

Industrial Status of Women

time the lack of precise definition of the content of a job within the same classification makes it impossible to reach reliable conclusions as to the basis of the differential where it does exist. In some instances it may be related to the sex of the worker, but in many cases other factors enter, principally the nature of the duties involved in the work.

This whole matter of the content of the job has a bearing upon the question of equal pay legislation. Effective application of the principle in fact depends upon adequate machinery for the appraisal of a job. The fact that three provinces have passed legislation, as my hon. friend has said, requiring equal pay for equal work has been brought forward as a reason why the same thing should be done by the federal parliament. Although the three provinces have set an example, if you like, this is an argument that is not completely convincing because of the fact that the field of employment for which the parliament of Canada legislates concerning labour matters is quite different from that under provincial jurisdiction.

Consider the industries listed in the bill. I cannot refer to the bill in detail, Mr. Speaker, but everyone in the house knows the industries that are listed there as coming under federal jurisdiction. These are large undertakings, very highly organized undertakings, in which the practice of collective bargaining is feasible and in fact is now quite widespread. Of the slightly less than 400,000 employees in industries under federal jurisdiction, some 70 per cent are now under collective agreements.

This fact presents a situation in clear contrast to that which exists in the widely diversified and smaller industries coming under provincial jurisdiction. There are of course a large number of great and highly organized undertakings under provincial laws but there are at the same time a large number of small enterprises in which collective bargaining has not become the standard operational procedure.

This fact presents a situation in clear contrast to that which exists in those industries which come under federal jurisdiction. In those activities which do come within the provincial field, only some 32 per cent of the employees are under collective agreements. Of course the women within those activities would work out to approximately the same percentage. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it certainly does not follow that if legislation at the federal level were considered essential it should follow in detail or even in some of its general features, a pattern that is appropriate to a province of Canada or a state

in the United States. Nor does it follow that the same methods should be used to ensure adoption of improved labour standards, including this matter of equal pay for equal work.

Within the federal field of jurisdiction, where for some years collective bargaining has been the accepted means of getting disputes settled, the legislation that is proposed in this bill could introduce unnecessary interference with normal processes of negotiation between management and labour. I do not point that out, Mr. Speaker, as an insurmountable obstacle to such legislation, but I point it out as a warning that in preparing federal legislation that factor should be kept in mind.

It is widely recognized that the enactment of a law is by no means the only method of ensuring the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work. There are other ways in which progress can be made in that direction. The convention for equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value adopted in 1951 by the international labour organization, which my hon. friend mentioned in another connection, recognized other methods of implementation. One of these was "collective agreements between employers and employees".

Mrs. Fairclough: That convention has never been presented to this parliament.

Mr. Gregg: The convention has never been presented to this parliament because it was pointed out by Canada's representative at the international labour organization, as my hon. friend knows, that in Canada this subject comes partly under federal jurisdiction and partly under provincial jurisdiction. Because of this our representative of necessity abstained from voting for the whole recommendation when it was put forward at the international labour organization. In these major areas of employment under federal jurisdiction it appears that the principle of equal pay is being observed. I appreciate the fact that there remain a small but nevertheless very important number of women under our federal jurisdiction who are unrecognized.

The investigation of all available wage data has shown that the extent of the problem is not definable without recourse to additional information. And here again I come back to those good words "study and research". This we are on the way to secure. As a matter of fact the house will recall that at the last session of parliament I said, when responding to my hon. friend's presentation of a similar bill, that it did seem strange that only recently we had received delegations from leading women's organizations, none of whom