NEGOTIATE PROTECTION

Most collective agreements now contain an anti-discrimination clause. There is some discussion as to whether this type of clause is effective protection against sexual harassment. In some cases arbitrators may not consider sexual harassment as discrimination and may disallow the grievance on this basis. There are two approaches to this problem:

- (1) Have an anti-discrimination clause that specifies: "sexual harassment shall be considered discrimination under this article."
- (2) Include a separate clause on sexual harassment in addition to the anti-discrimination clause.

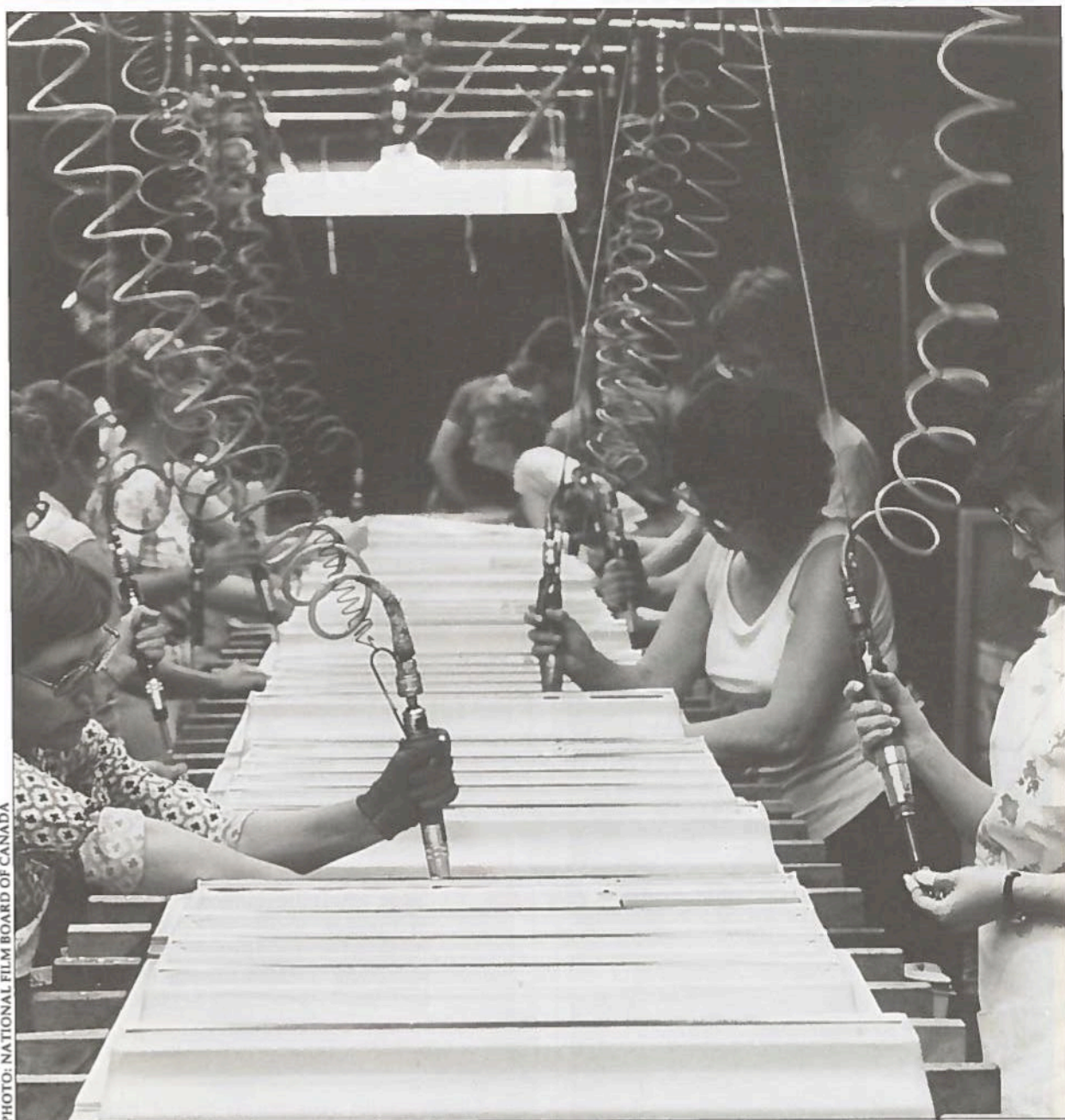
Prevalence of the problem would seem justification enough for a separate clause. Here is a sample clause.

SAMPLE CLAUSE

The Union and the Employer recognize the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace and are committed to ending it. Sexual harassment shall be defined as: (1) unnecessary touching or patting; (2) suggestive remarks or other verbal abuse; (3) leering at a person's body; (4) compromising invitations; (5) demands for sexual favours; (6) physical assault. Grievances under this clause will be handled with all possible confidentiality. In settling the grievance, every effort will be made to discipline and relocate the harasser, not the victim.

Once the contract covers sexual harassment, unions should initiate grievances and make them a priority.

PHOTO: NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA



It is management's responsibility to establish and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for its employees.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Most incidents of sexual harassment involve an employee and a supervisor. Once protection against sexual harassment is negotiated into the collective agreement, grievances should be initiated using the existing grievance procedure.

Unions may want to negotiate special grievance provisions to handle the unique circumstances of sexual harassment cases. A provision should be included which will insure the utmost confidentiality and promptness in dealing with these cases. The grievance should begin at an advanced level of the procedure, preferably the level where the management representative is outside the immediate workplace.



PHOTO: B.C. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES UNION

Here is an example of a special grievance procedure clause.

SPECIAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE⁵

- 1.1 An Employee who wishes to pursue a concern arising from sexual harassment may, with the approval of the Union, submit a grievance in writing directly to the Deputy Minister. Grievances of this nature shall be treated in strict confidence by both the Union and the Employer.
- 1.2 The Deputy Minister, a representative of the Union and a Chairperson selected and agreed to by both these representatives, shall investigate the grievance and shall issue a response in writing, within twenty (20) working days, of having received the grievance. This time limit may be extended by mutual agreement by the parties, provided such agreement is in writing.
- 1.3 The parties agree the recommendations of those investigating the grievance shall be implemented. If there is any dispute as to the implementation of these recommendations, the whole issue shall be submitted to the Public Service Grievance Board. Hearings on this issue shall be closed to observers. Witnesses shall be present only while giving evidence. The spokesperson for each of the parties may be assisted by one other person.

Ideally, with education, sexual harassment between fellow union members should be eliminated. Until that happens, we have to deal with the realities of co-worker sexual harassment.

Where the union has input into choosing the arbitrator, consideration should be given to the arbitrator's record regarding impartiality.

A study by the Ontario Human Rights Commission⁶ reported that between 15 and 30 percent of its reported sexual harassment caseload involved harassment by co-workers, or fellow employees. This problem may be amplified in some public sector unions where the bargaining unit often includes several levels of supervisory personnel.

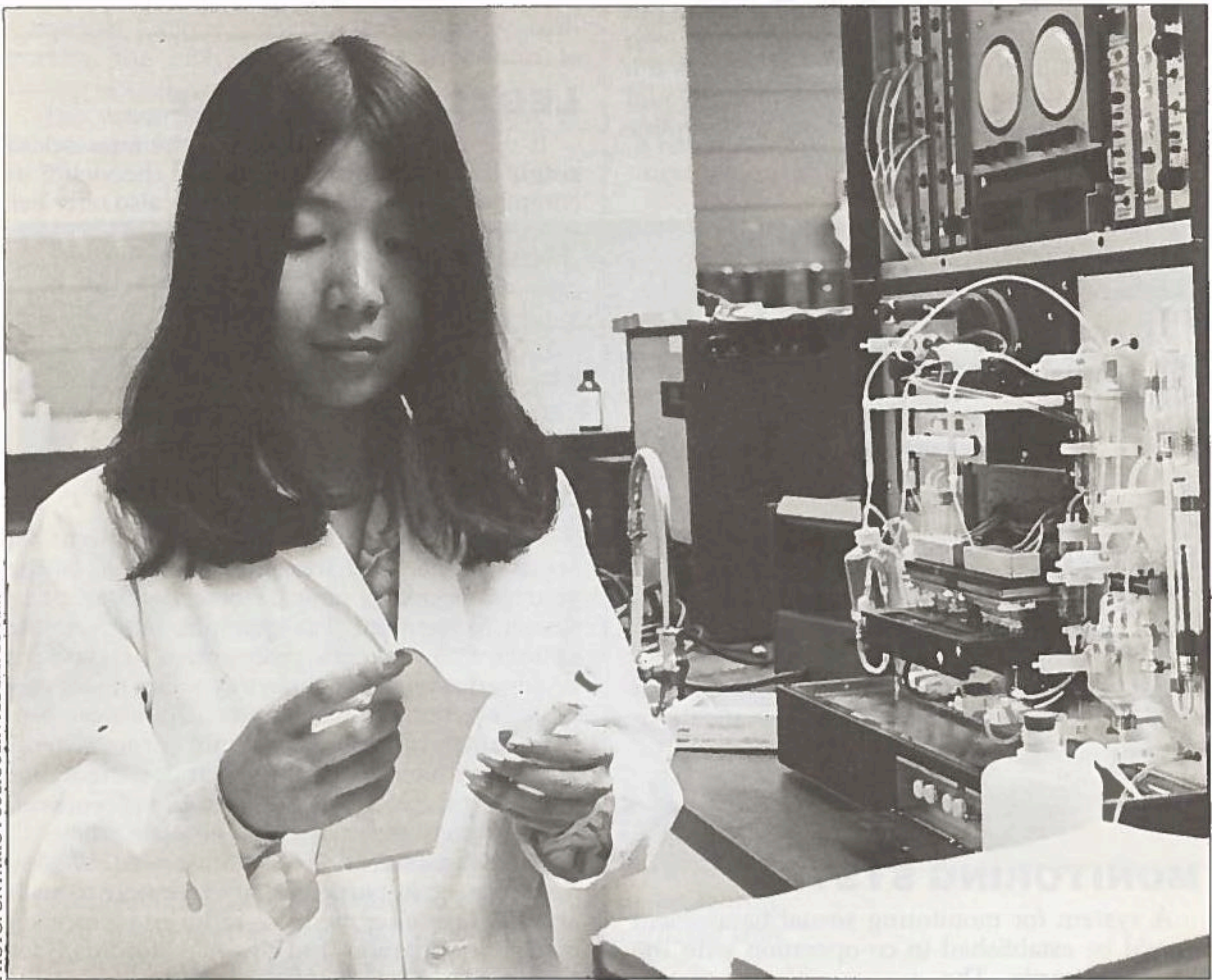
The problem of dealing with co-worker harassment is a difficult one. Most existing

grievance procedures are structured to solve union vs. management grievances. When union members grieve each other's actions, both parties are rightfully entitled to representation by their union.

Two approaches are suggested to solve co-worker harassment. They both have their advantages and disadvantages.

1. **Management Responsibility.** It is management's responsibility to establish and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for its employees. By

PHOTO: ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION



allowing sexual harassment in the workplace, management is jeopardizing the health and well-being of its employees. The union may initiate a grievance on behalf of a sexually harassed member, claiming that management is neglecting its responsibility. However, if the employer takes disciplinary action against the harasser, the union may find itself in the incongruous position of defending the harasser in a grievance against the disciplinary action.

- 2. Internal Union Action.** Most union constitutions contain a clause which specifies that union members shall respect each other's rights. The union can take the position that a member who sexually harasses another member is not upholding that clause. The union would then have the responsibility to discipline within the union structure.

COUNSELLING

The union may consider having a counselling program established. Many harassers are repeaters and a counselling program may be one way to deal with "chronic repeaters."

TRAINING

Union stewards should be trained in how to deal with sexual harassment cases on the job. The topic of sexual harassment should be included in basic union courses and special training sessions should be made available to stewards.

MONITORING SYSTEM

A system for monitoring sexual harassment should be established in co-operation with the union stewards. The purpose of the system

would be to determine the nature and extent of the problem among the membership.

A contact person would be named who would compile statistics on reported cases. This contact would work in conjunction with the steward, logging the nature of incidents and grievance settlements, etc. Also, the contact could act as a resource person for those victims who seek information and advice but who wish to remain anonymous. Statistics compiled by these contacts could be used to justify demands for a protective clause in the agreement, special grievance provisions, etc.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

If the victim decides to take the harasser to court, the union may want to aid the victim in compiling her case. The union may also refer her to a competent lawyer. Depending on the circumstances, the union may wish to fight the case on behalf of the victim and assume the legal fees involved.

SOCIAL CHANGE

Unions, which have often led the fight for social change, may want to attack some of the sources of myths about women workers and sexual harassment. For example, letters to the editors of newspapers, protesting sexist cartoons or advertisements that portray women workers as sex objects, can be effective. Unions can also help launch campaigns to remove from schools any discriminatory literature that stereotypes women and creates distorted images of workers. Unions might also wish to contribute articles to local newspapers on sexual harassment. Weekly newspapers, in particular, are receptive to such articles. The other media — radio and television open-line programs and citizen's "forums," for example — are other good possibilities.

QUESTIONNAIRE

A survey of the membership may be useful in helping the union determine the extent of the problem. This should be done in conjunction with an education campaign, to ensure that people understand what sexual harassment is before they are asked if they are victims. A better understanding of the issue — and the importance the union attaches to it — will ensure a better response rate and give a better picture of the situation.

LEGISLATION

The union should lobby for effective legislation that prohibits sexual harassment. The Canadian Labour Congress has a policy supporting the lobby for separate legislation to outlaw sexual harassment.

The union may want to set up a course in lobbying techniques for its members.

The union should examine the Human Rights

Act in its province to determine if sexual harassment is actually specified. Briefs should be prepared by the union and submitted to the provincial minister responsible.

NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

National and international unions can help develop an awareness of the problem of sexual harassment and encourage the local unions to deal with the problem at their level.

National unions can develop policy statements defining the problem and outlining program objectives. They can co-ordinate information exchanges among their components and assist in the development of training and educational material. They can lobby at the federal level for protective legislation against sexual harassment. National unions should take a leading role in presenting sexual harassment as a national social issue and sensitizing both their membership and the public to the problem.

PHOTO: NATIONAL UNION OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES



National unions should take a leading role in presenting sexual harassment as a national social issue and sensitizing both their membership and the public to the problem.

Solutions Outside the Union Structure

The best way to deal with sexual harassment is through the union. However, there are other solutions that should be presented here to give a complete picture of the options available.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS

Most provincial human rights legislation does not specifically mention sexual harassment. The legislation *does* provide protection against discrimination on the basis of sex, and human rights commissions have been taking cases on that basis.

In May, 1980, an amendment to the Human Rights Act was introduced in the Ontario Legislature to facilitate the ability of that province's Human Rights Commission to settle sexual harassment cases. However, the government took no action and the bill died on the order paper.

Complaints to the human rights commission may be made while you are still employed or after you have left your job. The human rights officer will investigate your complaint by interviewing you, any witnesses, and the harasser. The commission will try to achieve a conciliated settlement which may include any or all of: letters of apology; assurances that the harassment will stop; job reinstatement; financial compensation. In most provinces, the

complainant is legally protected from reprisals during the investigation period.

If the commission is unable to get a satisfactory conciliated settlement, it may take the complaint to a board of inquiry. At this level, an arbitrator hears the case and makes a decision, based on the evidence presented by both sides. The arbitrator has the power to order the employer to reinstate the victim, provide financial compensation, etc. The decisions of these boards of inquiry can establish precedents.

In August, 1980, an Ontario Human Rights Commission board of inquiry established that sexual harassment is illegal under the Ontario Human Rights Act. This decision should enable the Commission to be more effective in dealing with sexual harassment complaints.

Dealing with sexual harassment through the human rights commission has its advantages and disadvantages. The commission may be able to negotiate compensation for the victim to make up for lost wages, benefits, medical bills, etc. However, the time element is a negative factor. Human rights commissions, as victims of government cutbacks, are often understaffed, and have an overwhelming backlog of cases. It may take months before the victim can be reinstated in her job or granted financial compensation. Women, who are economically dependent on their jobs, cannot afford to wait. Unfortunately, for non-unionized workers it is often the only option.

LEGAL CHANNELS

Victims who are threatened, physically assaulted or raped can bring charges under the Canadian Criminal Code. Women who are slandered as a result of non-compliance with a harasser's demand may sue for defamation of character in a civil suit.

The problems with trying to solve sexual harassment through legal channels are many and varied:

- Legal action can only be taken *after* the fact. It can compensate for the act but cannot actually prevent the damage. Legal penalties, however, may act as a deterrent to potential harassers.
- Legal action is very expensive and time-consuming. Most victims do not have the financial resources to fight a sexual harassment case in the courts. The victim may have to take time off work to appear in court — another financial hardship she may not be able to afford.
- Sexual harassment cases, like rape cases, can often be emotionally traumatic. The tendency may be to blame the victim for enticing the harasser's action.
- Even if the legal approach is taken, there is no guarantee that legal precedents will be set.

Conclusions

Sexual harassment is not a new problem for women workers, yet it is only recently that people have started to seek effective solutions.

Legal solutions are expensive and time-consuming and can only come after the damage has been done. They can, however, provide compensation for the victim.

Union solutions are designed, in part, to be preventative solutions. For example, sensitizing members to the issue may encourage them to take lobbying action for adequate legislation; and protective provisions in the collective agreement will force employers to end the harassment or face the consequences of violating the agreement.

The most viable solution is a workplace approach, where management is made aware of the problem, employees are sensitized to the issue (and are aware of their rights under the legislation and their collective agreement), and local stewards are trained to deal with the problem under a collective agreement that protects the members.



PHOTO: PHOTO FEATURES LTD., OTTAWA

FOOTNOTES

¹Women's Bureau, Labour Canada.

²Women's Bureau, Labour Canada.

³Statistics Canada

⁴*Sexual Harassment at the Workplace*, Alliance Against Sexual Coercion, 1977.

⁵Adapted from bargaining proposal of Alberta Union of Provincial Employees.

⁶*Complaints of Sexual Harassment to the Ontario Human Rights Commission*, September, 1979.

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