Equal Partners for Change:

Women and Unions

Women's Bureau
Canadian Labour Congress

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Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

Dealing with Change: The Challenge of Microelectronics

Over the next 20 years, Canadian women will be be joined in the workplace by an unusual colleague. This worker functions without coffee break, vacation or sick leave. The worker does the most tedious and repetitive jobs without complaint, and works faster than other employees at many tasks. This inhuman worker is one of the many new microelectronic office and industrial machines that will profoundly affect the workplace.

The development of a tiny silicon "chip" or microprocessor with the capabilities of a computer has revolutionized machinery. Microprocessors are used in word processors, cash registers, sewing machines, television and stereo sets, medical equipment, etc. The memory function of the computer is added to a machine to produce products such as a robot welder on a factory assembly line or a stock-taking, electronic scanner at the supermarket check-out counter.

This electronic revolution is already changing our lives: cheques and bank statements are processed electronically; an electronic cash register can withdraw funds from your bank account when you write a cheque at the supermarket; an automatic television set assembly line uses 11 people operating machines to assemble 72,000 pieces per hour compared to the manual rate of 300 per hour; a plastic card allows you to withdraw money 24 hours a day without ever seeing a teller.

The results of the introduction of micro-electronics into the workplace can be both beneficial and harmful. It can free workers from tasks that are monotonous and time consuming. It can increase productivity and free the workers for more interesting and challenging tasks. It can take the place of workers when jobs are dangerous to workers' health and safety.

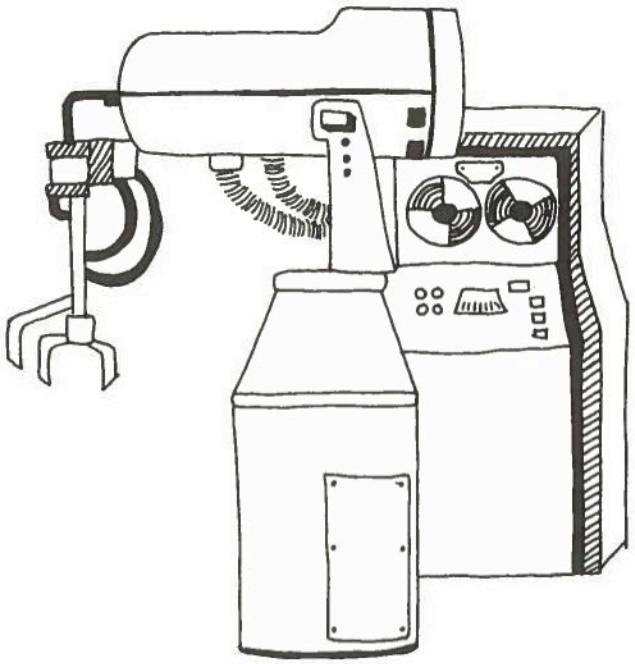
However, the long-term effects of electronic automation are still not known. One consequence may be serious unemployment, particularly among women. Some predictions state that more than half the jobs now carried out by men and women soon will be handled by machines. A German study estimates that 25-30% of office jobs could be automated. It has been predicted that workplace automation could create a pool of one million unemployed female workers by 1990.

Micro-electronic equipment has the ability to process, store and recover large quantities of information very quickly. This means that the most serious effects of the micro-electronic revolution will be felt in those areas that handle information — clerical, sales and services.

These occupational sectors are made up largely of women. Two-thirds of women in the paid labour force are in those three occupational groups, with one-third in the clerical group alone. These occupations have provided employment for women without advanced education or technical skills. They have been the traditional employers of women entering the workforce for the first time and women re-entering as their children grow older. These occupational groups are also largely unorganized. Only 16% of office workers outside the public sector are in unions.

The Office of Tomorrow

Office automation will combine micro-electronic and telecommunication technologies. In the "office of the future," desks and typewriters are replaced by workstations equipped with video display terminals. Letters and memos are composed and edited on computer terminals then "sent" by electronic mail across the



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office or across the country. Floppy plastic disks take the place of files and filing cabinets.

This futuristic office begins by taking the duties performed by office staff and breaking them down into specific tasks that can be programmed. This "assembly-line" treatment of information-handling allows the introduction of word-processing and other computerized equipment.

Word-processing equipment is essential to office automation. It allows the composition, editing, correction, printing and retrieval of written material. Connected to other equipment, it can carry out dozens of office functions. A typist using an electric typewriter spends about 27% of time typing new material and 38% of time correcting and handling the material. Using a word-processor, correction time drops to 10%, allowing 55% of time for typing new material.

Micro-electronic equipment performs many tasks faster and more efficiently than human workers. One large bank reports on the success of its cheque scanning equipment, "We can now do in three steps what it used to take seven steps and 25 or 30 more employees to do."

A fewer number of employees needed to do certain tasks means fewer employees required in the workforce. For example, in the telephone industry, computerization of telephone switchboards required 30-50% fewer workers. All directory assistance operators may be eliminated by the introduction of home video directories. The 11,000 Canadian jobs in this sector could be reduced to 2,500 in a few years.

Microprocessors can reduce employment among both the workers that make the equipment and the workers who use it. A major cash register manufacturer reduced its workforce by almost 50% when it produced an electronic register. At the same time, the stores using the register were able to reduce the number of employees needed to keep inventory and to work as cashiers.

The reduced need for clerical staff will create an increase in part-time rather than full-time work. In banks and supermarkets, two sectors already feeling the effects of technological change, there is a significant amount of part-time work.

The increased unemployment is a result of a growing gap between clerical and professional skills. While technological change decreases the number of clerical jobs, it increases the percentage of professional staff. In one corporation studied, the staff was 78% clerical and 12% professional level before automation, and 46% clerical and 54% professional after. Of the 130 clerical workers displaced by technological change, only two were able to move up to the professional group.

With sufficient notice of technological change and appropriate retraining opportunities, some clericals at least could be moved into professional level jobs, reducing unemployment and the need for outside hiring.

Quality of Working Life

Those employees who stay in the automated office must prepare for a change in the quality of working life.

The use of word-processing and other micro-electronic equipment allows for greater control by management over workers' activity and productivity. On many machines, the time the operator leaves and returns to the terminal is logged. In data processing, the number of keystrokes made by workers are monitored. Cashiers know that their sales volume is being kept by the machines. Some input typists are paid on a piecework basis instead of on an hourly rate. This constant monitoring adds stress to the monotony of these jobs.

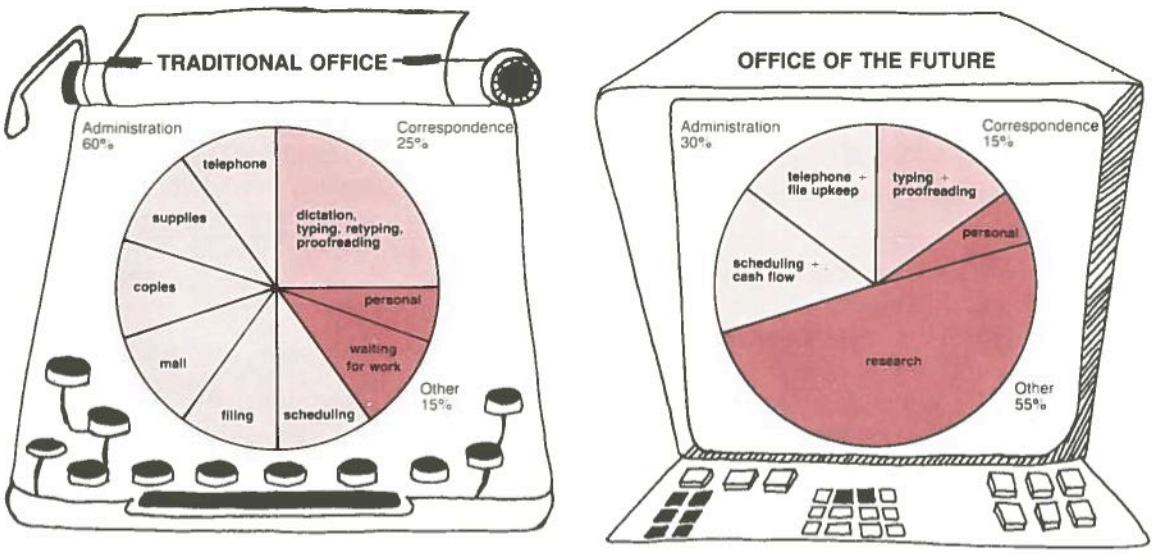
The ability of office technology to function 24 hours a day has created an increase in shift work for clerical workers. In addition to coping with the physical and emotional stress caused by shift work, many employees must also attempt to find a child-care arrangement that will handle evening and night working hours.

The operator of the new equipment often may be physically isolated from other workers at individual workstations formed by panels or sound baffles. The operator frequently must stay with the machine except for coffee or lunch breaks, repeating the same tasks over again. Unable to move around and cut off from social contact, the workers suffer from occupational stress. Stress also results when workers must pace their work to a machine and feel that the machine is monitoring their productivity.

Health and Safety Impact

Work stress can produce problems such as headaches, general tiredness, irritability or sleeplessness. There are other definite VDT health problems. Eyestrain is common, with burning, aching or watering eyes or blurred vision. Muscular complaints are also widespread, including pain in legs, lower and upper back, shoulders, arms or neck.

These health hazards arise from badly designed VDT machines or work situations. Examples include: poor lighting, inadequate ventillation and extra noise; glare from windows, screens, desks or keyboards; seats which give poor support and are difficult to adjust; screens that flicker, or that are hard to read;



Job Content of Secretarial Work Before and After Office Automation (Hypothetical Cases)

lack of regular rest breaks. Radiation from VDT's is still a concern, although tests have not confirmed this hazard. Further research is needed. Meantime, all machines should be checked regularly for radiation emission.

Technological change is already affecting many major industries and businesses. Its impact will be felt on the assembly line and in the office. Heather Menzies, in her study *Women and the Chip*, looked at the effect on an insurance company, a bank and a supermarket.

Menzies predicts that "by 1990 there could be work for only half to two-thirds of the bank tellers, cashiers and other clerical workers currently employed by Canadian industry and government."

Women make up half of the workers in the insurance business, and 60% of those women are in clerical jobs. Over the years that technological change was introduced to the company Menzies studied, "clerial workers' share of total employment declined by 12%. On the other hand, specialist and professional employment increased by 10% during the first nine months of 1979 alone."

In banks, 80% of female bank workers are in clerical jobs. With the introduction of electronic banking, including automatic tellers, personal access cards and electronic funds transfer systems, banks have been able to expand their services without expanding their clerical staff. Traditionally a fast growth area, employment in the finance industry increased by 34% during 1975-79. However, as Menzies reports, the managerial and professional sector grew by 42% while the clerical field grew only by 25%. With the decline in need for tellers, part-time employment has also increased.

An electronic cash register in a supermarket can ring up sales 10-20% faster than a mechanical cash register. With the addition of optical scanners to read prices and inventory numbers, speed and efficiency is even greater. By 1984, 50% of the supermarkets in the United States are expected to use scanners, and Canada is following the American lead. The efficiency of these machines allows stores to increase sales and reduce staff. Menzies reports that hiring rates have levelled off and less overtime is being worked by part-time employees. (60% of cashiers are part-time workers.)

Unemployment, fewer job opportunities, and fewer hours for part-time workers will hurt women employees and the society as a whole. Most women in the labour force are there for economic reasons. They are single women, sole-support parents or part of a low-income, two-earner family. A National Council of Welfare report points out that without a working wife, the number of Canadian families living below the poverty line would increase by 50%.

The incomes of Canadian women are vital to their families and their society. The loss of these incomes could increase the demand on social services and reduce the buying power of the consumer. Ed Finn, of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Transport and General Workers tells a story that illustrates the potential economic impact of technological change:

"Walter Reuther, the late president of the United Auto Workers, once listened patiently to a General Motors official extolling the virtues of an industrial robot.

'Can you think of a single thing one of your members can do that this robot can't', the company man taunted.

'Sure,' Reuther shot back. 'Let's see the robot buy one of your cars!"

"Security Within Change"

In order for Canada to reap the full benefits of technological change without severe economic and social costs, Canadian workers must be guaranteed "security within change." This requires a legislated guarantee of job rights and income, implemented through collective bargaining.

At present, only British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan labour acts, and the Canada Labour Code, have any provisions for technological change. Even these provisions only require an employer to give advance notice and to renegotiate the contractual relationships affected by the change. Saskatchewan and British Columbia give workers the right to strike if agreement is not reached, although that right is qualified in British Columbia. The existing labour legislation does not establish which aspects of technological change are to be negotiated, and does not outline the steps required to assist workers displaced by the changes.

The absence of protective legislation has placed an additional burden on the collective bargaining process. However, few unions have yet won protection against technological change and its impact. Because technological change is usually a continuous process, it is difficult to adequately protect workers without very precise contract language. A 1978 Labour Canada survey of collective agreements covering 500 or more workers showed how little protection even unionized employees have against the impact of the new technology. In the event of technological change, 91% of contracts did not require notice of lay-offs, 99.9% did not have a re-opener clause, 97% did not provide a relocation allowance, 81% did not have wage or employment guarantees, and 77% did not provide training or retraining.

Collective bargaining alone cannot blunt the impact of technological change. A joint effort by unions, government and industry is required, with serious commitment to sharing the benefits of micro-electronic technology.

As a first step, there must be comprehensive federal and provincial legislation to guarantee much more protection for workers faced by technological change. This legislation must cover such areas as adequate notice of technological change, job security, guarantees of pension rights, lay-off protection, severance pay, retraining and relocation, and control over organization of work. Removal of legislative barriers to unionization must also be a priority.

With adequate legislation, supported by collective agreements, workers would be consulted well in advance on matters relating to technological change. After consultation, employees would be able to take retraining courses to give them the new skills required for the new technology. Workers would have input into decision-making about the rate of introduction of change and the quality of the work environment. For those workers unable or unwilling to take retraining and relocation, there would be income security through such things as pension benefits and severance pay.

As legislative barriers to unionization are removed, trade unions must make a major effort to organize white collar and service employees, particularly in those industries most threatened by office automation. Collective agreements must also be strengthened on issues relating to technological change to give more protection to vulnerable workers.

Because women are most vulnerable to job loss through technological change, there must be a major education program to encourage females in the work force, particularly in the clerical field, to seek immediate retraining. Young women should be encouraged to develop the scientific and technical skills necessary for the new technology, so that they can move into the professional level positions created by technological change. Industry must be required to provide specific and adequate retraining and apprenticeship programs in anticipation of technological change.

There must be government commitment to full employment, supported by policies and planning so that all members of society can share in the benefits of the technological revolution.

The effects of the micro-electronic advances of recent years will be felt by everyone. Whether these effects are good or bad will depend on the planning and preparation that is done today.

For Discussion:

1. How could micro-electronics affect your work place? What jobs now done by human workers could be done by computers or other machines? How would automation hurt or help individual workers? If technological change has already been introduced in your workplace, how has it affected employment, quality of life, health and safety, job advancement, etc.?

2. Does your collective agreement provide any protection against technological change? What changes do you need in your contract to guarantee "security within change" in your workplace? Which workers would be most helped and harmed by technological change?

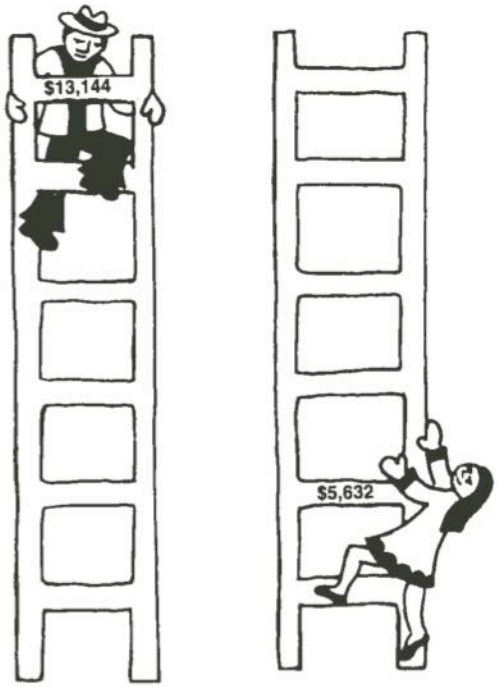
Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

Bread and Roses

The old union song of women textile workers demanded "bread and roses, bread and roses." As Canada heads into the eighties, Canadian women are still asking for their bread and roses — equal pay and equal opportunity.

Almost 30 years after the International Labour Organization of the United Nations passed Convention 100 calling for equal pay for work of equal value, women in Canada are still not adequately paid for their work.

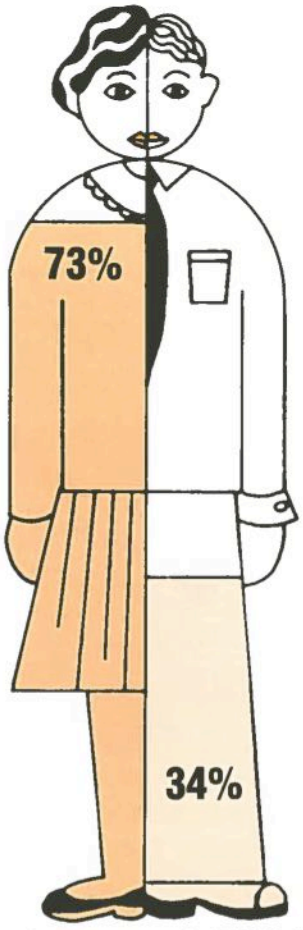
Full time female workers earn less than 60% of full-time male workers, and the gap appears to be widening.



Average Income from Wages and Salaries for 25-34 years old, 1978

In 1971, women working a full year earned about $3,800 less than men working the same full year. By 1978, the gap had grown to about $7,200 between men and women. Almost two-thirds of women employees earn less than $12,000; less than one-third of men earn under that amount.

Wage differences exist in all occupations. Whatever your age or education, if you are female, you are likely to be paid less than a male. Men 25-34 years old earned an average of $13,114 in 1978 while women of the same age earn $5,632. Men with high school diplomas earned an average of $15,831 while women with the same education average only $8,472.



Income of wage-earner under $12,000, 1978

Many women work in "job ghettos," occupations almost exclusively made up of women. These jobs have always paid less than men's jobs, but even here men working in "female" occupations earn more than women. In clerical jobs, usually done by women, the average male earnings were $13,233 while the average female salary was $8,741.

Because many women have taken time out of their working lives to bear and raise a family, women's paid work has not been taken seriously by society. These attitudes have helped to justify the unequal wages of men and women.

Equal Pay

In 1951, Ontario became the first province to introduce equal pay laws. Now all provinces and the federal

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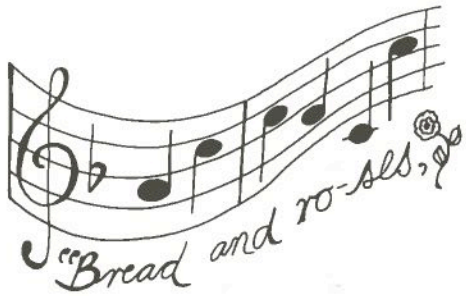
government have legislation to encourage equal pay for equal work. However, most of the legislation covers only equal pay for work that is identical or substantially the same.

In 1977, the federal Human Rights Act introduced the concept of equal pay for work of equal value for the federal labour jurisdiction. Only the province of Quebec now interprets their equal pay legislation in a similar way. Equal pay for work of equal value means that predominantly female jobs can be compared with predominantly male jobs in terms of skill, responsibility, effort and working conditions. For example, a woman's secretarial job could be evaluated against a man's work as a machine operator and found to be of equal value to the organization.



Similarly, a group of librarians employed by the federal government attempted recently to get equal pay for work of equal value. The librarian group is made up mostly of women who earn about $3,000 less than federally-employed Historical Researchers, most of whom are men. The LS groups usually had to have a higher university degree and claimed their work was of equal value. Although the LS group won a no-discrimination clause through collective bargaining, they did not win equal pay. With union support, they have taken their case to the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

In an attempt to bring about the enforcement of equal pay for work of equal value, unions are pushing for and including no-discrimination clauses in their agreements so they can process grievances at the workplace.

With strong legislation, these different but equal jobs would then get the same rate of pay. All factors that make up income such as wages, fringe benefits, commissions or wage scales must be equal.

If widely implemented and enforced, the concept of equal pay for work of equal value would bring profound changes to the workplace. Revised pay scales and job evaluation systems used to determine the value of work could be used to open doors of many occupations now closed to women. Women would at last be paid the wages their work deserves. However, the way in which this concept is interpreted and implemented will determine how successful it will be as a means of achieving equality in the workplace.

Although the Human Rights Act establishes a base for federal workers, and some progress has been made in Quebec, most women employees are not able to receive equal pay for work of equal value because no legislation guarantees them that right. Through their union however, it is possible for them to bargain for the right which should be ensured by provincial law. Unions will be insisting on equal pay for work of equal value clauses in their next contracts.

The value of the work is determined by weighing the composite of four factors — skill, responsibility, effort and the conditions under which the work is done.

Skill means the intellectual and physical abilities needed to do the job. Skills may be acquired through education, training, experience or natural ability.

Effort means the physical or intellectual exertion demanded by the job. Different jobs may require similar effort although one may be mental effort and one physical effort.

Responsibility means the extent to which the employer relies on the employee to do a job, and the extent to which the worker is accountable for human or financial resources of the organization.

Working conditions such as heat, cold, noise and stress may also be used to help to determine the value of a job.

Under the existing federal legislation, the employer is responsible for determining the value of work as long as the legislation is obeyed. The employer may, but does not have to, ask for assistance from the union. Federal law should require the same kind of 50/50 union-management committee structure as is developing in the health and safety field.

It is clear that unions must continue to be involved in determining value of jobs if they are going to be able to put the concept of equal pay for work of equal value into their contracts.

Few collective agreements provide a means for re-evaluating the wage rates of present jobs, therefore the problem must be dealt with during collective bargaining.

Unions who bargain without a joint job evaluation formula may find it more difficult to determine the value of different jobs, particularly where the work is not similar in nature. However, they have been able to adjust inequities, particularly as pressure from the membership supports changes in the pay rates.

In workplaces that use a job evaluation system, the evaluation may be carried out in different ways:

1) the employer sets the categories for rates of pay without any criteria,
2) the employer, with or without the union, ranks jobs against each other and decides what the value will be,
3) the jobs are jointly evaluated according to a point-rating or a factor comparison plan using guidelines and numerical measures,
4) jobs in governments or public sector employment are compared against similar jobs in the private sector, and evaluated and paid accordingly. Thus if pay scales are discriminatory in the private sector they are used to continue the practice in public employment. This kind of comparison is also used among industries.

Unions with job evaluation programs in their contract must be sure that the program is not used to justify paying less to women. A good evaluation program ensures that:

1) all factors are weighted appropriately. For example, a physical exertion could not be weighted too highly in a plant where there is mainly light work, or the dexterity and speed involved in jobs traditionally done by women could not be seen as a "female" skill and underpaid accordingly.
2) the plan should cover only the bargaining unit and not supervisors.
3) the union should have equal input with the employer into development and implementation of the plan.
4) where separate plans are used for office and plant workers, the plans must produce acceptable results for women workers.
5) public employees in federal and provincial governments are prevented by law from bargaining on classifications with their employers. This must be changed.

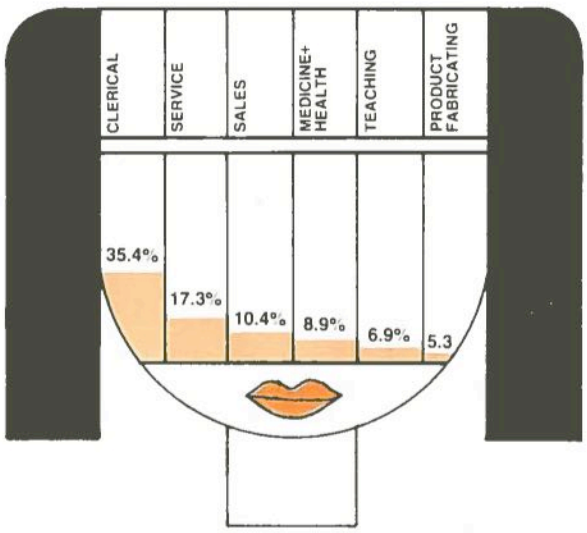
Through collective bargaining, unions can go a long way to set up fair job evaluation programs, modify existing pay scales and push for equal pay for work of equal value. To do less would be unjust to women employees.

Equal Opportunity

It is not enough just to win equal pay for work of equal value for women. If they are denied equal opportunity, women will still be restricted to job ghettos. Women do not rise through the normal channels to jobs of authority and responsibility. In almost all occupations, the positions with the most prestige and highest pay are held by men.

In a study of municipal government employees, the City of Ottawa found that women were "completely absent in the highest echelon where responsibility for policy planning and administrative authority resides. Unlike men who are distributed among the 15 occupational categories, women are concentrated in only a few. 75% of the women in the City are employed in the Clerical and Regulatory category and the Office Support category." The office support category has the lowest scale of pay.

Across the country, women remain in job ghettos with little opportunity to break out. Clerical, sales and service jobs employ over 60% of women in the labour force.



Percentage Distribution of Women in Occupational Categories

From the first stage of employment, the hiring process, women face discrimination. They are often only considered for certain types of work and automatically rejected if they apply for non-traditional jobs. They are not hired if the employer feels they might leave to get married or have children, or to care for their children. Employers often feel that men should get the jobs because they are the "bread-winners" in the family. Women's experience as a homemaker or a community volunteer is rarely considered for most occupations. "Protective" legislation which keeps women from doing certain jobs, such as heavy lifting, automatically excludes women from certain occupations without testing for individual abilities.

Once women are hired, they are seldom given access to the on-the-job training or educational programs that would help them move up the job ladder. Often women are denied promotions because the em-

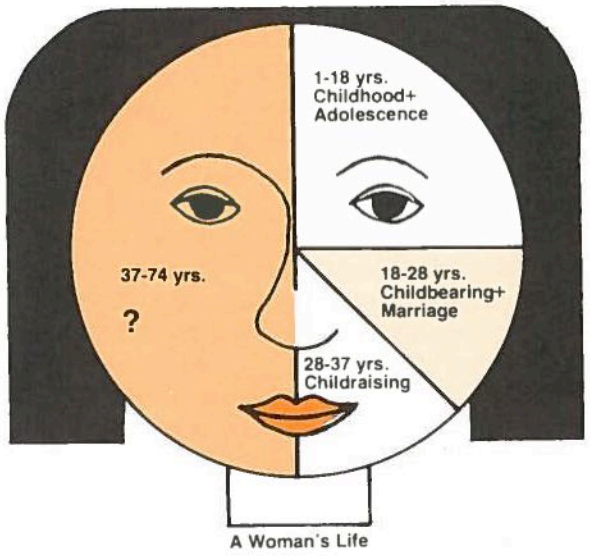
ployer feels that family responsibilities prevent women from doing a good job. Jobs requiring extensive travel are often denied to women for the same reason.

To open the barriers which restrict job opportunities for women, and to end female job ghettos, affirmative action programs must be started in the workplace. An affirmative action program sets policies and goals to combat sex discrimination and monitors the progress towards meeting these goals. The committee to plan and monitor such a program should be made up of equal management and union representatives.

A good affirmative action program eliminates job qualifications that discriminate against women and are unrelated to the job. It prevents employers from classifying women as a group without regard to their individual abilities. Affirmative action seeks out skilled women to fill jobs, and provides on-the-job training and upgrading so that less-qualified women may improve their abilities and move ahead. It is necessary to set goals and guidelines through a comprehensive affirmative action program to reduce job segregation and to move more women into higher paying and skilled labour positions.

The right to equal opportunity is as important to working women as equal pay. Historically unions have not had much say in hiring, promotion and training procedures. However unions are recognizing the need to establish affirmative action plans through collective bargaining. Once the need for affirmative action has been recognized and declared by the union, the individual workplace must be studied to determine how women are being discriminated against in hiring and promotion policies, job evaluation, access to training programs and collective agreements. By changing job evaluation systems, giving women access to training and revising personnel policies on hiring and promotion, new career paths can open up for women. Once an affirmative action program has begun, the union should monitor it closely to see that the objectives and procedures are being followed.

Most of the changes called for in an affirmative action program deal with practices, procedures and structures. Although organizational changes will bring about a more equal treatment of women workers, it will not guarantee equal opportunity. Women have long been taught to have fewer expectations, to put family needs first and to accept less opportunity. It is necessary therefore to ensure that an affirmative action program also helps individual women through career-development, confidence-building and assertiveness-training seminars. As most women will have many years when they will have to or be able to work, they must be encouraged to plan their work lives.



A Woman's Life

Equal pay for work of equal value and equal opportunity in the workplace are the two most critical issues facing women in the workforce. Women must be guaranteed the right to both if they are to achieve real equality with men.

* Statistics from Women's Bureau, Labour Canada, 1977 edition, *Women in the Labour Force.*

For discussion:

1. What are the wages for men and women in your workplace? Who is paid more? Evaluate male and female job classifications according to skill, effort and responsibility. Do the differences in jobs justify the differences in wages? Does the collective agreement give women any protection against unequal pay? Was your last increase a percentage increase or an across-the-board increase?

2. In the Acme widget company, women are only office workers and sorters and packers. Men are in supervisory and machine-operator jobs. Discuss how the union at Acme might set up an affirmative action program. Could the same kind of program be used by your union? Who controls the hiring and on-the-job training in your workplace? Are you informed of all job openings, training sessions and apprenticeship programs with your employer? Do you have the right to apply? Do you have unit-wide, department-wide or workplace-wide seniority provisions?

3. Are you guaranteed equal pay for work of equal value by either federal or provincial law? What are the salary differences between men and women at your workplace? How could your union bring about equal pay for work of equal value in your workplace?

Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

Going further:

This list of books, films, publications and places will give you more information about issues of concern to women. Many of the books listed will be available from your public library. If not, request that they get them for you. The opinions expressed by these materials and organizations are not necessarily those of the Canadian Labour Congress; however, we hope they will be useful to you.

Places:

Union: Most Federations of Labour have Women/Equal Rights and Opportunities Committees who will be a source of information and support for you. More and more labour councils too are establishing committees. We have only listed Federation Committees because of space limitations; however, they can put you in touch with the labour council committee in your area.

Federation Committees

B.C. Federation of Labour
Women's Rights Committee
Contact:
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Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 2L1

Government: The Federal Government and some Provincial Governments have bureaux or branches that have developed information and services for women. They are listed below:

Federal Government:

Status of Women Canada,
151 Sparks Street, Room 1007,
Ottawa, Ontario.
K1A 1C3
(613) 995-9397

Women's Bureau,
Rights in Employment Div.,
Labour Canada,
Ottawa, Ontario.
K1A 0J2
(613) 997-1550

Women's Programs Div.,
Secretary of State,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M5
(613) 994-3190

Provincial Governments:

Alberta Women's Bureau,
1402 Centennial Building,
10015 — 103 Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta.
T5J 0H1
(403) 427-2470

Women's Division,
Saskatchewan Department of Labour,
1914 Hamilton Street,
Regina, Saskatchewan.
S4P 2Y5
(306) 565-2452

Women's Bureau,
Department of Labour,
241 Vaughan Street,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1T6
(204) 944-3476

Women's Bureau,
Ontario Ministry of Labour,
400 University Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario.
M7A 1T7
(416) 965-1537

Conseil du statut de la femme,
700 est, boul. St Cyrille,
16e étage,
Québec (Québec).
G1R 5A9
(418) 643-4326

Sheila Rea, Co-ordinator,
Women's Bureau,
Department of Education
and Manpower Planning,
Box 2703,
Whitehorse, Yukon.
Y1A 2C6
(604) 667-5182

Women's Bureau — Canadian Labour Congress
Produced by CLC Labour Education and Studies Centre

Resource List

Audio-visual

Account Overdue
Video-cassette, ¾"
Film, 16mm, 15 minutes (colour)
Outlines the views of bank workers about organizing their union. Excellent interviews about "why" they want to join. Prepared for CLC Bank Workers Organizing Committee.
Available from the Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Babies and Banners
1930's sit-in strike in Flint, Michigan
16mm, 30 minutes, 1978
Available from the Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Bread and Roses
History of women workers
Video tape, 1978
Available from the Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Changing Women's Roles
1850 — Present
A multi-media kit.
Available from the Museum of Man and Nature,
190 Rupert Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Must book well in advance and pay some shipping costs

Composite Resolution on Sexual Harassment; CLC Convention 1980
Video-cassette, ¾",
12 minutes (colour)
Taken from the debate at the CLC Convention 1980, this tape gives speeches by delegates in support of the resolution finally adopted.
Prepared by CLC Labour Education and Studies Centre and available from them and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Don't Call Me Baby
Film on union women and their rights
16mm, 30 minutes
Available from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, 233 Gilmour Street, Ottawa, Ontario.

Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value
Slide tape, 10 minutes
Available from the Women's Bureau,
Canadian Labour Congress,
2841 Riverside Drive,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1V 8X7

Every Woman Works
10-minute slide-tape with teachers' guide
Available from the
Student Personnel Services,
2nd Floor, Lodge Building,
2147 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 0L5

Great Grand Mothers
A historical look at women in Canada
16mm, 30 minutes
Available from the National Film Board regional offices.

Hidden Message in Primary Readers
Slide-tape on sex-role stereotyping,
18 minutes
Available from the
Department of Education,
408 - 1181 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
or
Women's Bureau,
Canadian Labour Congress,
2841 Riverside Drive,
Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8X7

Hidden Price
Video-cassette, ¾",
13 minutes (colour)
Dramatized tape on various aspects of sexual harassment on the job. Good for discussion of this topic.
Prepared by the
B.C. Federation of Labour,
3110 Boundary Road,
Burnaby, B.C. V5M 4A2

It's Not Enough
Discusses the reasons for women working,
16mm, 16 minutes
Available from the National Film Board regional offices.

A Matter of Choice
A look at how women choose their work,
16mm, 15 minutes
Available from the
Federation of Women Teachers
Association of Ontario,
1260 Bay Street, 3rd Floor,
Toronto, Ontario
M4R 2B8
Must pay shipping costs

Moving Mountains
Video-cassette, ¾",
Film, 16mm (colour)
Shows women at coal mine in Elkford, B.C., in "non-traditonal" jobs and how they fell about them. Produced by Laura Sky for United Steelworkers of America.
Available from the Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Now the Chips Are Down
Video-cassette, ¾",
Film, 16mm, 55 minutes (colour)
Shows the impact of micro-chip technology on many jobs. Also shows some of medical benefits. Poses many questions for workers. Done by the BBC in United Kingdom.
Available from the Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Silicon Factor 1, 2, 3
Video-cassette, ¾",
Film, 16mm.
Episode 1 — 41 minutes; Episode 2 — 40 minutes; Episode 3 — 41 minutes. (colour)
Series shows different jobs affected by micro-chip technology. Interviews with business, labour leaders about employment impact. Done by the BBC in United Kingdom.
Available from the Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

They Appreciate You More
A discussion of how one couple who both work outside the home have learned to share the work at home.
16mm, 15 minutes
Available from the National Film Board regional offices.

Token Gesture
An animated film introducing concepts of Women's rights,
16mm, 8 minutes
Available from the National Film Board regional offices.

X/?" Unions
Video-cassettes, ¾",
Film, 16mm, 28 minutes (colour)
Depicts many different jobs done by unionized workers. Gives background of Canadian Labour Congress. Shows other side of labour in its day-to-day helping role. Prepared for CLC by Crawley Films.
Available from the
Labour Education and Studies Centre and their Regional Offices across Canada.

Union Maids
A look at women who became labour organizers in the United States. Discusses sexism in the labour movement.
16mm, 50 minutes
Available from the
Women's Bureau,
CLC
2841 Riverside Drive,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1V 8X7

Visible Women
A history of women in Canada since the 19th century.
16mm, 30 minutes
Available from the
Federation of Women Teachers'
Associations of Ontario,
1260 Bay Street, 3rd Floor,
Toronto, Ontario M5B 2B8
Some charges for use

Who Needs Daycare?
Video tape
Available from Video Women,
% Status of Women Action Committee,
Old YWCA Room 206, 233 - 12th Avenue S.W.,
Calgary, Alberta T2R 0G9

A Women's Work
Union leaders, working women and lawyers discuss the laws for working females in Canada.
16mm, 20 minutes
Available from the
Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre,
406 Jarvis Street,
Toronto, Ontario
Charge for purchase or rental

Women and Labour Laws
Part of an excellent series on women and the law.
Video, 30 minutes
Available from the
Vancouver People's Law School,
610 - 207 West Hasting Street,
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1H7

Books

The Bitter Thirties in Quebec
Includes material on women and unions in Quebec.
Author: Evelyn Dumas
Black Rose Books
1975

The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and their Times
Biographies of Canadian women
Author: Mary Innis
University of Toronto Press
1966

The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work
Authors: Pat Armstrong, Hugh Armstrong
McClelland and Stewart
1978

Good Day Care: Fighting for it, Getting it, Keeping it
Author: Kathleen Ross, ed.
Women's Educational Press
1978

A Harvest Yet to Reap
A good history of prairie women.
Author: Rasmussen et al, ed.
Women's Press
1975

Her Own Women: Profiles of Ten Canadian Women
Includes a profile of trade unionists.
Author: Madeleine Parent
Kostash, et al.
Macmillan of Canada
1975

How Women Can Get the Best Jobs — and Keep Them
Practical guide for job-seekers.
Author: Marilyn Evans
How Books
1977

Last Hired, First Fired
The discrimination against women in the workforce in Canada.
Author: Patricia Connelly
The Women's Press
1978

Mother Was Not a Person
The history and condition of women in Canada.
Author: Margaret Anderson, ed.
Black Rose Press
1972

The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History
Author: Trofimenkoff and Prentice, ed.
McClelland and Stewart
1977

Never Done: Three Centuries of Women's Work in Canada.
The history of Canadian women in the workforce.
Corrective Collective
Canadian Women's Education Press
1974

Nobody Speaks for Me
Self-portraits of American working-class women.
Author: Nancy Seifer
Simon and Schuster
1975

The Parlour Rebellion: Profiles in the Struggle for Women's Rights
The history of Women's rights
Author: Isabel Bassett
McClelland and Stewart
1975

Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life
The ages and stages in our life.
Author: Gail Sheehy
E.P. Dutton
1976

Penelope's Web: Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Society
An historical look at Canadian and European women
Author: N.E.S. Griffiths
Oxford University Press
1976

Privilege of Sex
A century of Canadian women
Author: Eve Zaremba, ed.
House of Anansi
1974

The Proper Sphere: Women's Place in Canadian Society
The history of Canadian women
Author: Cook and Mitchinson, ed.
Oxford University Press
1976

Rank and File: Personal Histories by Working-Class Organizers
An American look at labour history.
Author: Alice Lynd, ed.
Beacon Press
1973

The Secret Oppression: The Sexual Harassment of Working Women
Discusses the problems and possible solutions to sexual harassment.
Author: Backhouse and Cohen
Macmillan of Canada
1978

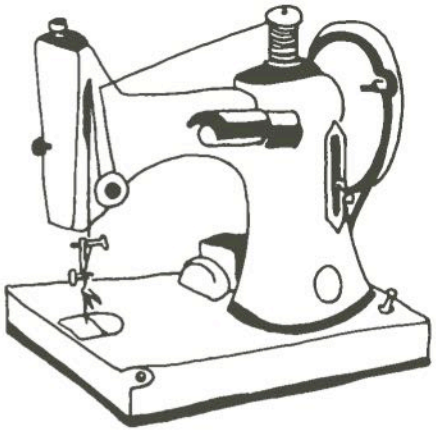
Sexual Harassment at Work
A booklet designed to present practical solutions to the problem of sexual harassment from a union perspective.
National Union of Provincial Government Employees (NUPGE) Ottawa, Ontario
1980

Sexual Shakedown
An American look at sexual harassment.
Author: Lin Farley
McGraw Hill
1978

We Were There
The story of working women in America.
Author: Barbara M. Wertheimer
Pantheon
1977

Women and the Chip
Author: Heather Menzies
Institute for Research on Public Policy
1981

The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada
How we got the vote.
Author: Catherine Cleverdon
University of Toronto Press
1974



Women at Work: Ontario 1850-1930
Historical look at women in workforce.
Corrective Collective
Canadian Women's Education Press
1974

Women in British Trade Unions 1874-1976
Author: Norbert C. Soldon
Rowman & Littlefield
1978

Women in Canadian Life: Politics, Sports, Law, Literature
An excellent series for use by highschool and adult groups. Good discussion topics.
General Editors: Jean Cochrane, Pat Kincaid
Fitzhenry and Whiteside
1977

Women in the Canadian Mosaic
Essays on women, including union women
Author: Gwen Matheson, Ed.
Peter Martin Associates
1976

Women in Need: A Sourcebook
A good guide for low-income women.
Available from the
Canadian Council on Social Development
55 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1E5

Women Working
Author: Stromber and Harkess
Mayfield Publishing
1978

Women's Work, Women's Health
Women's occupational health problems
Author: Jeanne M. Stellman
Pantheon Books
1977

The Working Mother
A practical guide for women who can or want to work outside the home.
Author: Sidney Cornelia Callahan
Warner Paperback Library
1972

Pamphlets

Affirmative Action
Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
Lord Nelson Arcade
P.O. Box 2221
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3C4

Bibliography on Equal Pay
Ontario Women's Bureau
Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

Bibliography on Re-entry Phenomenon
Reading list on women returning to the workforce.
1972
Women's Bureau
Ontario Ministry of Labour
400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

The Canada Pension Plan and Women
Advisory Council on the Status of Women
378 Osborne Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3L 1Z8

Canadians Ask About Day Care
A bibliography on day care.
National Day Care Information Centre
Health and Welfare Canada
Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1B5

Child Care Services in Canada: What the Federal Government Must Do
National Action Committee
121 Avenue Road
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2G3

Directory of Canadian Women's Groups
A listing of all women's groups and the services they offer.
Available only in libraries and resource centres, or write:
Women's Program
Secretary of State
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M7
for the nearest location to you.

Employment in Chartered Banks 1969-1975
Advisory Council on the Status of Women
P.O. Box 1541, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5R5

Equal Opportunity at Work
A practical, detailed manual on affirmative action.
Canadian Union of Public Employees
Suite 800
233 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario

Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value
National Action Committee
121 Avenue Road
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2G3

Facts and Figures on Women in the Labour Force
Comprehensive statistical information on many aspects of women and paid employment.
Rights in Employment Branch
Labour Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0J2

Facts Sheets: Women in the Labour Force
Statistical data and analysis of Canadian and Ontario labour force.
Ontario Ministry of Labour
Women's Bureau
400 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7

Health Hazards at Work
Advisory Council on the Status of Women
P.O. Box 1541 Station B
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5R5

Kit on Pensions for Women
Extension Division
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

The Law Relating to Working Women
Rights in Employment Branch
Labour Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0J2

Learning Opportunities for Women
Papers on women and continuing education.
Canadian Association for Adult Education
29 Prince Arthur Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 1B2

Maternity Leave in Canada
A report on maternity leave legislation across Canada.
Labour Canada
Women's Bureau
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0J2

Occupational Health Hazards to Women
Advisory Council on the Status of Women
P.O. Box 1541, Station B
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 5R5

Perspectives on Women
Study guide on the status of women.
Women's Program
Secretary of State
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0M7

Plan for Action
Status of Women Committee
Manitoba Government Employees' Association
360 McMillan Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 0N2

Some Sources of Women's History in the Public Archives of Canada
Good for looking into women's history.
Marketing Services
National Museums of Canada
491 Bank Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M8
Priced $1.50

Women and Work: An Inventory of Research
An extensive bibliography on every aspect of women in the labour force.
Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women
Suite 415, 151 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3
Priced $4

Women in the Labour Force in Newfoundland
Newfoundland Status of Women Council
P.O. Box 6072
St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5X8
Priced $1

Women in Labour Unions: A Selected Bibliography
Rights in Employment
Labour Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J2

Women in Quebec, Their Laws and Their Place in the Economy
Forces: Special Issue of this magazine
Hydro Québec
75, boul. Dorchester ouest
Montréal, Québec

Women on Welfare
Research Collective on Women on Welfare
School of Social Work
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
Free to women receiving social assistance, others $2.

Women's Resource Catalogue
An excellent guide to non-commercial Canadian resources in both languages.
Women's Program
Secretary of State
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M7

Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

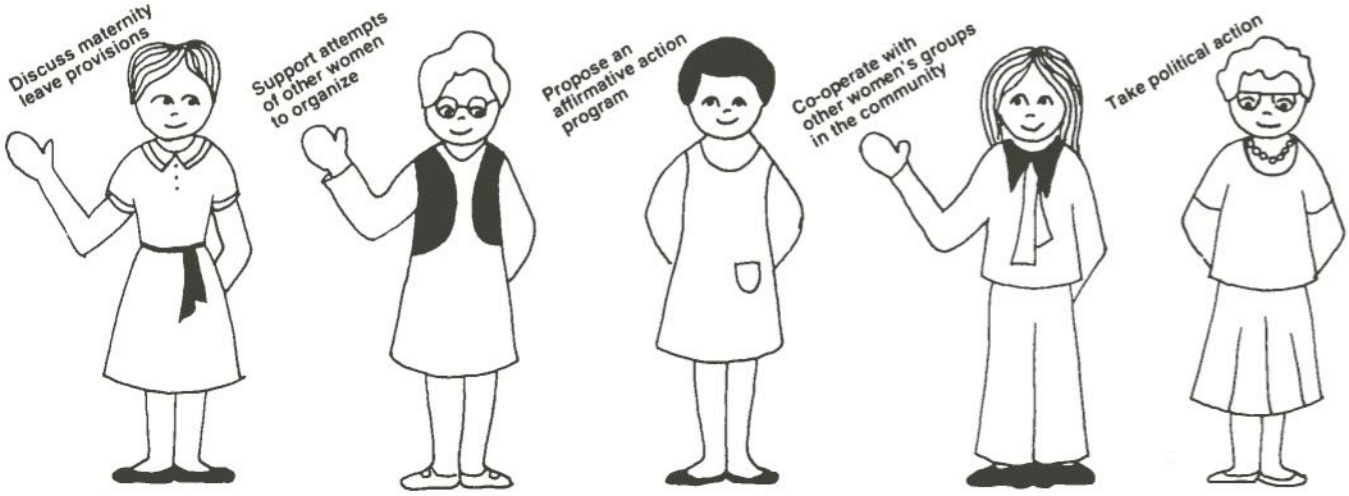
Using Your Union

Unions have been instrumental in bringing about changes in wages, working conditions, fringe benefits, job security and human rights for workers. If women workers are to be equal partners in the workforce, they must work with and through their unions. The Canadian Labour Congress has supported the goals of equal pay and equal opportunity in its Policy Statement on Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers. The CLC has requested Labour Councils to establish committees to ensure that women receive equal pay for work of equal value and that they have equal opportunities in the workplace and in the larger community. These committees, called Women's Committees or Equal Rights and Opportunities Committes can be effective forces for change in the workplace. Procedures for establishing and operating such a committee could be as follows:

1) The labour council passes a motion to establish a committee on equality. A chairperson is named from among labour council officers or selected by committee members at the first meeting.
2) Members of the committee are chosen from affiliates, with as wide a representation as possible from both unions and occupational groups.
3) The council calls the first meeting of the committee to determine its terms of reference which might include:
   — developing policies and programs to bring about equality of treatment between men and women workers.
   — involving women more actively in their local unions and in the labour council and its programs.
   — developing programs to examine the status of women within their area, such as hiring policy of local employers; services of government to find out how they treat women clients; child-care services; educational opportunities for women and career choices offered to young girls still in school.
   — co-operating with the CLC and affiliates in education programs to assist women in developing leadership skills.
   — helping to organize the many unorganized women in the community.
   — co-operating with other women's groups, for example NDP women, to take action on common issues such as learning opportunities for women in the community.
   — recommending to the labour council possible policy positions and action proposals that would improve opportunities for women.
4) The newly-formed committee would take its proposals and terms of reference to the labour council for adoption.
5) The committee would report regularly to the labour council on progress in implementing the terms of reference.

Union Locals

Union locals and groups of women within a local may also wish to take action to improve the status of women. Union locals can undertake many activities to work for equal pay and equal opportunity for women workers.



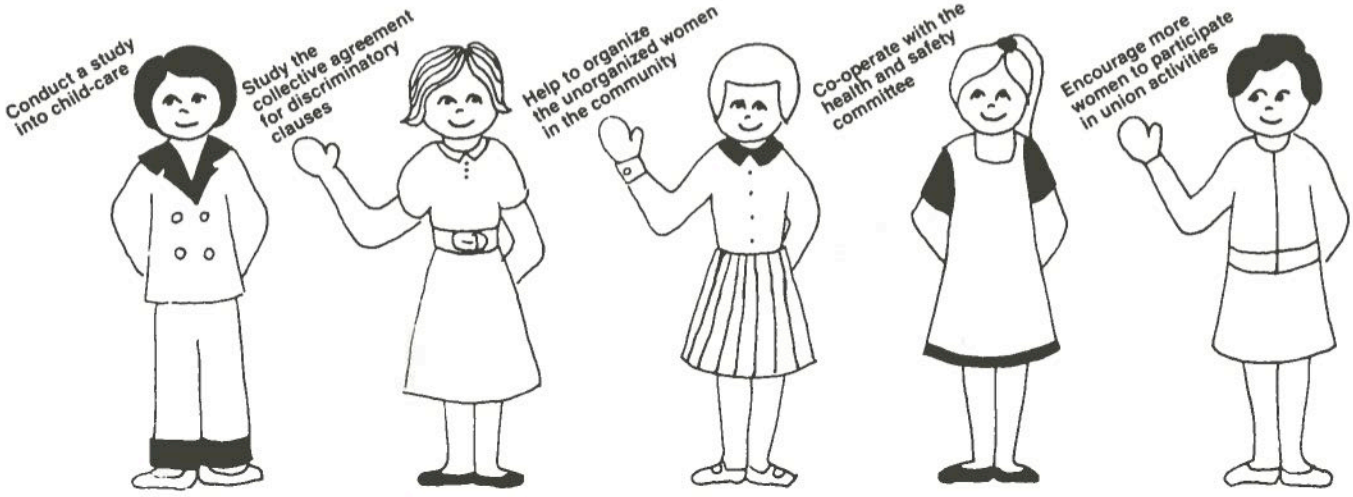
Women's Bureau — Canadian Labour Congress
Produced by CLC Labour Education and Studies Centre

Participation in union activities is the first step towards influencing union decisions.

Union locals can establish women's committees or equal rights and opportunities committees to:

- Encourage more women to participate in union activities. Seek out and encourage women to run for elected positions in your local. Set up special sessions to listen to the problems faced by women in your workplace.
- Study the collective agreement to see if there are any clauses which have a discriminatory impact. Ask women workers what clauses they would like to see added to the next contract.
- Propose an affirmative action program to end discrimination in hiring and promotions, and open doors to non-traditional occupations to women.
- Examine your wage structure and/or classification system to see if it is based on equal pay for work of equal value. Discuss your findings with your committee and prepare recommendations to your executive or bargaining committee.
- Co-operate with the health and safety committee to study your workplace for health and safety hazards for women. Carry out research into the health problems of women employees to see if there is a pattern which could indicate a hidden health hazard.
- Encourage women workers to speak out about sexual harassment on the job. Through the local, request the employer to issue a memorandum to supervisory staff condemning sexual harassment. Work for protection against sexual coercion in the next contract.
- Examine the fringe benefits in your contract to see if they discriminate against women, and recommend to the local ways to equalize benefits in the next contract.
- Discuss maternity/parental leave provisions to see if they adequately protect the income, seniority and well-being of parents.
- Conduct a study into child-care arrangements made by the working parents in your workplace. Could these parents be better served if the union worked for on-site child-care, 24 hour child-care services for shift workers, or financial subsidies for child-care away from the workplace.
- Study the position of part-time women workers and their wages and fringe benefits.
- Support attempts of other women in other workplaces or occupations to organize, and support workers striking or picketing over issues of special concern to women.

A union is only as strong as the workers who join and participate in it. The more that women take an active role in the union, the greater their influence in improving the status of women workers and the greater the strength of the union in bargaining for women's rights.



Running Uphill:

The Effects of Economic Crisis on Women Workers

In 1975, as the world recognized International Women's Year, many Canadian women felt they finally had won the opportunity to participate as equal partners in their society. Now, less than ten years later, economic depression has swept away many of the victories that women had worked so hard to achieve.

An economic crisis, with high unemployment, high inflation and high interest rates, hurts every worker but women in the workforce are particularly hard hit:

- The unemployment rate for women stands at almost 12%. Across Canada, there are 564,000 women out of work, and 282,000 of them have been looking for work for more than 14 weeks. Many women have simply given up looking, and these hidden unemployed no longer show up in the statistics.
- As companies feel the pinch of depression, women workers — usually the last hired — are the first to be laid off.
- For every job opening there are dozens of candidates, making it hard for women to find or advance in their jobs.
- Full-time women workers earn less than two-thirds as much as their full-time male colleagues. Women workers are clustered in those occupations where wages are lowest. Two-thirds of all minimum wage workers are women, and three-quarters of all part-time workers are female. As a result, women, already on the low end of the wage scale, are particularly affected by the rising cost of food, clothing and housing.
- Still clustered in the female job ghettos — clerical, service, sales and health care — women now find it even harder to enter non-traditional fields for training or employment. Many of the achievements made by affirmative action programs have been eliminated by lay-offs or plant closings.
- One-third of the women in the labour force work in clerical jobs. These jobs are being replaced, reduced in responsibility or dehumanized by the introduction of sophisticated microtechnology. These jobs are also largely unorganized, with only 16% of office workers outside the public sector in unions.
- Wage controls and limitations on collective bargaining in the public service hurt women workers. Not only do they have lower wages than male workers, they also find that they can no longer bargain for important issues such as family responsibility leave, day care, protection from sexual harassment or technological change.
- Although the depression makes it essential for many women to work, many employers use the excuse of the economic crisis to "give the job to the man because he is the breadwinner."

In the face of difficult times for all working people, Canadian women want the same things that they wanted back in 1975: equal pay for work of equal value and equal opportunity in the workplace.

The unemployment rate for women stands at almost 12%. . . Many women have simply given up looking, and these hidden unemployed no longer show up in the statistics.

With equal pay for work of equal value, predominantly female jobs will be compared with predominantly male jobs in terms of skill, responsibility, effort and working conditions. Different but equal jobs will then be rewarded equally, and women's efforts in the workplace will be appropriately paid.

Equal opportunity will give women an opportunity to break out of the traditional job ghettos, to get appropriate training and apprenticeship, and to move up the job ladder.

Equal pay for work of equal value and equal opportunity in the workplace are as important in times of depression as they are in good times. Working with their union, women have a right to insist that their work is fairly paid and that they have a fair chance in the workplace. There is never a wrong time to insist that women be equal partners in their society.

Women's Bureau — Canadian Labour Congress
2841 Riverside Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8X7, (613) 521-3400, 1983

Special Issues For Union Women Today

Women workers in the 80's face challenges that are both old and new. Today, women are concerned about pressing for equal pay and opportunity in a time of economic depression. Affirmative action programs that had allowed women to move ahead in the workplace have been thwarted by lay-offs and cutbacks. Non-traditional areas of work remain closed to women as unemployment reduces job opportunities. Part-time work with part-time benefits is being offered as an alternative to badly-needed full-time jobs. The impact of technological change is affecting those areas of work traditionally dominated by women. All union members are hurt by blocks on the right to organize and bargain collectively.

This discussion paper provides a brief look at some of the issues that are of particular concern to working women today.

No Time Like the Present

As the impact of economic crisis is felt across the country, lay-offs, plant closings, wage controls and limits to collective bargaining threaten all workers, male or female. Many workers are concerned about the effect of pressing for equal pay for work of equal value and equal opportunity. Some workers feel uneasy about demanding equality when so many are unemployed.

The causes of the depression are not found in women workers' demands for equality of pay and opportunity, any more than the demands of workers are to blame for unemployment, inflation or high interest rates. Our economic crisis cannot be blamed on workers' request for a fair return for their labour.

Discrimination in pay, hiring and job opportunity is as unfair in times of economic difficulty as it is in better times. Justice for working women cannot be postponed until the economy improves, nor can recovery from depression be built on inequality between men and women workers.

Unions across the country have recognized the need to affirm their commitment to equal treatment for women workers. The Ontario Federation of Labour's 1982 statement on affirmative action called for affiliates to negotiate "affirmative action programs and clauses of specific benefit to women." These contracts might include equalization of base rates for women's and men's jobs, equal opportunity for women to advance in the workforce and no-discrimination clauses. The Quebec Federation of Labour, in a 1981 policy statement on the status of women, recommended that its affiliates set up committees on the status of women with a mandate to determine "the full extent of the problems faced by women." Unions are recognizing that equality postponed by depression is equality denied to working women.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Unions have been active in assisting women to find employment in non-traditional areas and in fighting discrimination in hiring practices. Two recent examples illustrate the kind of support that unions can provide.

In Fort Erie, Ontario Lodge 171 of the International Association of Machinists determined that only 35 of 500 people hired at Fleet Industries in the previous two years were women. The union put an ad in the local paper asking women who had been refused employment with Fleet to come forward. Over 200 women replied, and the IAM, with the support of the Ontario Federation of Labour, took the case of eight of the women workers to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. Unfortunately, although the eight women were given some compensation, they were not hired by Fleet, and no affirmative action program was put in place.

In 1979, Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America found that the Steel Company of Canada (Stelco) in Hamilton had hired only one woman since 1961 for blue-collar production jobs. During that period, 33,000 men had been hired and 30,000 women had applied for work.

The union, supported by the Ontario Federation of Labour, assisted five women who felt they had been denied work with Stelco to go before the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The USWA Local 1005 also asked that Stelco, as a minimum first step require that at least 10% of new employees be women. In 1980 all five women were hired by Stelco, and the company came close to reaching the 10% level in hiring women for blue-collar jobs.

Although the numbers of women hired were small, these hirings represented a breakthrough in a traditionally male area of employment. But even these small steps were thwarted when the depression hit Hamilton, and hundreds of workers, including women workers, were laid off. As the last hired, women are particularly vulnerable to lay-off. There are now virtually no women in blue-collar jobs at Stelco.

Union women must look for and discuss ways and means of guaranteeing that long-overdue gains in hiring practices will not be eliminated by lay-offs and cutbacks. Women must explore strategies for ensuring that they do not lose their hard-won chance in non-traditional areas, while at the same time, protecting the rights of all workers to seniority and job security.

Women's Bureau — Canadian Labour Congress
2841 Riverside Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 8X7, (613) 521-3400, 1983

Part-Time Work: the Unwanted Alternative

One out of every four women works part-time. As in full-time work, part-time jobs for women are concentrated in the female job ghettos — two-thirds of all part-time jobs are clerical, sales or service jobs. As a result, almost three-quarters of part-time workers are women.

Part-time workers are usually confined to the lowest job levels, with little opportunity for training or advancement. Most part-time workers earn less than full-time workers on an hourly basis, and part-time jobs offer inadequate benefit packages — reduced sick leave, poor pensions and lack of disability or medical insurance.

The number of part-time workers has grown dramatically. Since International Women's Year in 1975, the number of part-timers increased from 988,000 to 1,477,000 in 1981. Almost one-third of new jobs created since 1975 are part-time. Part-time work now comprises 13.5% of the labour force. As three-quarters of the newly created part-time jobs are in service, sales, clerical and health areas, it is not surprising that women also take over three-quarters of the new part-time positions.

While a majority of part-time workers choose to work a reduced work week, a large minority (40%) have taken part-time because they couldn't find full-time jobs. A significant number of female part-time workers would take on full-time work if good child care and community supports for working parents were available.

The Canadian Labour Congress, in its submission to the federal government's inquiry into part-time work, urged that "Part-time work . . . be integrated into a full employment policy so that it is complementary to, rather than conflicting with, full-time employment." The CLC also reiterated its 1976 commitment that "Special measures shall be taken as necessary and appropriate to ensure equality of treatment for workers employed regularly on a part-time basis, the majority of whom are women, particularly with respect to pro-rata benefits."

Blocks to Collective Bargaining

The reaction of the federal government and several provincial governments to the economic depression has been to impose harsh and unjust legislation, such as Bill C-124, on all public sector workers as an "example" to the private sector.

Bill C-124, which puts six and five per cent wage ceilings on public workers and severely limits the right of collective bargaining for two years, has a particularly harsh effect on women workers:

- The standard of living of all workers in the public sector will be reduced by 10 per cent. Female workers, already in the lowest paying jobs, will be hard hit as prices rise and wages fail to keep up.
- No progress will be made in bringing about equality in the terms and conditions of employment of men and women workers.
- No improvement will be made in negotiating issues of special concern to women such as maternity leave; protection against the effects of technological change; day care; as well as health and safety conditions; medical and dental plans; paid educational leave; vacations; etc.

Bill C-124, with its provincial offspring, sets back years of struggle by the labour movement to establish the process of free collective bargaining by allowing governments and crown corporations to renege on contractual commitments voluntarily entered with their workers.

This legislation must be vigorously opposed by all workers. As Dennis McDermott, President of the CLC, said in his statement to the federal government, "The economic policy of which Bill C-124 forms a part is a prescription for continuing recession and economic misery for millions of Canadians. . . (The bill) is so fundamentally unjust that the only reasonable way to deal with it is to get rid of it completely."

Living With the Chip

Micro-electronics in the workplace can be both beneficial and harmful. It can free workers from time-consuming, monotonous or dangerous tasks, but it can also create unemployment, limit responsibility and opportunity, increase health and safety problems and decrease the quality of working life.

There is no doubt that micro-electronic technology is in the workplace to stay. The impact of this profound change will be largely felt by women workers. The micro-chip revolution is felt most in those occupations traditionally held by women — clerical, sales and service. These areas are major employers of women without advanced skills, education or training. These are also the areas with little protection from unions. In the private sector, only 16% of office workers are organized.

Even for unionized workers, there is insufficient protection from technological change. Many contracts or agreements do not include clauses that anticipate the effects of micro-electronic advances.

Workers must be guaranteed "security within change" through a joint effort of unions, government and industry. Improved legislation, consultation and collective agreements together with appropriate retraining are needed to protect workers from the harmful effects of technological change. Because micro-technology has such an impact on female workers, unionized women must encourage their unions to make it a priority in negotiations.

Finally, women in the workforce and young women still in school must be encouraged and supported by appropriate education and training to develop the skills necessary for the new technology.

Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

Women and the Canadian Labour Congress

In 1976, the eleventh convention of the Canadian Labour Congress adopted a declaration of *Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers*. The policy statement outlines the targets for change and sets out a program for action on the regional, national and international level. The policy begins:

"The Canadian Labour Congress, as a supporter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reaffirms the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and before the law, and declares that all efforts must be made to provide every worker, without distinction on grounds of sex, with equality of opportunity and treatment in all social, cultural, economic, civic and political fields."

The policy statement goes on to confirm the Canadian Labour Congress' commitment to equal rights and opportunities for women in all aspects of their life. It reaffirms the CLC's support for women's right to gainful employment and recognizes that changing women's status in society will also change the role of men in society.

> "All measures shall be taken to guarantee women's right to paid work as the inalienable right of every human being and to revise, as necessary, existing laws, collective agreements, practices or customs which limit integration of women in the workforce on a footing of equality with men."

The policy statement also sets out certain principles as targets to achieve the equal participation of women in economic life.

The policy statement then goes on through 14 articles to detail the areas in which change must be made to ensure equality between women and men in working, family and social life: ending all discrimination on the basis of sex, guaranteeing women's right to seek work, improving education, training and vocational guidance, achieving equal balance in occupational fields, equal pay for work of equal value, parental leave, safer working environment, better social services in the community, equal pension rights, and fairer taxation.

Federal and provincial governments are encouraged to implement a ten-point program to improve opportunity in education, training, employment and community services.

Unions also are encouraged to act on the regional, national, and international level. They are required to set an example in their treatment of women workers and to implement programs to promote equality of opportunity and treatment.

A complete copy of the detailed policy on *Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers* is available from the Canadian Labour Congress and from provincial federations.

The CLC Women's Bureau

When the Canadian Labour Congress adopted the policy statement on *Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers*, it followed the recommendation of the statement to establish a department on the status of women workers. In December 1977, the **Women's Bureau** of the CLC was formed.

The Bureau's main task is to carry out the recommendations of the CLC's policy statement on issues affecting women and men in the labour force, in unions and in the larger community. The Bureau has paid particular attention to the issues of equal pay for work of equal value and the development of equal opportunities in the workplace.

The Bureau provides services to affiliates of the CLC on women's concerns, and works with the affiliates to establish or improve committees on women's issues.

The Bureau undertakes research into equal pay, parental leave and occupational health hazards. A constant flow of information on women's issues is exchanged by the Bureau with affiliates, with government departments concerned about women

Women's Bureau — Canadian Labour Congress
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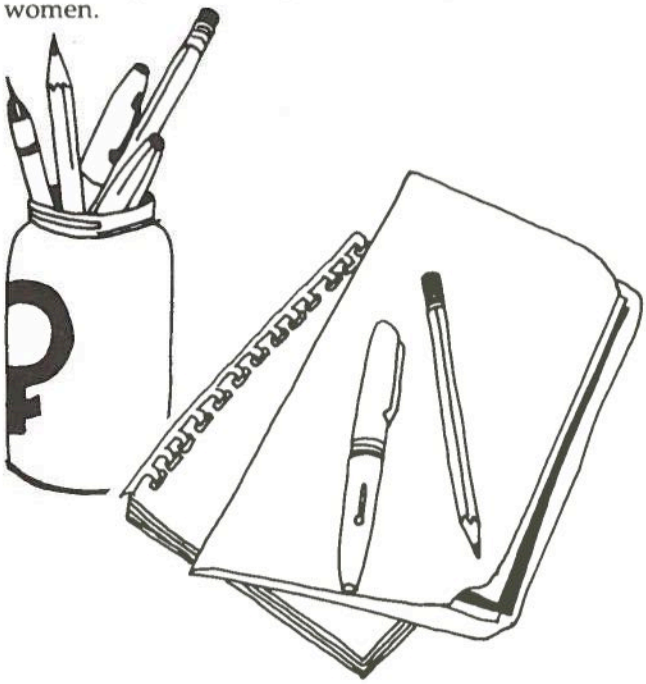
workers and with other women's divisions of affiliates of the ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions).

The **Women's Bureau** has a special responsibility to educate trade unionists on the barriers and solutions to achieving equality for women workers. Through labour schools and audio-visual presentations, more unionized men and women are becoming interested in improving the status of women workers.

The **Women's Bureau** works with groups outside the labour movement to bring about equality for women. It helps to prepare briefs to governments on women's issues and pushes for legislative change in the status of women.



The Bureau has established a working group to study the new federal legislation on "equal pay for work of equal value" and the impact this legislation will have on collective bargaining.

The **Women's Bureau** has sought out information from collective agreements on clauses or agreements dealing with parental leave, equal opportunity or affirmative action, existing pay practices, sexual harassment on the job and female job ghettos.

Working with the CLC Labour Education and Studies Centre, the Bureau has collected historical information about women in the Canadian labour movement so that these women will become part of the permanent record of Canada's labour history.

The Bureau helps affiliated unions to tackle the specific problems of equality for women workers. At the British American Bank Note Company in Ottawa, 25 women went on strike to win equal pay for work they considered to be of equal value to a job performed exclusively by men within the company. The women, who are steel-plate examiners, required two years of training for their job. However they received one dollar an hour less than men who swept the floors and who had no skilled training.

In settlement of the strike, the women submitted the matter to an arbitrator who ruled in favour of the company offer which was still a dollar below the lowest-paid job done by men. The women of British American Bank Note are not yet receiving equal pay for their skilled work.

Through the **Women's Bureau** of the CLC, the six unions involved with British American Bank Note were called together and are working out a collective strategy on equal pay and equal opportunity.

The **Women's Bureau** assists provincial federations to press their governments to introduce equal pay for work of equal value legislation to cover situations such as British American Bank Note.

In addition to the above services, the **Women's Bureau** deals with dozens of letters and phone calls from groups and individuals inquiring about issues and policies on women workers.

The **Women's Bureau** has become the focal point for interest and action on women and unions.

For Discussion:

1. Review the recommendations of the 1976 policy statement on *Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers*. How many of these recommendations have been carried out and how many remain to be done? In what way could the recommendations be implemented in your workplace? How many of the recommendations could be implemented through collective bargaining?

2. The workers at British American Bank Note feel they have been denied equal pay for work of equal value. Do you agree or disagree? How should we determine what is work of equal value? Does your province guarantee equal pay for work of equal value in legislation?

3. The CLC's policy statement says that discrimination against women workers is "incompatible with the interests of the economy." In what way do women workers improve or hold back the healthy growth of the economy? Do you feel that the federal or provincial governments' policies clearly support women's right to paid employment?

Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

To Seize the Good
The History of Women in Unions

"The restrictions and prohibitions of women's work will testify to the shortcomings of our social and economic organization and to the failure of us all, regardless of sex, to seize the good that is within our reach."

from the
All Canadian Congress of Labour, 1920's

Canada's 750,000 organized women workers are the heirs to a century of work and struggle. The participation of women in unions goes back to 1886 when Elizabeth Wright of the Knights of Labour became the first woman delegate to the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC) convention in Toronto. Before 1900 women were active in locals of the United Garment Workers in London and Winnipeg. In 1906, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers organized a local of telephone operators in British Columbia. In 1913 the Home and Domestic Employees Union was formed in Vancouver, and in 1916 the women clerks of Woolworth's in Winnipeg struck for better wages.

From the beginning, equal pay was a hotly debated issue. As early as 1882, the Toronto Labour Council supported the principle but when the Trades and Labour Congress drew up its first "Platform of Principles" in 1898, it advocated the abolition of female labour "in all branches of industrial life."

It was not until 1915 that the efforts of a Vancouver trade unionist named Helena Gutteridge changed this policy. Gutteridge was actively involved in organizing laundry and garment workers, and she was active in the women's movement of the time. By bringing together labour and women's groups, she was responsible for B.C.'s first minimum wage act in 1918.

Throughout the 1920's, a minimum wage was the main issue. The TLC supported the minimum wage for women because they "need protection," but opposed the same for men. The TLC also opposed the introduction of family allowances in 1929 on the grounds that government payments should not substitute for a fair and adequate wage. The All-Canadian Congess of Labour (ACCL) favoured a minimum wage for all workers and supported family allowances as a step towards the redistribution of income.

Although women were very active in various unions throughout the Depression, the economic slump provoked disagreement within the labour movement about the role of women in industrial society. The TLC condemned married women who worked but supported single working women. The ACCL held that men and women should be admitted to industry on the same basis.

The end of the Depression brought with it World War II and the rise of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and a dramatic increase in the number of women in the work force for obvious reasons. The CIO, committed to industrial unionism, aimed largely at the manufacturing sector but also included white-collar unions. In Canada, this activity was particularly evident in the first Canadian bank strike in 1941. Eileen Tallman of the Steelworkers, one of the organizers of the strike, went on to become one of the most active organizers of her time. She led the long but unsuccessful battle to organize the T. Eaton Company in Toronto in the late 40's and early 50's.

More women became leaders in the labour movement during this time. With the increased participation of women during the post-war years came an increased awareness of the problems they faced. "Equal pay for equal work" helped to end some of the most blatant forms of discrimination but said nothing about job ghettos and lack of opportunity for women. Unions were beginning to tackle the question of separate seniority lists for men and women, but little was said about the subtle discrimination in fringe benefits.

In 1956, the TLC and the CCL merged to form the Canadian Labour Congress. Issues of concern to women had very low priority for the first ten years of the new organization's existence. But in 1956, the election of Huguette Plamondon of the United Packinghouse Workers of America from Montreal, as a regional vice-president, put a woman in the top ranks of the organization. In 1968, when the executive was re-organized, Plamondon became a vice-president at large in the CLC.

A new initiative began in 1966 when the Human Rights Committee of the CLC called for an end to discrimination against women through collective bargaining and effective legislation. The CLC amended its own constitution to include sex as a prohibited

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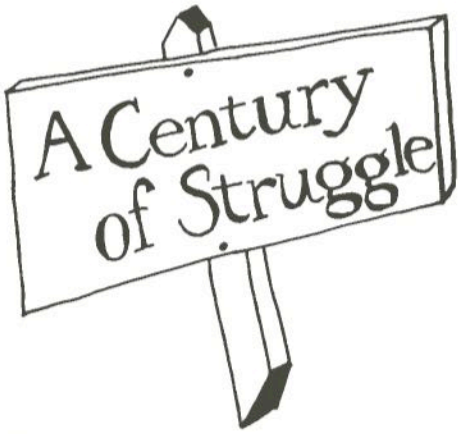
ground for discrimination. In 1967, a committee of the CLC prepared a brief to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The brief looked into some of the real problems of discrimination: equal pay, access to education and training, income tax, child care, "protective legislation". Although the brief was well received by the Royal Commission, and most of the CLC recommendations were incorporated into the report of the Commission, it was not until 1972 that these issues became a priority for the CLC. At the convention, the CLC Executive was directed to draw up a programme of action to encourage unions to assist in the improvement of the status of women.

As a result, a special report on the rights of women was put together for the 1974 convention. At this time, Shirley Carr of the Canadian Union of Public Employees was elected to the full-time position of executive vice-president, making her one of the four top officers of the Congress. She was the first woman to hold this position.

In July 1975, a subcommittee of the Human Rights Committee was formed to deal with women's rights. In March 1976, this committee held a national conference on women's issues, both as an educational tool and as a forum for policy planning and recommendation. At the conference, a statement of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers was drawn up, based on the standards of the International Labour Organization. This statement, accepted by the 1976 convention, became the cornerstone for future policy development. Among its many recommendations was a call to establish a "Department on the Status of Women Workers" within the CLC, and in December 1977 the CLC's Women's Bureau was formed.

Individual women continued to gain recognition in their unions and in the CLC. It is no longer uncommon to find women as presidents of local labour councils. With recent changes in federal legislation, the CLC is examining ways to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value through the collective bargaining process.

Today active women are found in almost every union, often in positions of authority and responsibility. These women, heirs to a century of struggle, are working hard to finally establish equality for women workers.



1882 Toronto Labour Council supports equal pay for equal work.

1915 Helena Gutteridge has equal pay written into constitution of Trades and Labour Congress.

1919 Kathleen Derry is part of Canadian delegation to founding convention of the International Labour Organization.

1936 Mrs. Finch, National Clothing Workers, elected to the executive of the All-Canadian Congress of Labour.

1941 First Canadian bank strike organized by Eileen Tallman of the Steelworkers.

1948 Mabel Mayne becomes the first woman president of the Oshawa Labour Council.

1956 Huguette Plamondon is first woman in top ranks of the CLC.

1966 Human Rights Committee of the CLC calls for an end to discrimination against women.

1971 The B.C. Federation of Labour is first provincial federation to form a women's committee.

1972 CLC Convention calls for programme of action on the status of women "as a matter of top priority."

1974 Shirley Carr is the first woman to be elected as executive vice-president of CLC.

1975 Grace Hartman elected President of CUPE, the first woman to head a major union.

1976 CLC holds national conference on women and draws up statement of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Women Workers.

1977 CLC Women's Bureau formed.

1978 Nadine Hunt, president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, becomes first woman to head a provincial federation.

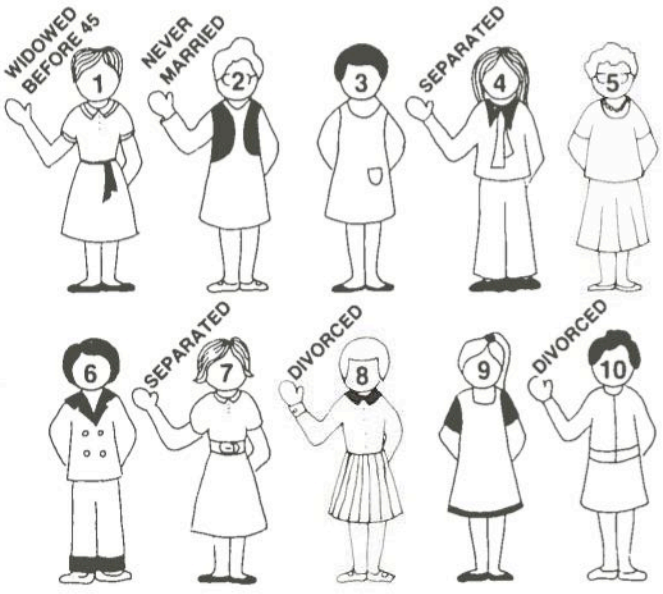
Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

Here to Stay
Women in the Workforce

All women work. Whether they are doing the unpaid labour of child care and housework, or paid labour in business or industry, women and their work are an essential part of Canada's economic life.

In the 1800's, one out of every eight paid workers was female. Today, four million Canadian women are doing paid work. Women make up nearly 40% of the labour force, and their numbers are increasing. From 1969 to 1979, the number of women in the job market increased 70%. In 1979, almost half the women between the ages of 15 and 65 were in paid employment. Although predictions for the 1980's anticipate a slowdown in the number of women joining the labour force, it's clear that the paid working woman is here to stay. The need to be self-supporting puts many women in the work force.

For different reasons, six out of ten women, at some time in their lives, will be self-supporting.

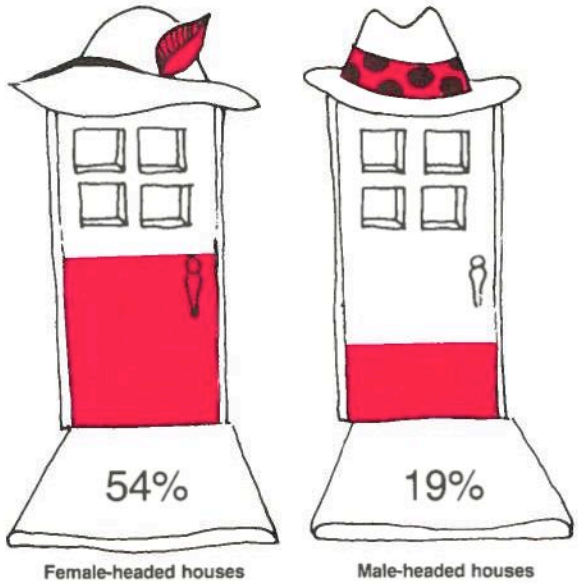


Marriage no longer takes women off the job. In the last 20 years, the number of married women in the labour force has more than doubled. Now three out of five women in paid employment are married.

Thirty percent of women in the labour force are single, ten percent are widowed, divorced or separated and twenty-seven percent have husbands with incomes of less than $12,000

A growing number of married women are taking paid jobs to keep up with the rising cost of living. Far from being secondary wage earners or working for luxuries, these women are working to keep their families out of poverty. The lower the husband's income, the greater the chance that his wife will be working. Forty-two percent of Canadian families with young children where both husband and wife are working, the husband's income was less than $15,000.

For single-parent families headed by women, finances are critical.



EARN UNDER $12,000

While most women work for financial reasons, many women are seeking paid employment for personal fulfillment. Some are choosing to make their work a life-long career. Still others are re-entering the job market after their child-rearing duties are ended.

Whether by choice or by necessity, women workers have a serious commitment to their work. Although they face blatant discrimination in job opportunities and in rates of pay, women have proven to be reliable employees. Contrary to common belief, women workers do not miss more sick days than male workers do. Neither are they any more likely to leave their jobs than men, even though most women also carry out child care and household duties.

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However, the differences between male and female workers show up very clearly in their paycheques. In spite of labour legislation and union efforts, the wage gap between men and women is widening. The average income from wages and salaries for male workers in 1978 was $11,053 while a female worker earned only $4,758, less than half the man's wage. Although some legislation has been passed to introduce equal pay, loopholes allow employers to avoid paying equal wages by changing small details of the job.

The gap between male and female wages exists at all age levels and in all occupations. Even higher education does not substantially improve the chances for equal pay. With only primary school education, an average woman's income was $4,858 and a man's was $10,933. But with a university degree, a woman still only earned $12,009 to the male graduate's average of $22,846.

Women are still employed largely in "job ghettos," parts of the labour market characterized by low wages, monotonous tasks and lack of opportunity. Almost three-quarters of women working are in clerical, sales, services or health-related occupations. Women make up almost all the bank tellers, secretaries, cashiers, nurses, telephone operators and receptionists. Little progress is being made in getting women into non-traditional jobs, skilled trades or apprenticeship programs.

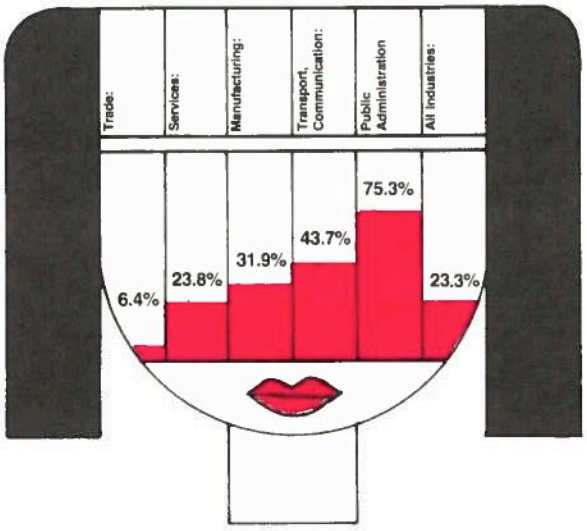
Occupational segregation by sex does not protect women from getting lower wages. Even in the "female" fields such as clerical work, men averaged almost $100 more a week than women workers. In fact, as more women enter certain industries, the salary levels drop in that industry.

Nor do job ghettos protect women from unemployment. When the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was published in 1970, unemployment among women had been consistently lower than for men for 20 years. In the last decade, however, women have been badly hurt by unemployment. The recent rates for women have been running close to 10% across Canada, and above 16% in Newfoundland and 12½% in New Brunswick.

Women, always last hired and first fired, are too often considered by employers and governments as disposable secondary wage earners. Therefore in government cutbacks, special programs or retraining courses for women are the first to be cut.

Women are beginning to look more often to unions for assistance. Since 1962, female membership in unions has more than tripled and they now represent 29% of total membership.

Within unions, women face many of the same problems of discrimination that plague them in the working world. However, they have begun to demand and receive action from their unions to eliminate inequalities. Some unions, particularly those with large female memberships, have negotiated equal pay clauses, better maternity leave, equal job opportunities and fairer benefit packages. More union women are appearing as officers and staff, and some unions have affirmative action programs underway.



Percentage of Women unionized within Each Industry December, 1978

Women are not a temporary part of our economy. They will continue to look to paid work for financial support and personal fulfillment. Women in the labour force are demanding from their unions and from society an end to unequal treatment.

Sources: Statistics Canada — *Income Distributions by Size in Canada* (13-207), 1978
The Labour Force (71-001), 1978
Corporations and Labour Unions Reporting Act (71-202), Part II, 1978

For Discussion:

1. Women are often told they are discriminated against because they are not primary bread-winners. How many of your female co-workers consider their wages necessary to the family? How many are self-supporting or helping to support their families? Are they satisfied with their wages and their work opportunities?

2. In your workplace, are there jobs done exclusively by men or by women? If so, compare the jobs considering responsibility, physical effort, working conditions, difficulty of work and experience required. Could the job be done by either sex? Do the jobs have different salaries?

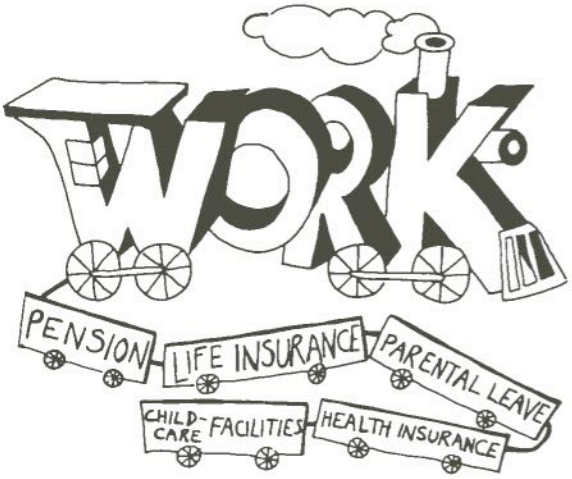
3. "Unions are likely to be a major factor in improving the position of women in the work force." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Does your union listen to and act on the needs of women workers? How could you get your union to act on these needs?

Equal Partners for Change: Women and Unions

Reaping the Benefits

Fringe benefits are often ignored by women entering the workforce. However, benefits are part of any worker's income, and they must be included when equal pay for work of equal value is being calculated. Fringe benefits are any payments to workers that don't come from work performance such as payments made for sickness, disability, retirement, pregnancy or death. All workers should look at these benefits as an earned right. For any worker, loss of income can be devastating but for women, already at the low end of the pay scale, it is doubly difficult. Union negotiators are trying to eliminate the sex discrimination within fringe benefits as well as in wages.

The structure of fringe benefits is largely based on traditional assumptions about men as heads of families and women as dependents or secondary wage earners. However, these assumptions are not valid in Canada where half the women are in the labour force, and most of them are self-supporting, heads of families or equal partners in providing family income.



Pensions

Few women in Canada have the chance for a good pension, a hard-won right of unionized workers. Only 27% of female salaried employees are covered by a private pension plan, and most of these women are employed by governments or crown corporations.

A 1974 study of private pension plans found that many plans exclude or discriminate against female workers. Some plans only cover earnings above a certain level which few women reach. Other plans cover only occupational categories where women are rarely found. Many plans do not allow women entry until later than men and insist on an earlier retirement for women, thus cutting up to ten earning years from their eligible time of service.

In both private and public plans, pension benefits are based on a percentage of average earnings. As women's salaries are lower than men's, their benefits are smaller. In addition, plans such as the Canada Pension Plan base their benefits on the average earnings over the number of years workers "could" have been employed. It does not allow exclusions for child-rearing years. Many women, who have taken some time out of their working life to care for their young children, will find that even if they have worked for most of their life, their pensions are severely reduced by the child-rearing years.

To eliminate discrimination in private plans, unionized workers must have a say in the use of pension funds which are now largely employer-controlled.

Inequalities in private pension plans, and inadequate public pensions help make elderly women among the poorest of Canada's poor. The statistics on incomes of the aged are grim. Women over 70 have average incomes of $3,438 while men of the same age receive $5,804. While far too many of all our elderly are poor, the position of elderly women is desperate.

Insurance Plans

In the case of group life insurance plans, women are often penalized because family duties have taken them out of the work force more often than men. On the basis of this actual or presumed family responsibility, women often must pay more for the same benefits. Some insurance plans pay less to the survivors of female policyholders than to survivors of males. Others distinguish between "principal" and "secondary" wage earners when paying benefits. Similar discrimination may occur in health plans where the spouse of a female worker may not be covered, while wives of male workers are covered. Not enough information has been collected over long periods of time to justify the underlying assumption of many health plans that women have greater health costs than men and therefore should pay larger premiums.

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In negotiating contracts, unions need to ensure that pension plans and health and life insurance plans equally protect male and female workers.

Childbearing/Childrearing

For many women, childbearing can be an expensive business. Although most female workers are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits during pregnancy leave, these benefits do not replace the full loss of salary. Regulations governing the length of pregnancy leave, protection of seniority and eligibility for leave vary from province to province. Collective agreements can give workers additional benefits during this type of leave but many do not protect seniority or fringe benefits while others deny women increments that occurred during the time of their leave.

In negotiations, unions, employers and society must recognize that we all have a special responsibility toward the bearing and raising of children. In addition to protecting the income and well-being of the mother, parental leave provisions should acknowledge the wish and right of the father to be involved in child-care. Some countries now recognize the rights of both parents by allowing either of the parents to take leave to care for the infant up to a joint total of one year after birth.

Similar provision is being made in some contracts for parental leave for either men or women to care for children who are ill or have special needs requiring parental attention. Parental leave guarantees both parents the right to a certain number of days to be used at their discretion to care for their children. Without this provision, many parents have to use their own sick leave to care for their children.

With so many women in the workforce, children need the supporting service of child-care or after-four care. Yet the most recent statistics available show that most children are not receiving that essential care. Over one million children under 14, half of them under 6, need child-care. Only 2% of children under 6 are in child-care or child nurseries. One out of ten children has no permanent day-care arrangement at all. Unions can help working parents by asking for joint union-employer child-care programs, either as on-site facilities or as financial subsidies so that parents can purchase services near their homes. Unions are also pressuring governments for better subsidies and better facilities for child-care services.

To equalize the total wage package for women, unions are working to equalize fringe benefits. They recognize that fringe benefits are "bread and butter" issues, equally as important as increases in salaries.

For Discussion:

1. Many women feel they have two jobs — one outside the home and one inside the home caring for the family. What arrangements do workers in your workplace make for care for their children? Is the responsibility shared by both parents? Does your union or employer help parents through child-care subsidies or parental leave? What services are needed in your workplace or your community?

2. Examine the laws in your province for maternity/parental leave? How much time can a woman take as leave? Are her fringe benefits or seniority protected? How long must she have been employed to be eligible for federal unemployment insurance pregnancy benefits? Are any provisions made in law or in your contract for fathers to take leave to care for the new baby or for older children while the mother is in hospital?

3. Examine your own collective agreement and the provisions of pension and group insurance plans. Do the plans discriminate against women workers by exclusions or special rules for women? Does your union have any control over the funds of pension plans?

Who Will Mind the Children?

Every morning across Canada, thousands of parents step out of their homes and into the workplace. Some are forced to leave their children in inadequate, expensive, unstimulating or unsafe child care arrangements. The personal worry faced by these parents is a symptom of Canada's growing crisis in child care.

In our society, child care has been assumed to be the responsibility of the parents, particularly the mother. While day care was provided grudgingly for the poor or bought by the rich, it was assumed that other women would be at home to care for their children. Day care, it was thought, would encourage mothers to leave the home and fragment the traditional family.

However, mothers of young children are already in the labour force in record numbers. Almost 40% of mothers of children under 2, and almost 50% of mothers of children from 3-5 are already in paid employment. Single parent families, economic pressures on the nuclear family and the need for personal fulfillment for women have meant increasing numbers of mothers in the workplace. Each family has to cope individually with the problems of finding child care.

Quality day care provides young children with a warm and caring environment where they can grow and develop. Good day care is more than just a babysitting service for working parents. A good day care centre or day care home is a place for children to mix, to learn and to understand other children and other adults.

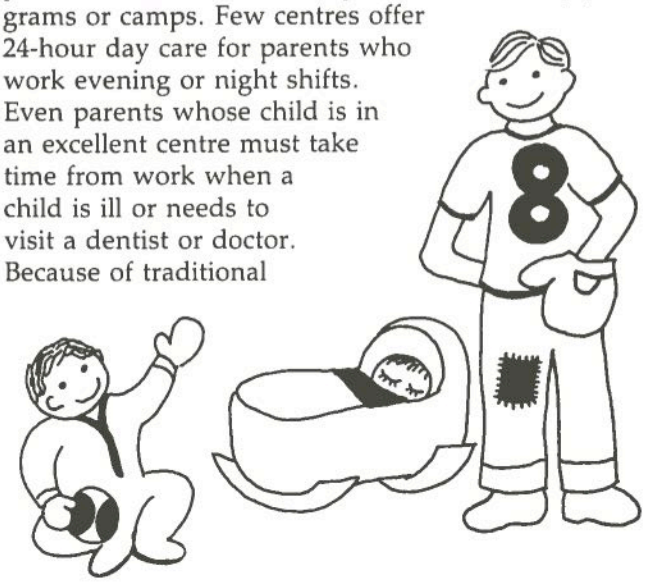
Today's young family is small, mobile and isolated. Good day care provides play and friendship opportunities for the young child who may not have brothers or sisters. It is a network of community support for families who may be hundreds of miles from grandparents, aunts and uncles. Its trained staff and concerned parents provide knowledgeable advice for young parents on child rearing. It is a place where the community and the parents can share the joys and responsibilities of caring for children.

There are a variety of child care arrangements. **Public or non-profit** day care centres care for children in a group setting. These day care centres have trained staff to encourage the full physical, mental, emotional and social development of the young child. The centres are run by a variety of community, social and government institutions. They are regulated by law to control such things as programming, diet, play space, equipment, health standards and staff training.

Commercial or corporate day care centres also provide group care for children but many give a "franchised" service, restricting quality and quantity of staff, facilities and programming to show a profit.

Space in day care centres is hard to find. Every month, 3,500 inquiries are made to day care centres in Metro Toronto alone by frustrated parents looking for child care. Space in public day care centres has declined 40% since 1978 as a result of social service cutbacks and restraints. Corporate and commercial day care operations have grown by 28%.

Most centres care for children from age 2 to kindergarten. There are a few infant or school-age child care centres in Canada. For vacation or school holidays, parents must scramble for space in community programs or camps. Few centres offer 24-hour day care for parents who work evening or night shifts. Even parents whose child is in an excellent centre must take time from work when a child is ill or needs to visit a dentist or doctor. Because of traditional



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attitudes and women's lower wage levels, it is frequently the mother who uses her own sick leave or loses wages when a parent is needed to care for a sick child.

If parents are lucky enough to find space in a centre, the high cost of day care may discourage them. Some subsidies are available for parents of children in non-profit or public day care centres. These subsidies differ from province to province, but most exclude the middle-income earner. Day care costs run from $140 to $400 per month per child.

The high cost and unavailability of day care spaces drive many parents into private day care arrangements. One Ontario study found that 75% of children receiving care outside the home were in private child care situations. While there are some good day care homes, the majority of children are receiving care in unsupervised conditions, from untrained caregivers with no expertise or training in the physical, emotional and social needs of the young child.

Accessibility and cost are key factors in the provision of day care services. Almost all European countries provide extensive child care services at little or no cost. In countries such as France and Sweden, the majority of children aged 3-6 are in free or nominal fee, voluntary pre-school programs. Younger children benefit from a wide variety of services including infant care centres, lengthy paid parental leave and supervised family day care homes.

In Sweden, the social policy which emphasizes equality between the sexes and the close integration of work and family life has created an extensive network of child care services. Programs for children of school age provide lunchtime, after-four and vacation care. Either parent is given special leave for days when their children are sick or need special attention. Fathers are encouraged by government policy and advertising to take an active role in parenting.

The Swedish Parent Insurance system provides a taxable cash benefit equal to 95% of wages for up to one year after the birth of the child. Both parents are able and encouraged to share this flexible benefit.

In Canada, day care services are not seen as a social right, essential to the well-being of the family. Child care services are provided only when public pressure is strong and vocal. There is no national planning for an integrated system of child care services. Funding for day care is shared by federal, provincial and by some municipal governments, and funding systems vary across the country.

In this confusion of services and funding, parents and day care workers are the losers. Child care workers put in long, strenuous days with few breaks for minimal wages. Few day care centres are unionized, and day care workers have almost no protection or benefits. Government restraint programs have kept wages and facilities at a very basic level.

Parents, community organizations and unions are demanding that child care be provided as a social right for children from birth to age 12 through a system of publicly-funded, non-compulsory child care services.

A universal, comprehensive network of child care services must be planned and include a variety of options so that parents can choose the care most appropriate for their child, including:

- Publicly-funded, non-profit day care centres in community locations such as schools, churches, union halls, libraries and community centres. These centres would be staffed by trained day care workers whose valuable work would be recognized in wages and benefits. In addition to providing group care for children, these centres could act as resource centres for registered, private day care homes and in-home day care workers.
- Registered, private day care homes with trained care-givers and facilities appropriate for the young child. These publicly-funded and supervised homes would use the day care centres as a resource. The home day care worker would also receive appropriate pay and benefits.
- Part-time programs for school age children including lunchtime, before and after school care, vacation and teacher development day programming.
- In-home workers who could go to the child's home to provide care during emergencies, illness or when parents are working evening or night shifts.
- A flexible system of community control of such child care services so that parents and day care workers retain control over decisions affecting the children in their care.
- Paid parental leave for up to 10 days per year for each parent for the care of children who are ill or require special attention.
- Paid parental leave for either parent to care for an infant for up to a joint total of one year after the birth or adoption.
- In recognition of the choice made by some parents of young children to spend more time in the home with their children, the comprehensive system of child care services may also include flexible hours.

As an interim step toward universal day care, some workplace day care centres could be established under the joint control of parents, union and management.

To implement a comprehensive system of child care services will take time and a concerted effort by parents, day care workers, unions, community groups and governments.

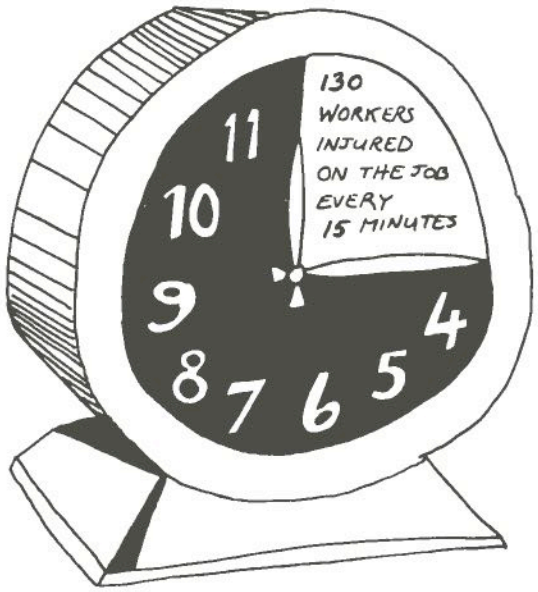
For Discussion:

1. How are the children of workers in your local being cared for while parents are at work? How many are in private day care homes, in public or non-profit day care centres, in commercial centres, with a relative, or are after-school "Latchkey" kids? What are the costs of day care services for these children? What kinds of services do parents in your workplace need most for their children?
2. Day care is often used as a support by young families. How do the strains of the single-parent family, two parents in the workforce, economic pressures, isolation from the extended family, etc., affect the families in your workplace? What services could the day care centre or day care home provide to ease these strains?

Fit to Work:
Health on the Job

Good health is not just the absence of disease. It is defined by the World Health Organization as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being."

Working women face many health and safety hazards which endanger their own health and that of their unborn children. As more women enter the work force, and more women enter non-traditional occupations, the risks to their health increase. Every 15 minutes, 130 workers are injured on the job. For every day lost to strikes and lockouts, six days are lost because of workplace accidents and disease. The costs in human suffering and financial losses are enormous.



As a direct result of working, women are exposed on a regular basis to physical, chemical, biological and psychological hazards to their health.

Physical hazards such as noise, vibration, extremes of temperature and radiation can cause accidents and disease: deafness from noise, bone and joint disease from vibration, collapse or coma from heat or cold and blood disease and genetic deformities in the fetus from radiation. In addition, physical hazards also cause increased psychological stress for the worker.

People working with plants, animals or groups of people face biological hazards. Diseases such as rabies or brucellosis can be transmitted by animals. Some diseases such as brown lung or asbestosis are caused by plant dust, fibres or fungi. Contagious diseases are special risks for workers who are constantly exposed to large groups of people or to vaccines or laboratory work.

For workers in industry, chemicals pose a constant threat. Three thousand new chemicals are added every year to the hundreds of thousands already in use. Most have not been tested to determine the toxic affects on humans. Although workers may not show any immediate ill effects from using certain chemicals, the disease may show up ten or twenty years later, long after hundreds of other workers have been exposed.

Women workers often suffer psychological stress because of the low-prestige, monotonous and unsatisfying work which they are limited to carrying out. Stress from these factors in addition to overwork or shift work, sexual harassment, production pressures, or noise and vibration can cause mental illness and physical symptoms. Psychological stress also makes workers more susceptible to other health hazards.

Some occupations dominated by women workers pose particular risks: airline attendants face jet-lag, stress and noise causing fatigue and alterations in the menstrual cycle. Dental workers and hospital workers are exposed to anaesthetic gases, X-rays and contagious

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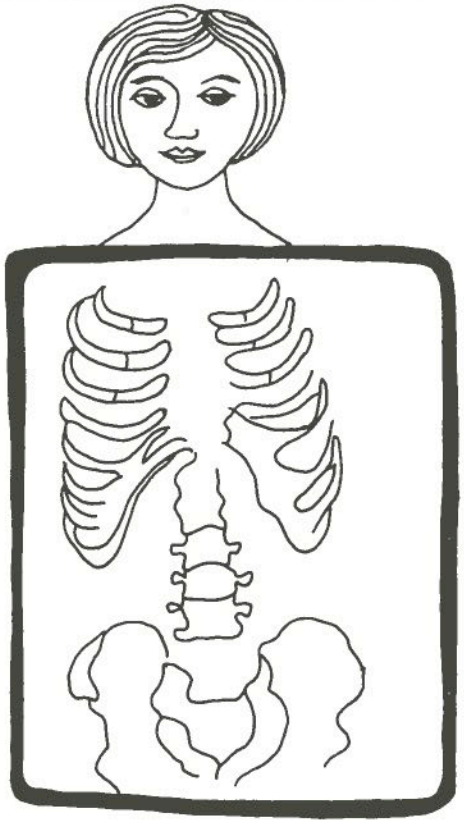
disease. Textile workers are in danger of cancer, brown lung or asbestosis from chemicals, cotton dust or asbestos fibres. Laundry and dry cleaning employees come in constant contact with dangerous chemicals causing diseases from skin rashes to cancer.



Pregnant workers face risks to their own health and to the health of the fetus. Miscarriage, birth defects, stillbirth and prematurity can be caused by workplace hazards. Because many substances can be inhaled, ingested or absorbed by the mother and passed on to the fetus, the risk to the unborn child can be very high, particularly in the first trimester of pregnancy when the mother may not realize she is pregnant. Anaesthetic gases, beryllium, carbon monoxide, carbon disulfide, estrogens and synthetic hormones and hydrocarbons pose a serious threat to pregnant women, and may harm the male reproductive system causing defects in their children.

The response of employers to the hazards facing pregnant women has been to refuse to hire or to fire women of child-bearing age working in areas of potential risk. One woman has been voluntarily sterilized so that she could continue to work in a battery plant using chemicals. However if health hazards are a danger to pregnant women, the workplace is not healthy for any worker. The answer is to cure the sick workplace, not to deny jobs to women workers.

Laws regulating health and safety differ from province to province, although some industries are covered by federal law. Some provinces now require joint employer-worker health and safety committees in all workplaces over a certain size. These committees are a good first step toward adequate health and safety protection but much more must be done to guarantee a healthy workplace. Laws across Canada must give workers the right to refuse to work in situations they feel may be unhealthy or dangerous. They must have the right to joint health and safety committees which have the power to make immediate and binding decisions. They must have the right to make tests, and receive reports on those tests or on medical or environmental information related to health and safety.

The best laws however, only guarantee a minimum of protection. Through collective bargaining, these laws can be improved on by health and safety clauses in new agreements.

For Discussion:

1. Evaluate your own job for health hazards. Are you exposed to dangerous chemicals, plant fibres or dusts, excessive noise, vibration, temperature or constant mental stress? What are the dangers in your workplace for female workers of child-bearing age?

2. A pregnant woman in your workplace is exposed to chemical hazards on the job. These chemicals could possibly harm her unborn child. The employer wants to lay her off but she has appealed to the union. What, if any, help would she get from your collective agreement? Is she protected by any provincial legislation? What is the ideal solution to this problem?

3. Is your workplace covered by provincial or federal health and safety laws? Does your contract or provincial law call for joint worker-employer health and safety committees? Are health and safety problems a major concern at the time of collective bargaining?