

**Ontario Federation of Labour**

Chartered by the Canadian Labour Congress



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Supplementary statement to: Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Timbrell  
regarding their response to the OFL brief "Making up the Difference"

We appreciate the 45 page response to our brief "Making up the Difference". We must state though, that to receive such a comprehensive response one and a half days before the meeting arranged with you, after waiting almost a full year for an answer, is at best a poor consultative process. We did not even have time to copy the response and send it to our affiliates, the submitters to our forums and the women's groups and teachers' organizations working with us, let alone properly analyze its contents.

However, given the enormous difficulties we have had in setting up this meeting, we would like to give you an initial response, and hope that further discussion is possible after we have time to read carefully through the report and consult with those working with us. Many of us here today have not even had that luxury.

At first glance, the document is an impressive summary of the activities of the Ontario government, with resources flung in all sorts of directions to assist women. Flung is an appropriate word because there appears to be no overall strategy to achieve women's equality and no legislative mandate. Despite the fact that we have had only several hours to read the document, there are immediately several concerns we have with it:

1. In responding to the call for mandatory affirmative action you once again cite both your own public service affirmative action program and the government's voluntary program as reasons for not legislating programs.

- yet despite your figures that the wage gap has improved 5.2% in the eleven years of your internal program (0.47% a year on average), 70% of women in the public service still earn less than \$20,000 a year compared with 25% of men. In addition, your hiring program is a high profile, women into management program and has done very little to break down the job ghettos that public service women are

still in, and very little to facilitate women entering non-traditional categories. 30% representation by women in the administrative module is only a 10% increase in 10 years and far from the 54% representation of women employed by you as a government. Nearly twice the training dollars still go to men even though half those enrolled are women, implying that men are still getting more extensive and expensive training. Finally, this year's report of your program has much less detail than previous years making direct comparisons difficult and obscuring the true picture.

- in the private sector you report that in 10 years, 268 employers have adopted affirmative action initiatives. You neglect to mention that there are no minimum requirements to qualify for this list and in fact surveys have shown many companies merely have a policy statement to this effect, nothing more. In addition only about 40 of these companies even make public who they are and the rest are a government secret. There are no minimum standards, no requirements to assess hiring and wage practices, no provision for workers to participate in the program, no requirement to pay equal wages for work of the same value, in short no legislative teeth to the voluntary program.

2. In responding to our recommendations for vastly expanded technology related training, for growth industry occupational training for women and the establishment of a levy-grant system of funding for training you report:

- the successes of I.N.T.O. and W.I.T.T. programs which we acknowledged in our brief, but you neglect to respond to our concerns and the concerns expressed by those teaching the programs that there are insufficient numbers of the programs, their funding is not long term, funding is inadequate to allow good equipment and the training allowance is often inadequate to meet childcare and other necessary expenses.

- the \$12 million cited for T.U.P. Technical Upgrading Program is commendable, but isn't even a drop in the bucket to deal with the training needs of 2 million women in the Ontario workforce, 194,000 of them currently unemployed and many more whose jobs are threatened.

- your comments about the levy-grant system are misleading and inaccurate. First, the Dodge report which studies the British levy-grant system from 1964-73 says that particular grant levy system was inequitable and administratively clumsy, it does not reject a levy-grant system as a valid approach. Secondly, the report you cite is the only

document that suggests such a system is not effective and the reality is that most trade unions and many businesses advocate such a skills training option. In fact, the Business Council on National Issues, comprised of 150 corporate presidents and executive officers and a key consultative body to Mr. Mulroney has recommended the levy-grant system. Ontario, it would seem, should get its information correct before making decisions not to utilize such a system.

- you mention \$150 million in addition to the \$12 million for T.U.P. over three years to assist in training of older and experienced workers. Since that fund of \$50 million per year was announced in the last budget, there have been no subsequent statements about the details of how the money will specifically be used, and if in fact any has been used. In your response to us you make reference in several different parts to say the same money will be used: to provide technical upgrading to women wanting to return to the labour force (p.7), to retain older men and women threatened with job loss (p.10), to support sole support moms re-entering the work force (p.7), and give money to training of native and immigrant women and the educationally disadvantaged (p.11). There is no indication on who will get what and how much in fact will ever go to women. Given that less than 1% of Ontario's approximately 40,000 apprentices in non-traditional trades are still women, we still have no direct indication that you will introduce training quotas of 50% women in your program.

3. In response to the recommendation for paid parental leave to either parent for one year after birth or adoption, and to the request for paid leave up to ten days per year for children who are ill; and to the request for a free, universal publicly funding childcare system; you don't answer the recommendations directly, you mention you have studied, are studying and will study them - an activity that you have been engaged in for at least a decade.

4. In responding to our request for equal pay for work of equal value legislation, you once again mention the composite amendment Bill 141. You neglect to point out that such a bill will address at best 5% of the wage disparities in Ontario. With 6 years of history with federal and Quebec equal value legislation where a variety of evaluation models have been utilized to conclude some equal pay complaints, it is rather silly to characterize such legislation as "rigidly interventionist". We would like also to remind you that all parties in the legislature unanimously voted in 198 for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and you have failed to respect that mandate and introduce equal value legislation.

5. In response to our recommendation to introduce legislation to protect video display terminal (VDT) operators, your response is again misleading.

- you state that the Ministry's Ontario Advisory Council on Occupational Health and Safety has advised the Minister there is no evidence of health hazards from radiation, but you neglect to add that the Council has recommended to the Minister that VDT shielding be mandatory, that there be mandatory x-ray testing at the point of manufacture, that there be the right of transfer of pregnant operators with no loss of pay or benefits. These and other recommendations were made to the Minister in a report titled "Interim Recommendation on electro-magnetic spectrum and the Potential Reproductive Hazards" which the Minister received February 1983 and has still not acted upon.

- you state that regulatory action is not warranted at this time, but that ministry staff recognize the importance of ergonomic factors and will provide advice to employers and workers. To cite one case of a growing number, the Special Studies section of the Ministry's Health and Safety Administration did assist workers at OHIP in Hamilton to assess ergonomic needs, and in a study October 1983 made a number of recommendations. Management has flatly refused to implement them and your ministry officials say they cannot force them because there are no regulations.

6. In response to our request for improvement in labour legislation to make it easier for women to unionize, you respond that Ontario laws are favourably disposed to the acquisition of bargaining rights. You neglect to address the myriad of barriers which exist to women or any workers organizing including: the inability to discuss the union on the premises of a workplace even during breaks or lunch hour, the inability to leaflet in adjacent areas of the workplace if they are privately owned, the lack of first contract legislation provisions, the lack of rights to an arbitration hearing for dismissal of unorganized workers, lack of general protections against unjust dismissal of workers trying to organize their workplace. The current organizing drive at Simpsons and Eatons provide clear testimony of all these barriers.

These are just a very few of our concerns at such short notice regarding your response. There are misleading statements, unanswered questions and glossed over responses. We had hoped after almost a year of waiting, that more serious consideration

would be given to our recommendations. Your response amounts instead to a public relations document which props up your decision not to introduce legislative initiatives. We ask again for you to seriously consider our recommendations.

One final point. In your letter of February 26 regarding your proposed Equal Opportunity Code you quote that as part of your consultation process you sent the draft to 261 private employers and their associations, 36 public employers and a total of 6 women's groups and union associations. We strongly suggest this is not a balanced consultative process and that key groups such as the Equal Pay Coalition have never been consulted. It is, we would suggest, reflective of your bias toward listening to employers instead of seriously listening to the needs of millions of Ontario working women, represented by their unions, women's groups and community coalitions.

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