

THE PATTERN OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT

AT

DEHAVILLAND AIRCRAFT

A BRIEF

Presented to the Commission of In-
quiry on Equality in Employment

by the

International Union, United Auto-
mobile, Aerospace & Agricultural
Implement Workers of America (UAW)

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Greetings:

The UAW represents about 115,000 workers in Canada. About 80,000 of these are concentrated in the auto sector; however, the UAW does represent almost 11,000 aerospace workers in Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. Local 112 (production) and Local 673 (office) represent UAW members at DeHavilland Aircraft.

Our union has been a strong supporter of equal opportunity for women workers having fought for equal pay, non-discriminatory contract language and a unisex seniority list in its shops and offices. We are on the record for supporting equal pay for work of equal value and for affirmative action, without which, in our view, equal opportunity can have no real meaning or no real possibility of happening.

Nothing demonstrated that contention more than the situation of women workers at DeHavilland Aircraft.

The Plant

At one time in its history, during World War Two, employment at DeHavilland was predominantly female. Women built the aircraft that men flew to war and they built them well. Presumably women could do the same today.

That's not reflected in DeHavilland's employment figures. Today, of a workforce of about 1,500 people, fewer than 20 are women. Only three of those women have less than 10 years seniority; eight have more than 27 years. None are employed in mainline assembly of aircraft, but in the more traditionally female areas of cleaning, upholstery, shipping and electrical wiring.

Between 1978 and 1980, the company hired about 500 new employees. Six or seven of those hired were women. Indeed, at least four experienced female bench and structural assemblers laid off from the McDonnell Douglas plant in Malton, applied to DeHavilland during this period. None was called for an interview. In the meantime inexperienced

boys of 17 or 18 years of age were called for interviews--and hired. (The UAW attempted to lodge a human rights case, but the women were fearful of pursuing it and could not be reassured.)

The Office

There are 408 UAW members working in the DeHavilland office; 205 are women.

Only .05% of those women are at a Group 10 salary level or higher (\$563.07), while half of the men are at Group 10 salary level or above.

Fifty-three percent of women are below salary level 4 (\$444.92), and only eleven percent of men. In fact, on average, women in the DeHavilland office earn \$79.65 less a week than men. (Males average \$539.49 and females average \$459.84.) These figures include COLA accumulated since 1981.

The difficulties encountered by women wanting to upgrade to the top technical salary levels are all but insurmountable since some

factory experience is usually required. As we noted above, women are virtually excluded from factory experience. Without factory experience, their academic qualifications must hold up; whereas in the case of many of the men factory experience was a sufficient qualification.

Summary

Hiring at DeHavilland has all the earmarks of overt as well as systemic discrimination against women. The failure to even call the experienced bench and structural assemblers laid off from McDonnell Douglas for an interview while calling inexperienced young men certainly points to overt discrimination. And the requirement of factory experience for higher technical positions in the office is an example of systemic discrimination.

The UAW has approached the company about rectifying these situations and has received some words of reassurance. However, the union would like to see installed formally several measures:

1. A joint union-management affirmative action

committee to review hiring and recruiting practices as well as training, retraining, promotions and upgrading to ensure that women make up their fair share of the work force and salary and wage classification. The committee would work out targets and timetables to achieve this. Top management must lend its full support, including moral and financial aid for such a programme--support services such as childcare, days off for sick children would also come under the purview of this committee.

2. An application of the equal pay for work of equal value principle to DeHavilland workers. Presently an entry-level, Group 1 sweeper in the plant makes \$474.80 a week including COLA while an entry-level Group 1 female clerk in the office makes \$410.00 a week, including COLA: a \$64.80 difference!

3. The legislation of mandatory affirmative action by the federal government (a) to give the affirmative action committee at DeHavilland the force of law and (b) to make sure that aerospace employers in the private sectors do operate under the same conditions.