

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON:

Day care
 Family benefits
 Childbirth leave
 Other benefits

Rationale:

Women's work has become privatized - i.e., removed from the public or social/economic domain and put into the home; thus it has become devalued.

As long as child care and family maintenance responsibility is seen as the responsibility of the household rather than of the community, it will remain the responsibility of women, it will remain unpaid, and thus it will remain a source of oppression and a cause of inequities for women who wish to compete in the external work-place.

One useful analysis of the oppression of women rests upon the notion that this oppression occurs as a result of the transformation of their socially necessary labour into private service through the separation of the family from the clan. In effect, their work has become invisible.

Implications for women who wish to work become obvious, as their work in the household is literally not seen by society at large, and is thus valueless.

An interesting, and classic example of the way in which this view of women's work can be reversed occurred during World War II in Canada. Women in the work-force were essential to economic survival during this period, and the following measures ensured that attitudes were manipulated to suddenly make it a desirable and proper role for women.

- extensive recruiting campaigns were used to convince women they should work
- advertising focussed on ways in which to simplify housework, clothing, grooming & other aspects of women's lives to assist them to work and maintain their household
- employers offered special conditions - cheap, nutritious meals, pleasant rest areas, special counselling through their personnel offices, assistance with transportation, encouragement of part-time, improvement of working environment, flexible hours, etc. - to encourage women to work
- publicity campaigns emphasized women's ability to do any job and do it well - even mechanical tasks such as engine repairs and maintenance!
- training programs of all kinds were developed for women

MOST IMPORTANT - women were convinced by intensive publicity and by real incentives (subsidies, availability, good facilities) that children were better off in day care than they were at home. The government held conferences, provided money, developed federal-provincial cost-sharing programs, and stated that day care ought to be a "feature of community life".

Day Care

- Canada: only about 10.5% of children under 6 are in government-approved day care.
- Spaces for children under 2 are dropping, but the number of children needing care is increasing.
- France: virtually all 2½-6 year-olds attend free all-day pre-schools.
65.6% of children under 6 are in day care.
- Sweden: 42.5% of children under 6 are in day care.
- East Germany: 80% of children under 6 are in day care. All three to six year-olds are.
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Family-related benefits: sickness in family

- Canada: about 99% of all work situations make no provision for the fact that employees may have children.
- One Ottawa clerical union allows male or female employees three days off with pay to care for a sick family member, up to a maximum of ten days per year.
- Sweden: parent is allowed 60 days per year per child, at full pay.
- East Germany: single mothers get 50% pay to care for sick children, and are allowed 4 weeks for 1 child, 6 weeks for 2 children, 8 weeks for 3 children, 10 weeks for 4 children.
- No pay, but time off is allowed married mothers to care for sick children.
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Childbirth leave

Canada: unemployment insurance benefits for 15 weeks for mother on maternity leave.

S.U.B. plan: must be part of collective agreement. Employer may supplement unemployment benefits up to a total of 95% of employee's actual pay. Currently about 10-12 collective agreements use this plan.

Quebec - civil servants have 20 weeks paid maternity leave (includes teachers).

Some Canadian universities have variations of paid maternity leave.

CUPW - inside postal workers have paid leave up to 93% of salary.

East Germany: mothers get 26 weeks full-paid leave. Either parent may take additional 7 months without pay but with full job security for 1st child; 7 months at 75% pay for each additional birth.

France: 16 paid weeks for mothers of one & two children;
26 paid weeks for third child.

Sweden: non-working parent gets 6 months at about \$10.50/day. Previously working parent gets 90% of his or her former pay for six months. Leaves may be extended for 3 more months. A further 3 months without pay may be taken. This 6-month period may be taken at any time up to child's 8th birthday, as a block or by shortening working day. All parents may also work 6-hour days (paid for 6 hrs.) till child turns 8.

Other benefits

Canada: family allowance
tax credit
child care deduction, up to \$1000/year/child

East Germany: mother may work 40 hrs. & be paid for 42.75 hrs./week;
forgivable loan on marriage of \$2975.
1st child, \$595 forgiven; 2nd child, \$890 forgiven;
3rd child, balance forgiven.
\$30/year clothing allowance; \$130/month child support;
free day care except for meal costs

France: 2 children: \$70/month
family income under \$11,600: \$175/month
single mothers: average benefits \$580/month

Possible directions to consider on these issues

Day Care: support provision of day care for children of Board employees

 support compulsory child development courses for all students prior to age 16

 request that Federation provide day care at all its major provincial and regional functions (e.g., Assembly, Provincial Council, conferences, etc.)

 encourage districts to provide day care at District Council

 permit inclusion of babysitting costs as legitimate expense for teachers on Federation business (this is now permitted for provincial meetings of OSSTF)

Family Benefits:

 support parental leave with full pay for taking care of sick child

Childbirth Leave:

 support continuation of paid fringe benefits pending acquisition of paid maternity leave (some districts already have this)

 support unpaid leave extensions with accrual of seniority and full job protection on return

 support aggregate rather than continuous as criterion for years of experience for seniority purposes

 expand definition of related experience to include years spent on child care

SHELAGH LUKA
OSSTF STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

Q. Why should I have to pay for "someone else's children"?

A. Society places the highest value on family life. From tax deductions to baby bonuses to unemployment benefits, the Canadian people have endorsed the production and maintenance of a family.

However, in the last decade, countless couples have found they cannot afford to have children. The effect of this slowdown in the birth rate is seen already in declining enrolments. The people that vote today for or against paid maternity leave will witness even stronger effects twenty years down the road when there is no one to pay their pensions and the disproportionately small labour force causes costs to skyrocket.

By supporting paid maternity leave now, you are not merely paying for "someone else's children" - you are investing not only in your country's future - but in your own!

Q. Isn't paid maternity leave discriminatory since only pregnant women are eligible for it?

A. Paid sick leave, by the same token could be considered discriminatory as only those who are sick benefit from it. You may say that women "choose" to be pregnant but people do not "choose" to be sick. Many people apparently do "choose" to be sick by pursuing a life style of excessive smoking, drinking, overwork, etc. and by participating in highly dangerous sports, yet there is no suggestion that they do not deserve full pay while recovering.

Besides, the conditions that exist presently are discriminatory because the couples who decide to have children are being penalized by the loss of the women's income.

The first few months of a child's life could be the most important ones. We should commit ourselves to making sure these all important months are free from abnormal financial stress and hardship for the parents.

Q. If maternity leave is fully paid, won't hundreds and hundreds of women want to have children to cash in?

A. Similar fears were expressed when the old age pension was brought in in 1927. People said no one would even try to save for old age and the work ethic would be destroyed.

The same was said when OHIP was brought in in 1969. People thought there would be long line ups at doctors' offices because medical aid was "free". Both of these benefits are now considered everyone's right and the expressed fears did not materialize.

Q. Won't paid maternity leave encourage more discrimination by causing employers to think twice about hiring women of child-bearing age because of the potential cost they represent?

A. Basically this is an unanswerable question. It is hard to believe that an employer is not going to hire the best person for the job regardless of their fecundity. Besides, there is no evidence of the Board's discrimination against people with poor teeth since the dental plan has been a contract item.

Q. Why should O.S.S.T.F. become involved in radical union politics?

A. Well folks, you may be surprised to hear that paid maternity leave is a way of life outside of Canada. Seventy-five advanced industrial nations including West Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Denmark and The Netherlands have some form of paid maternity leave.

Q. Isn't paid maternity leave far too expensive for the Board?

A. Let's look at two hypothetical cases: A teacher receiving \$36,000, and one receiving \$20,000. Assuming supply teacher rates of \$30 per day, and unemployment benefits of \$190 per week, the actual cost to the Board is as follows:

Unpaid Leave	Teacher A	Teacher B
Weekly salary	\$900.00	\$500.00
Supply teacher	-400.00	-400.00
Board Saves	\$500.00	\$100.00
Maternity leave cost: *(SUB-plan, 17 weeks at 95%)		
95% of salary	\$855.00	\$475.00
U.I.C.	-190.00	-190.00
Board cost	\$565.00	\$285.00
Under current arrangements, the Board saves money on maternity leave. Deduct this saving from the cost of paid maternity leave, and the actual increase is:		
Cost to Board for SUB	\$665.00	\$285.00
Current Board savings:	-500.00	-100.00
Actual increase:	\$165.00	\$185.00
Total cost:	x 17 weeks \$2,805.00	x 17 weeks \$3,145.00

*SUB plan:

Supplements Unemployment Benefits Plan, Canada Employment and Immigration Commission.

Q. Even if the cost of one leave was reasonable, wouldn't the total number of leaves make it too expensive?

A. The highest birth rate occurs in the age group under 20 years old. Teachers do not fit into this group.

Each year, approximately 2.5% of women in the labour force apply for maternity leave.

In North York in 1980-81, a total of 36 women (OSSTF) were on Maternity Leave. Eighteen of these were full-year leaves, and 18 were part-year. Even if all 36 had been eligible for paid maternity leave, this is approximately 1.5% of the OSSTF members in this Board.

Q. How costly is it for a woman to have a child at present?

A. Women secondary teachers in Ontario in 1979 had a median salary of \$22,360.00.

Seventeen weeks of unpaid maternity leave reduces that salary by about \$9,500.00.

About \$2,850.00 is currently paid by U.I.C., leaving a net loss of \$6,650.00.

As well, other penalties may be incurred: replacement of superannuation contributions, cost of fringe benefits, and loss of sick leave credit accumulation.

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