

Table 4

Annual labour force participation rate of women by age group.

Age group	1967	1985
under 35	45.3%	75.1%
35 to 44	37.7	74.5
45 to 54	41.0	63.7
55 to 64	31.7	38.6

Source: Statistics Canada

Several witnesses before the Committee questioned the elimination of continuing benefits for women with dependent children. The National Action Committee on the Status of Women was typical of the witnesses who questioned the ability of many women in today's society to replace earnings lost on the death of a spouse, especially in cases in which female survivors had to care for dependent children.

Even more important, when we look at the proposals... we see that among employed mothers under the age of 35 who had children 7 to 17, only 51% had full-year, full-time jobs. Under the paper's proposals, mothers of that age who have children aged 7 to 17, whether or not they are employed, would get only three years of full benefits, so we see that among those employed, only 50% of those who would get only three years of benefits are not working full-year, full-time.

Concern was often raised by witnesses with regard to the lower earnings potential of women with children. It was also recognized that on the death of a homemaker, the surviving spouse is often forced to assume this additional role which may limit earning potential. Marianne Wilkinson of the National Council of Women of Canada told the Committee:

Because of this lower earning potential [of women with children] survivor insurance should be provided for a long-term earning supplement for all surviving spouses with dependent children... If you do not have the responsibility of children, then a woman is on the same status as a man in that respect and has the ability to have been in the labour force continuously if they so wished... We also do not believe a very short phase-in will work because of the problems of the double role women bear, and men would in the case of the death of a wife.

As can be seen in tables 5a and 5b, not only do women earn less than do men, but the presence of children appears to have an effect on these earnings, primarily by tending to increase the rates of part-time employment. This is especially true for women with young, pre-school children.

The Committee learned that, while women with children appear to have a disadvantage in terms of their earnings, there is a gap between the earnings of men and women regardless of marital status (see table 5c). This gap is greatest for married persons and those with children.

The Standing Committee shares these concerns with regard to older pre-retirement age survivors and with regard to younger survivors with dependent children. It is the view of the Committee that while the concept of the bridging benefit should be