

tasks previously considered exclusively masculine. But the main reason has proven to be economic.

The traditional view of the role of women has also changed. Ten or 20 years ago, most women gave up their jobs when they married or had their first child, and, with the occasional exception, did not re-enter the job market. Today a large number of mothers continue to work because they are the sole provider for their family or because they find one salary insufficient to meet the rising cost of living. Another growing group of women deliberately choose not to have children at all and to pursue a career.

Working conditions

On the whole, labour legislation, which, except where federal employees are concerned, comes under provincial jurisdiction, applies to men and women equally in the areas of minimum wage, maximum hours, unemployment insurance, days of rest, holidays, annual vacations and workmen's compensation.

Also, certain protective provisions in labour legislation applying only to women are being abolished throughout the country. For example, women may now work underground in mines in various jurisdictions. However, certain provincial laws still impose standards of safety and health for women only. Under most laws on workmen's compensation, the widow of an employee

killed on the job is entitled to an allowance and a pension regardless of her financial situation but a widower is entitled to a pension only if he is an invalid.

Although the working woman's contribution to the economy is generally recognized, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is not yet universally applied. In a number of occupations, women are less well paid than men for the same job or one of comparable importance. This situation is improving as a result of legislative action. In July 1977, the Canadian Government became one of the first in the world to implement legislation requiring its employers to pay men and women equally for work of equal value. This is the strongest legislation in this domain, although all the provincial and territorial governments have laws specifically prohibiting pay discrimination based on sex for similar or comparable work performed for the same employer.

All ten provinces, the two territories and the Federal Government have enacted laws prohibiting discrimination on grounds of sex in employment or conditions of employment. In the light of the increased number of women in higher education and on the labour market, and of the decline in the popular belief that certain jobs are by their nature suited to women exclusively or to men exclusively, such legislative measures will undoubtedly lead to