

Ontario Pay Equity Law

One Million Denied!

Working women in Ontario finally have pay equity, right?

WRONG!

Ontario's new Pay Equity Act, which came into effect January 1, 1988, was supposed to bring fairness to the pay cheques of two million women. In fact, over one million women are excluded from coverage — more than half of all working women in Ontario.

Ironically, most of the one million denied are those who need and deserve equal pay the most: immigrant and visible minority women and women in jobs traditionally done by women.

The problem is that the current law recognizes only one type of YARD-STICK for measuring discrimination in women's wages: a male job that's IN THE SAME WORKPLACE and also WORTH THE SAME as a female job — but paid more.

But in most workplaces throughout Ontario, that particular yardstick does not exist. Women's work in day care centres, garment factories, libraries, social agencies and many offices, plants, hospitals and stores IS definitely undervalued and underpaid. They just need DIFFERENT YARDSTICKS to measure the discrimination they face.

Before the Pay Equity Act became law, the union movement and the Equal Pay Coalition lobbied to have all working women covered. But Peterson's Liberal

government would not listen. Bob Rae and the New Democrats forced a last-minute amendment to have the Pay Equity Commission study the issue and report to the Minister of Labour within a year.

Government Stalls

On January 16, Labour Minister Greg Sorbara released the Pay Equity Commission's report. It confirmed our worst fears about the numbers of women excluded:

653,000 in the private sector, and
214,000 in the public sector.

Another 238,000 women in Private sector workplaces of less than 10 employees are not covered by this law and 200,000 part-time workers are excluded by the way the Act defines casual workers.

The Commission's own report also laid out several "options" for government action — most of them IDENTICAL to those proposed earlier by unions and the Equal Pay Coalition:

1. Amend the Pay Equity Act to allow comparisons between jobs of unequal value and jobs in different workplaces; include women in workplaces with less than 10 employees; allocate special funds for pay equity increases in the public sector;

2. Raise the minimum wage, amend employment standards and labour rela-

tions laws, and introduce employment equity legislation to promote economic equality for women.

Unfortunately, the Commission recommended that actual amendments to the Pay Equity Act be studied further ... and Labour Minister Greg Sorbara appears happy to stall action on ALL fronts.

What You Can Do

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and the Equal Pay Coalition (EPC) believe that Ontario women have already waited far too long for equal pay. We're organizing a campaign to pressure the government to keep their promises to the women of this province.

Here's how you can help the one million denied:

- order copies of the "One million denied" button and leaflet from the OFL and get them out to your union members; send the postcards attached to the leaflet back to the OFL;
- identify local cases where the Pay Equity Law won't help and publicize them through your local media;
- organize a letter-writing blitz to your local MPP;
- invite a speaker to your labour council, local union, women's committee or conference;
- make a presentation to your city/town council and ask for support;
- contact and work with your local labour council and local women's groups;
- take part in the provincial lobby of MPP's to be organized later this year.

You can contact Judy Darcy or Carrol Anne Sceviour at (416) 441-2731 for help in building the campaign in your workplace or community.



International Women's Day March 1989, Toronto: Judy Darcy, V.P. Ontario Federation of Labour, CUPE; Linda Torney, President, Metropolitan Toronto Labour Council

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The Fight for Child Care Heats Up

by Barbara Cameron

The child care movement is gearing up for a fight against the failure of both the federal and Ontario governments to solve the child care crisis.

At the federal level, the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association (CDCAA) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) are joining forces in a post card campaign calling for a new child care act which will begin the process of building in Canada a comprehensive system of accessible, high quality, non-profit child care.

The CDCAA and CLC acted quickly to prevent the Tories from introducing legislation similar to the discredited Tory bill C-144 which died on the order paper before the federal election in November.

At the provincial level, the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare (OCBC) is launching a lobby of Members of the

Provincial Parliament in their constituencies between April 17 and 28. This action is directed at making the Liberals honour their election promise to build a system of non-profit child care in Ontario.

The Ontario lobbyists are calling for more resources to be put into child care to increase quality, raise wages and improve affordability. They will also demand that the Ontario government publicly oppose any new federal legislation similar to the failed bill C-144.

You can get involved in the post card campaign and the Ontario lobby by contacting Fran Malandrino at the OCBC at (416) 324-9080 or Carrol Anne Sceviour at the OFL (416) 441-2731.

(Barbara Cameron is research director for the United Electrical Workers and a member of the OFL Women's Committee.)

What do women really want?

We want opportunity.

We want to earn an honest wage for an honest day's work.

We want dignity.

We want to work in an environment free of sexual harassment and abuse.

We want to choose — when, and if, we bear children.

We want time — to work, raise our families, love our spouses and care for our aging parents.

We want change — a world free of exploitation and degradation.

We want respect,

We want to achieve.

We want what's best for everyone.

We want equality.

We want a union.

WE DESERVE IT.

(Coalition of Labour Union Women)

Remember Our Roots — IWD

International Women's Day seems an appropriate time to remember a tragedy that took the lives of 154 women factory workers in a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Co. in New York City 76 years ago. This company, and many others in the clothing manufacturing industry, had defeated the ILGWU in a 13-week bitter strike two years before.

The factory was a fire trap — paper patterns hanging overhead, long rows of wooden tables, narrow aisles and stairwells, rusty fire escapes and no working hoses or fire alarms. Safety measures for the protection of the workers was a key demand of the union — unlocked doors allowing free access from the factory to the street, large safe fire escapes, fire alarms that worked and hoses connected to adequate water supplies. The union lost the battle, but was victorious in their next try.

Not so the 154 women who were trapped or trampled at the locked doors or who had jumped from windows of the building to the street below trying to escape the inferno. They did not live to fight again, but other women remembered when the union organizers were trying again to get contracts — they stood together. We honour these gentle women workers who gave their lives so that others could work in a reasonably safe workplace.

(Union Sister)

ONDP Women's Conference

The Ontario NDP Women's Committee invites you to participate in its 12th annual conference: **Women against Poverty: Breaking the Barriers, Harbord Collegiate, Toronto, April 14-15.**

"The conference is about increasing people's awareness of the political solutions to breaking the poverty cycle. This awareness will, I hope, build support for ensuring economic justice for women in Ontario," says Sandra Clifford, president of the committee.

Conference panels, workshops and plenaries will highlight how the recommendations of the Social Assistance Review Committee report, TRANSITIONS, and fully legislated employment equity and pay equity might begin to pave the way to ending poverty. Conference organizers are aiming to have representatives from labour, women's, ethnic, disabled and native groups, including New Democrats participate in the conference.

If you are interested in attending, please call Carol Ann Sceviour at the OFL, (416) 441-2731.

Keeping our rights, keeping the clinics open

On January 12-14, anti-choice protesters attempted to blockade the Morgentaler and Scott Clinics and forcibly to deprive women of their right to the clinics' services — a right which has been recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada. The Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics (OCAC) thanks the OFL Women's Committee for its exemplary support at that difficult time. Labour movement activists were in the front lines guarding the clinic doors and escorting patients through the crowd of anti-choice harassers. You helped us turn "Operation Rescue" into "Operation Fiasco". The anti-choice did not succeed in having a single procedure cancelled at the clinics.

Anti-choice people are spurred on by their hope that they can win anew and more repressive abortion law. They would score a victory if the U.S. Supreme Court were to overturn or undermine its former decision ("Roe v Wade") which recognized a woman's right to choose. A

case challenging Roe v Wade is currently under judgement. If the U.S. Supreme Court takes a step backwards on the issue of choice, we are sure to feel the repercussions in the arguments made in Canada's parliament and courts.

Now is the time to join our American sisters in the fight to keep abortion legal and safe. The National Organization for Women (NOW) is organizing a mass demonstration in Washington on April 9. We invite you to join us on a bus leaving Toronto April 8. The cost will be about \$60 per person. Why not ask your local to sponsor one or two of its members by donating to cover their costs? If you cannot go yourself, send a donation to OCAC to enable somebody else to join us on the bus.

For more information, call 969-8463.

Donations may be sent to:
Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics
P.O. Box 753, Station P
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2Z1.