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INEQUALITY AT WORK

Printed by Thistle Printing Limited





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A joint publication of The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto and the Women's Studies and Affirmative Action Departments of the Board of Education for the City of Toronto.

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The Facts

How Many Women Work? And Why?

All women work. In total, there are more than 4 million women in Ontario over the age of 15. Many of these women manage households and more than 1.8 million work outside the home for pay.*

Women have dramatically altered the composition of the labour force during the past twenty years. In 1960 women made up 31.4% of the Ontario labour force. By 1980, that proportion increased to 42%. By 1990, more than 75% of women aged 25-54 are expected to be in the labour force. Current predictions indicate that women will constitute approximately half of the total work force in Canada by the turn of the century.

Women do not work for 'pin money' — although salaries paid to women suggest this belief is still pervasive in our society. When you come right down to it, women work for basically the same reasons men do — for money, and for the satisfactions that come from doing a job well.

*Statistics used throughout are for women and men in the paid labour force.

Many Women Must Work In Order To Survive.

In 1980 39% of Canadian women in the labour force were single, widowed or divorced. They worked to support themselves and to provide for their families. Single mothers were particularly disadvantaged. A 1979 study by the National Council of Welfare found that 44% of this group struggled to subsist on incomes well below the poverty line. With double-digit inflation steadily eroding purchasing power, more and more families find they cannot maintain an adequate standard of living without two wage-earners.

THE NUMBER OF TWO PARTNER FAMILIES LIVING BELOW THE POVERTY LINE IN ONTARIO WOULD INCREASE BY 65% IF THE WOMEN IN THESE FAMILIES WERE NOT EMPLOYED.

Increasingly, a woman's place is in the labour force — out of necessity!

What Kinds Of Jobs Do Women Do?

Working women can be found in every sector of the economy and in a wide variety of work settings. However, the majority of women work in a severely restricted range of occupations and have done so for decades. These jobs have become type cast as **women's work**. They are invariably the lowest paid jobs in the occupational roster, the most menial, and the ones with the least status and opportunity for advancement. They are the **job ghettos**.

The largest ghetto is the clerical, sales and service sector where a whopping 62.8% of Canadian women workers are employed. In response to the question, "What do you do?" fully one-third of Canadian women respond "I'm a clerical worker." compared to only 6.5% of male workers. In fact, 77% of all clerical workers are women.

This is not an isolated example. Women are under-represented in most other occupations with respect to their proportion of the labour force or in comparison to male representation. In 1979 only 4.5% of Canadian women were employed as managers and administrators while 9.3% of Canadian men held such positions. The proportion of women in Canada who hold technical and skilled labour positions is even smaller. For example, only .2% of women were employed in construction trades compared to 10.3% of men.

Despite popular reports to the contrary, only a small proportion of working women obtain employment in non-traditional work outside the traditionally female job ghettos. For every female carpenter reported with media fanfare, there are thousands of secretaries, nurses, maids and telephone operators. Occupational segregation based on sex is a major reason for wage disparities between men and women. No improvement in this situation is in sight. Several recent studies have reported that the Canadian labour force is becoming increasingly segregated by sex as more and more women pour into the work force.

Equal Pay!

What Is A Woman Worth?

About three-fifths of a man, in dollar terms.



In 1979, a Canadian woman working full-time earned a meagre 63.3% of the earnings of her male counterpart. Even in office occupations where women workers are in the majority, wage differences based on sex persist. This fact is illustrated in the table below.

**Average Weekly Wage Rates For Ontario Workers
In Selected Office Occupations, By Sex, 1980**

Occupation	Average Weekly Wage		Female as % Male
	Female	Male	
	\$	\$	%
Bookkeeper, Sr.	272	364	74.7
Clerk, General Office, Jr.	201	238	84.4
Clerk, General Office, Sr.	275	313	87.8
Computer Operator, Sr.	273	335	81.5
Cost Clerk	255	314	81.2
Office Manager	364	436	83.5
Stock Records Clerk	224	302	74.2
Systems Analyst, Sr.	460	520	88.5

SOURCE: Labour Canada, *Wage Rates, Salaries and Hours of Labour: Ontario, 1980.*

How Does Canada Compare To Other Industrialized Nations?

Canada's record is dismal. In a 1980 report on the status of women, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development placed Canada at the bottom of its survey of 19 developed countries. Sweden, with the best record, has reduced its wage gap through effective remuneration policies so that Swedish women now make 86% of the male wage. Despite Canada's singular lack of accomplishment in narrowing the wage gap for women thus far, the Swedish example demonstrates that the possibility of doing so is not an idle day dream.

IT IS A QUESTION OF COMMITMENT!

Isn't There A Law Guaranteeing Equal Pay?

There is. Women in Ontario have won the right to equal pay for equal work. The Ontario Employment Standards Act specifies that men and women working in the same establishment and performing substantially the same work must be paid the same amount.

However . . . despite Ontario's equal pay legislation, evidence indicates that there is a dual wage scale operating: one pay rate for men and another lower rate for women. This disparity is evident even when quite specific occupational categories are considered within the same establishment. A 1975 report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Labour showed that salaries paid to men exceeded those paid to women working in the same jobs in the same workplace by an average of 22%. Several studies have come to the same conclusion. Even when allowance is made for differences in variables such as age, education, job level and seniority, a substantial wage gap of 10 to 25% remains. This can only be attributed to discrimination on the basis of sex.

In Fact, Despite Ontario's Present Equal Pay Legislation, the Wage Gap is *WIDENING!*

The lower pay scale for women also has a *spillover effect* since wage discrimination affects all benefits based on wage rates such as unemployment or life insurance, vacation pay and pensions. The *spillover effect* continues throughout a woman's working life. It has a particularly serious impact during retirement since pensions are based on pre-retirement income. Few part-time workers, 71% of whom are women, have access to coverage by private pension plans and pension benefits calculated by income are denied to women who labour for years in the home without pay to raise the next generation. Women are frequently faced with poverty in old age after a lifetime of hard work and economic discrimination.

What If You Don't Have A Man For Job Comparison?

EXACTLY! The Employment Standards Act requires that men and women must be performing the same job within the same workplace before equal work legislation applies. Most Canadian women work in clerical and service sector job ghettos with few or no male co-workers. In effect, the law is irrelevant to the majority of working women in Ontario since they have no legal basis for demanding wage parity.

A few statistics illustrate the inadequacy of the current legislation. In the fiscal year 1979-80, only 37 of Ontario's 1.8 million working women received compensation under Ontario's equal pay legislation. Together they were awarded \$56,212. In 1980-81, although the number of women receiving compensation rose to 391, they represented only two hundredths of one percent of the working women in Ontario.

The law is further weakened by inadequate enforcement, laborious procedures and provisions requiring that the individual complainant must seek redress rather than allowing for group actions without the consent of all injured parties.

Clearly, if changes are not made in equal pay legislation in Ontario, present and future generations of women in this province must anticipate continuing wage discrimination as they labour in the *pink collar ghettos* that constitute their *place* in a sexist society. Earnings differentials between men and women show no sign of shrinking at this time. We must recognize that Ontario legislation which attempts to guarantee equal pay for equal work has been a failure.

ONTARIO WOMEN WILL NOT QUIETLY ACCEPT THE MERE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL PAY WITHOUT THE REALITY!

If Equal Pay Legislation Isn't Working, Is There An Alternative?

Yes . . . Equal Pay For Work of Equal Value.

Women's work is not unskilled, but it is undervalued and underpaid relative to work performed by men. Women are paid less not because *pink collar* labour requires less skill, but because female labour is less valued than male labour.

Even in Ontario's public service, a woman's pay cheque often reflects sexual discrimination and devalued labour. Switchboard operators, 95% of whom are women, are required to have a high school education, one year of work experience, courtesy, tact, clear enunciation and the ability to communicate orally. Parking lot attendants, all of whom are men, must have grade eight education and know the location of government offices. Predictably, in spite of their higher level of skill, experience and knowledge the switchboard operators are paid \$40 less per week on average than parking lot attendants.

This is not an isolated example. Under Ontario's present equal pay for equal work legislation no comparison of these jobs can be made although the situation is blatantly unfair. With laws guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value, jobs of different types within the same establishment could be compared based on their intrinsic qualities — skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions — rather than on the sex of the worker, as they are now.

EQUAL VALUE — IT'S GETTING PAID WHAT YOU'RE WORTH!

Has Equal Pay For Work Of Equal Value Ever Been Tried?

The Canadian Human Rights Code requires equal pay for work of equal value in organizations under federal jurisdiction. Quebec has also adopted similar legislation. These laws are designed to promote equality between men and women by re-evaluating **women's jobs** according to their real worth.

Although Ontario was the first province to legislate equal pay for equal work, it now lags far behind other jurisdictions in implementing more advanced policies such as equal pay for work of equal value.

Can We Afford Equal Pay For Work Of Equal Value?

Women Receive Three-Fifths Of The Income Men Receive On Average.

This wage differential is, in effect, a subsidy to the Canadian economy paid by women. The extent of this subsidy can be estimated by the price tags attached to recent cases settled under equal pay for work of equal value legislation in Quebec and Federal government jurisdictions.

— In 1978, North Shore Pulp and Paper of Baie Comeau, Quebec agreed to pay out \$25,914 in retroactive pay and more than \$16,000 per year in salary increases to 24 female typists, receptionists and IBM operators. Their jobs were considered to be equal in value to male wood measurers, draftsmen and inventory clerks.

— In 1981, 470 federal government librarians were awarded a \$2.3 million dollar settlement when their jobs were evaluated at the same level as male historical researchers.

IF A JUST SOCIETY IS TO BE MORE THAN AN EMPTY PROMISE, THE EFFECTS OF DISCRIMINATION MUST BE ELIMINATED!

As the examples illustrate, women workers are paid less **BECAUSE THEY ARE WOMEN**. They form a pool of cheap labour for government and industry. Women have been working at less than full pay for decades. Their contribution to the labour force entitles women to a major redistribution of the rewards generated by our economy.

AREN'T WOMEN ENTITLED TO AN EQUAL SHARE OF THE WEALTH THEIR LABOUR PRODUCES?

Equal Opportunity

We Don't Practice Discrimination — Or Do We?

Discrimination based on sex or sexism is deeply imbedded in our society. Its effect is particularly noticeable in the workplace. Overt discrimination of the door-slammng variety is just one of the possible manifestations of discrimination in employment. Systemic discrimination, which is the product of employment practices and systems, is much more common and frequently exists even when there is no intent to discriminate.

For example, systems which a firm customarily uses for hiring and promotion may unintentionally discourage women from competing for many jobs. A factory which recruits by word of mouth among its mostly male tradespeople is unlikely to receive many female applicants for apprenticeship positions. Women may be routinely ignored for training and promotion and left to languish in dead end jobs. Height and weight requirements may be maintained even when they no longer have any bearing on job performance due to modern technological developments. Pre-employment tests, used to screen potential employees, can be unreliable predictors of on-the-job performance and may discriminate against women. Sexist bias which may be inherent in subjective

criteria (such as ability to fit in, initiative and commitment) often applied by interviewers and potential employers may also unfairly eliminate many women. Whether or not they are intentional, such practices do have a discriminatory effect. They bar women from equal access to employment opportunities.

THE EFFECT OF SYSTEMIC DISCRIMINATION IS JUST LIKE THE SLAMMING OF MANY DOORS!



How Do We Knock Down The Barriers?

We begin by taking action to eliminate systemic discrimination and by ensuring that women as a group have the chance to catch up. A positive action plan for the development of equal employment opportunity is often referred to as an Affirmative Action Plan. The goal of an Affirmative Action Plan is to increase the representation of women in job categories where they have been previously under-represented or excluded.

In order to achieve this goal an Affirmative Action Plan should be designed and implemented by a committee of management and where possible union or employee representatives. It must include:

- strong public commitment from senior management to support the development of equal employment opportunity through Affirmative Action.
- an analysis of the present status of women and men within the organization.
- a review of personnel practices to identify systemic barriers to employment and advancement.
- the establishment of goals and timetables for the employment of women at all levels and in all job categories.
- a rigorous management accountability system whereby managers are held accountable for achieving the goals established under the Affirmative Action Plan.
- ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress toward the achievement of equal employment opportunity.

STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY CAN INCLUDE:

- the active recruitment of women
- identification and training of women with management potential
- encouragement and training for women to develop non-traditional job skills
- job rotation or job bridging programs

It doesn't make sense for an employer to assign jobs on the basis of sex rather than ability. Affirmative Action has positive effects for the entire organization. The re-design of employment practices using objective criteria ensures a more effective use of the talents of ALL employees, not just women.

Has Affirmative Action Been Tried In Canada?

Yes . . . but only on a voluntary basis in the private sector. Both the Federal and Ontario governments have developed programs which encourage employers to undertake Affirmative Action programs voluntarily. What has been the result? Since 1979 the Affirmative Action Division of the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission has contacted more than 700 employers across Canada in federally regulated industries or with federal government contracts to request that they volunteer to develop their own Affirmative Action programs for one or more of three target groups: women, the physically handicapped and native Canadians. Only twenty-seven employers had agreed to do so by the end of 1981.

In Ontario, the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Labour has provided Affirmative Action consulting services with a focus on women to approximately 600 employers, labour organizations and management consulting firms since 1975. Ongoing consulting service is being provided for approximately 170 employers who are currently involved in the implementation of Affirmative Action policies. Affirmative Action programs undertaken in the private sector may vary widely in content and scope in Ontario since there are no legislated guidelines. Activity can range from educational seminars for managers to raise their awareness and understanding of the issue to a comprehensive commitment to achieving equality in employment for women. The Women's Bureau requires that a number of components of Affirmative Action be undertaken by an employer before that employer is recognized by the Bureau as having an Affirmative Action program.

The Ontario government's own Affirmative Action plan is an example of how we might move towards equality for women in the workplace. An Ontario Cabinet directive ordered a MANDATORY Affirmative Action program for

women crown employees in 1974 after receiving pressure from women across the province. Numerical planning and targeting to increase the representation of women and to diversify women across occupational categories is a requirement of the current plan.

Women in the Ontario civil service have not made large measurable gains since the adoption of mandatory Affirmative Action in 1974. However, the fact that they have not lost ground may be some indication that the program is having some effect. In 1981, as in 1974, women in the Ontario civil service earned approximately 72% of the salaries paid to men on average. Women in most other sectors have been losing ground, with their wages falling further behind their male colleagues on average during this same period.

Clearly, voluntary Affirmative Action isn't working in other sectors. It is just moving too slowly! If Affirmative Action is to be an effective instrument for achieving equality for women in the work force, it must be backed up by legislation. It must not be left to employers to adopt at whim.

VOLUNTARY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ISN'T WORKING. IT IS TIME FOR LEGISLATED AFFIRMATIVE ACTION!

Another way that government can influence corporate responsiveness to Affirmative Action is by making it a condition of government contracts. Through contract compliance, a vendor would be required to establish an Affirmative Action plan or face the possibility of losing the government contract. Contractors would be accountable for the socially responsible use of public monies for equal opportunity, as well as for the quality of goods and services supplied. Government contracts must cease to be a source of profit for organizations that are openly discriminatory, as is now the case.

VOLUNTARY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ISN'T WORKING. IT IS TIME FOR CONTRACT COMPLIANCE!

What About Equal Opportunity For Women In Non-Traditional Occupations?

Canada is facing a crisis because of the lack of skilled workers in traditionally male occupations. At the same time, the traditionally female clerical, sales and service occupations which account for most working women are precisely the jobs that will be hardest hit by the revolution in micro-electronics. One recent study by the Institute for Research on Public Policy predicts that by 1990 one million women could be facing unemployment in these fields. The crisis is already creating havoc in the lives of women who cannot find employment and are effectively barred from occupations traditionally reserved for men.

Many of the 2.8 million new jobs that will be created during this decade will be in highly skilled blue collar occupations or high technology fields. The increase in jobs in these sectors coincides with a slowdown in the rate of growth in the number of people in the labour force. Two-thirds of the new entrants to the work force will be women. If Canada is to meet increased world competition in newly emerging technologies, women must be recruited to fill these positions.

However, little action is being undertaken to meet the impending crisis. For example, in 1978-79 women were only 3% of all apprentices. Almost three-quarters of the female apprentices were being trained for traditional jobs such as hairdressing or cooking. Affirmative Action programs which provide apprenticeship opportunities for women in non-traditional fields are urgently required if future needs are to be met.

While overcoming a critical labour shortage, government could at the same time provide equal opportunities for women in non-traditional fields.

Productivity is lagging as industry seeks but cannot find skilled people to do society's work.

HOW MUCH LONGER MUST WOMEN WAIT FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM PRODUCTIVE TASKS ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH MEN?

What Family Supports Are Needed To Equalize Employment Opportunity?

Working women with families have two jobs: one in the marketplace which is paid and another in the home which is unpaid. In most cases, women assume major responsibility for child care and household maintenance in addition to holding down a paid job. It is a double burden that few working men must face. For example, a 1971 Vancouver study of couples where both spouses held full-time paid jobs found that wives did twenty-eight hours of regular housework per week compared to four hours of housework per week done by their husbands. This double work-load constrains the opportunities and rewards which women can obtain in the work place.

Policies which support working parents and their children, often called parental rights, could contribute to equal opportunity in the work place by facilitating a more equitable distribution of child care responsibilities between parents, as well as between parents and society. Canadians have long accepted the principle of collective responsibility for the young and expressed this belief through child welfare legislation, income tax credits and

mandatory universal education. Ours is a society with rapidly changing child rearing patterns and an escalating inflation rate which often demands two income earners per family for economic survival. Change is required to shift the responsibility of caring for children solely from women to other family members and to society.

Maternity Leave

MATERNITY IS AN IMPORTANT SOCIAL ACTIVITY ALTHOUGH WE TEND TO RECOGNIZE IT AS AN INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY.

Through it, society is maintained and future citizens and workers produced. Nevertheless, women are subject to an unequal financial burden for bearing the next generation. Women anticipating maternity are forced to rely on the sharply reduced income available through unemployment insurance (if they qualify) precisely at a time when financial burdens are substantially increased. Clearly, the wages of working women are as necessary to them as they are to men.

MEN ARE NOT PENALIZED FOR PATERNITY, WHY SHOULD WOMEN BE PENALIZED FOR MATERNITY?

Discrimination based on reproductive function can be corrected by providing fully paid maternity leave, without loss of benefits or seniority for a period adequate to safeguard maternal and child health.

Paternity Leave

Fully paid paternity leave must be available so that the father can share in the birth and assist in the care of the new child without financial penalty. The mother should not be required to bear the total burden.

Parental Leave

Extended parental leave must be available to either parent for child rearing, or to both parents on a shared basis, without loss of seniority or benefits. Although only women can bear children, either or both parents can raise them. Parental leave should be available to adoptive as well as natural parents. In addition, adequate time off to attend sick children should be granted.

Daycare

Daycare must be universally accessible, affordable and of high quality to ensure that mothers can obtain paid employment and seek advancement on the same basis as fathers. More twenty-four hour daycare centres must be established to accommodate parents who work irregular hours or on shifts.

On close inspection, some *women's issues* turn out to be *men's issues* too. With the number of working mothers increasing rapidly and a growing desire among fathers to share in the pleasures and responsibilities of raising children, parental rights can mean a positive change for both sexes.

Equal Representation

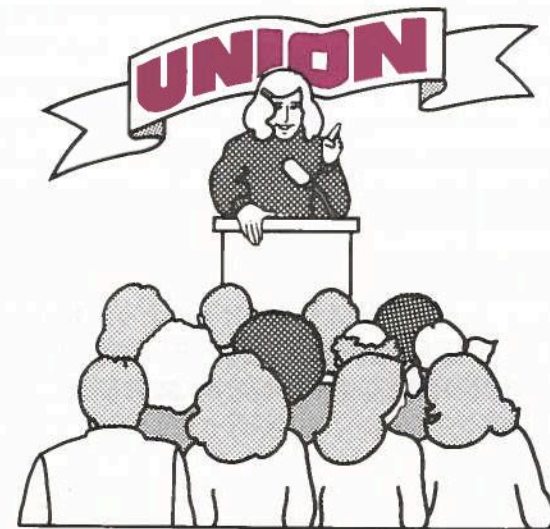
Will Unionization Help Women Achieve Economic Equality?

Unionization improves employment conditions for working people, whether male or female, by negotiating a legally binding contract providing job security, greater control over pay, benefits and working conditions, seniority, a grievance procedure with dispute arbitration by a third party and the collective strength to bargain on other issues in the work place. Non-discrimination clauses have been placed on the bargaining table and won by many unions in Ontario.

Union growth in Canada is on the rise as women recognize the benefits of collective bargaining. In the decade 1965-75, the number of women belonging to trade unions increased by 144% compared to an increase of 38% for men. This increase has taken place largely among public sector employees — teachers, nurses and hospital, clerical and office workers — occupations where women are in the majority.

As with other organizations in our society, the record of unions in asserting the equal rights of women is less than perfect. Nevertheless, awareness of women's concerns and willingness to bargain on these issues have improved substantially with the recent influx of women into the labour movement.

Women and men can use their collective strength at the bargaining table to hasten economic equality by negotiating contract clauses of specific benefit to women. Provisions can include parental rights, the usage of non-sexist language, exclusion of personal services to employers, pro-rated benefits for part-time workers, protection from sexual harassment and clauses guaranteeing equal opportunity.



**WOMEN MUST WORK ACTIVELY FOR EQUALITY BY JOINING UNIONS AND BY ASSERTING THEIR RIGHTS AS UNION MEMBERS.
THE PAYOFF CAN BE SUBSTANTIAL!**

Equal Pay For Equal Work

Unionization is a method more likely to achieve equal pay than reliance on Ontario's ineffectual legislation. A recent study of office workers found a wage differential of 16.8% between non-unionized men and women performing the same work, compared to 8.6% for those belonging to a union.

Equal Pay For Work Of Equal Value

A union can negotiate a plan to evaluate men's and women's jobs on the basis of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions rather than sex. This can lead to the achievement of fairer wage rates between women and men. Monitoring by union members can ensure that the evaluation plan chosen does not perpetuate the devaluing of traditionally female work. With the present ineffective Ontario equal pay legislation, unions are an important tool to use to overcome the wage gap.

Improved Wage Rates

IN 1977, UNIONIZED FEMALE OFFICE WORKERS RECEIVED AN AVERAGE OF \$26 PER WEEK MORE THAN NON-UNIONIZED OFFICE WORKERS.

Technological Change

Women can benefit by bargaining for job protection and retraining for alternative employment when new office machines are introduced. The health and safety implications of new technologies can be monitored with union support.

Discrimination

Contract clauses can expand the prohibited grounds contained in the Human Rights Code and provide a faster mechanism to resolve disputes.

Seniority

A plant wide union seniority system can provide improved opportunities for women to move out of female job ghettos into better paid jobs traditionally held by men.

What Can We Do About Inequality At Work?

The discrimination that confronts women workers every day has many adverse effects on them and their families. There isn't a single easy solution that will eliminate the results of decades of socially accepted inequality overnight. Multiple changes in our economic and social systems are essential if women are to achieve equality in the workplace in Ontario.

At a minimum, a commitment to progress toward equality for women must include: provision for economic equality; equal opportunity to select careers, to advance on the job and to seek new skills or retraining; improved access to union representation and the protection of labour legislation and a re-allocation of child-rearing responsibilities between parents and society.

Organize For Change!

What Can I Do?

In Ontario contact your M.P.P., the Premier and the Minister of Labour. Write your M.P.P., the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Employment and Immigration. Tell them that you want government to adopt policies that result in equality for women in the workplace. Tell them you support:

- equal pay for work of equal value
- legislated affirmative action
- contract compliance
- parental rights
- non-traditional skills training and apprenticeships

Discuss the issues with your friends. Remember some men are allies. Seek them out. Form an equality committee at your workplace to assess and improve the status of women. Hold an educational session and invite speakers from a women's organization to explain the issues. Organize within your community, in your church,

school, union, women's group, trade or professional association or wherever people are concerned about equality for women. Or form your own local group to press for change. A united voice speaks louder and with greater force than many single voices. Economic equality will come when women begin to exercise their collective power.

Circulate this booklet to other men and women concerned about inequality. Distribute it to your local news media for information. Use it in a seminar for your organization — or use it in a speech! Copies can be purchased from:

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