

Economic Policy

work because it is an economic necessity. The female spouses have to go to work today to make ends meet. With the high cost of living, they have to work to help pay for the cost of food, shelter, clothing and fuel. Young women must work to help pay for their education, job training, or to support themselves as they come to the age of majority.

There is another myth that women are taking jobs away from men. The fact is that most women are still limited to service industry jobs such as maids or waitresses, or jobs with particular skills that men do not have, such as nurses, secretaries, or those who work in the garment industry. Very few women are in the executive, professional or industrial work force.

The rate of unemployment among women over 25 years of age is about 60 per cent higher than for men over 25 years of age. According to figures published by Statistics Canada, most of the unemployed working women who are spouses come from low income families. In 1973, the last year for which we have statistics, 21 per cent of unemployed wives came from families with incomes between \$4,000 and \$7,000 a year. In other words their income was crucial for the total family income.

This government, because of its economic policies, particularly its anti-inflation program which has taken over \$300 million in wages out of the hands of workers through wage rollbacks, and has reduced consumer demand and caused business to lay off workers, is still not doing anything meaningful in terms of getting people back to work, especially unemployed women and unemployed young people. The figures of high unemployment among women indicate that the government in its job creation program has not addressed itself to the acute problem of jobless females. The same could be said about its lack of attention to the plight of the unemployed young.

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The young Canadian who wants to work is becoming increasingly desperate and cynical about society and its failure to provide jobs. It has become a demoralizing process for those with education or job training to go out into the world of work only to find there is no employment available. Consider, for example, the experience of a young welder who had completed his course at the top of his class. He told me, when he came to see me in my office, that the first question prospective employers asked him was whether he had any previous job experience. When he replied that he had no previous experience, the door was closed in his face. In addition, employers told him there was a waiting list of 20 welders at the local Manpower office who could not find work.

Many of these young workers are classified as under-employed. In 1975, for example, 54,000 young people held part time jobs, not because they wanted such jobs but because they were the only ones they could find. Today large numbers of university and community college graduates are working at jobs far below their qualifications. The example of a Ph.D. driving a taxi is no longer a joke.

Summer job prospects for high school and university students were dismal last year—2,519 young people were seeking jobs in my constituency through the local Manpower centre. However, by the end of the summer the centre had only managed to find jobs for 982 of these students. This coming summer things will be far worse. The government has put forward a Young Canada Works program, offering this as a solution. But we all know the program is not adequate. The allotment in the Sault is \$120,000, based on an unemployment formula and the limited funds available. To date applications submitted to me total \$270,000. There is just not enough money to fund all the worth-while projects which are being submitted.

Just as there are myths about women in the work force, so there are myths attached to the unemployment of young people. It is assumed by many that the young today are over-educated. The fact is that of those in the 15-19 year bracket who are out of school and in the labour market, 60 per cent have no more than grade ten education, and that in the 20-24 year old group 40 per cent have no more than grade ten education. Their job prospects are dismal. We also hear that unemployment among youth is of short duration. The record shows that in 1975, 27 per cent of all those out of work had been unemployed for 14 weeks or more. The corresponding figure for young people was only slightly lower at 23 per cent.

There is also a myth that unemployment among the young really amounts to paid leisure thanks to unemployment insurance benefits. The reality is that most of these young people are first time job seekers who have not worked for long enough to qualify for extended unemployment insurance benefits. Many do not qualify at all because they cannot fulfil the minimum eight week work requirement. The government is now introducing legislation which will increase the qualifying period from eight weeks to 12 weeks, a measure which will come down hard on young people trying to find summer jobs or short term jobs, and which will disqualify completely another 330,000 Canadians from receiving unemployment insurance benefits, throwing them on to the municipal welfare rolls.

There is a further myth that the youth unemployment problem will disappear as the population ages. In reality the result will be that their poor job experience early in life will be transmitted to the future, helping to create a generation of working poor.

The New Democratic Party has proposed a full employment plan, and my hon. friends and I have elaborated on this subject on other occasions. Surely, though, part of any national employment strategy must be directed to increasing employment opportunities among women and young people. I have some suggestions to put forward at this time specifically to meet the needs of these two groups. For example, I suggest that the government introduce effective laws prohibiting discrimination because of sex or marital status in recruitment, classification, promotion and advertising of jobs. There should also be a mandatory program of affirmative action to achieve sexual equality in all public service departments and agencies.