

Status of Women

doing the same job as the man, earns only \$117 a week and the man earns \$151? Or a male X-ray technician earning \$618 a month and doing the same job as a female who is earning only \$576 a month? Or a professor in a university—if she is a woman she earns \$19,750, while a male professor in the same faculty earns \$20,635?

Example after example can be given to show that women are heavily represented in the worst paid occupations and in occupations subject to the poorest working conditions. If we look at women in the labour force, we find that one-third are in clerical occupations, one-third are in service occupations, less than one-fifth are in professional and technical occupations, one-tenth are production workers and only 4.2 per cent hold managerial or executive positions. This pattern is hardly an improvement over that of a decade ago.

If we look close to home at the situation in the government's own public service, the situation is equally bad. Since 1971, the gap between salaries paid to male and female public servants has actually increased. The median increase for men in the public service since 1971 has been \$1,500, but for women it has been only \$1,000. In the annual report on the public service tabled a few days ago we find that 77 per cent of the women in the public service earn less than \$10,000 a year, but that only 46 per cent of the men earn less than that figure. Women make up 32 per cent of the total number employed in the public service, but hold only 2 per cent of the senior executive positions, 33 out of 1,614, and only 1 per cent of those in the senior management category, 17 out of 1,300 posts. We read in the women's bureau report issued by the Department of Labour the following conclusion:

Although women workers still represent one-third of the labour force, they do not occupy a place in the labour force remotely proportionate to their numbers either in terms of occupational distribution or in terms of compensation.

There has been little improvement when it comes to ending discrimination against women in our society. We have polarized women into low paying and dead-end occupations.

I should also point out that the equal pay laws now on the books have no effect in areas where only women are employed. They apply only where both men and women are engaged in the same or similar work; where women only are employed, the laws are totally ineffectual. We need strong and enforceable laws to end discrimination against women on the grounds of sex, in terms of promotion, training and hiring as well as pay. To achieve this end, the law must first of all be written in clear language; it must be enforceable. Second, penalties should be provided to encourage full adherence. In Ontario, the maximum penalty for violating the human rights legislation applying to women is only \$5,000, and not one case has been judged in this area to date.

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We also need to make sure that the administrators of the law—that is, the government civil servants administering the law—are sympathetic to the intent of the law, and that the enforcers of the law, the courts, also have the proper attitude. We also need a campaign to promote the educa-

tion of employers and employees as to what is the law and what are the rights of women under the law.

In this regard I ask the minister, why is there the delay in establishing the federal commission on human rights as recommended by the royal commission in 1971? The government has indicated that it is sympathetic to the idea, but we have not yet had this legislation. What we need is an independent commission with some power of investigation and prosecution so that the laws we design can be enforced. We should also have legislation to provide class action for women in the work force who as a group would be able to sue an employer for across the board discrimination in pay or working conditions. One individual female worker going up against General Motors is certainly not going to have much chance of success.

In regard to bringing in legislation and policies to end discrimination, I am proud to say that the New Democratic Party has had, as a matter of policy for many years, ideas and recommendations promoting equality of the sexes in the work force. For many years in this House we have espoused these ideas. The former member for Vancouver-Kingsway, Mrs. Grace MacInnis, was a pioneer in raising women's issues and in trying to get the government moving in this direction.

If we are to do something significant to end discrimination against women in our society, I suggest we implement some recommendations along the following lines. We should have vigorous and tough laws, enforceable laws that prohibit discrimination because of sex or marital status in the recruitment, classification, promotion, dismissal and advertising of jobs. We should make provision for child-care centres for children of all ages, which are free, community controlled and available 24 hours a day. We need tough laws, strictly enforced, to provide equal pay for work of equal value and to provide incentives to achieve this goal.

We need the provision of maternity leave with pay, of whatever duration the woman and her doctor deem necessary, and at the end of that time the right to return to her position without penalty as to seniority or salary. In the bill before us is, finally, an amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act that would end some of the discrimination in the granting of maternity leave. However, even the amendment that the minister is proposing is very weak. The amendment allows about 15 weeks' maternity benefit, paid partly before the pregnancy and partly after the baby is delivered. Why not take the 15 weeks' benefit at any time during the claim year and leave it up to the mother to decide when she wants to take that kind of leave?

We should also provide that benefits for sickness not related to pregnancy, as well as maternity benefits, may be paid in the same claim year instead of persisting with the kind of discrimination that now exists. However, there is no provision in the bill to permit an adoptive working mother to take any maternity leave. Surely a mother who is adopting a child needs some time off work to acclimatize the child during the early days of the adoption period. We should have at least two weeks' maternity benefits for fathers so that they may be with the newly-born child and the mother to assist her around the house after the child is born. I also believe that the waiting period for maternity