

More women are in the labour force but the labour force remains highly segregated by gender. There are "significant differences in the hours of work, financial rewards, promotion patterns, and types of work of men and women." And, even though women in the labour force have, on average, "higher social status origins and education levels than their male counterparts, on average, they have lower incomes and intra-job mobility."⁽⁵⁾

These economic conditions directly affect the quality of women's lives, especially older women and those who are single heads of families.

Without adequate pension provisions elderly women are doubly disadvantaged. The National Association of Women and the Law pinpoints their problems as:

- lack of access to jobs which offer pension benefits;
- underevaluation of women's work;
- disregard of women's needs and obligations in setting the requirements for qualifying for full pension benefits;
- differentiation in the actuarial tables used to establish the rights of male and female participants in pension plans; and
- lack of legislative schemes for fair division of pensions between spouses.⁽⁶⁾

According to NAWL, Canada's three-tiered retirement system (individual savings, occupational pension plans and public government-run programs) offers less to women than men at every tier.

These inequities were frequently raised by witnesses appearing before the Committee and representations were made for better retirement safeguards for women as well as a provision for a homemaker's pension.

(B) SOCIAL JUSTICE

Equality Rights

As previously stated, Canada's commitment to equality rights is long-standing on both the national and international levels.

Violence

Over the years governments have put increasing emphasis on the problems of wife battering, sexual assault, rape and pornography. As well, public awareness of these problems is increasing.