

Q. WOULDN'T WOMEN TAKE MEN'S JOBS IF THEY GOT THE SAME RATE?

Answer: Equal Pay is actually a greater safeguard to male workers, because while cheap labour exists, employers will continually strive to replace the male worker. (The meat monopolies' application to the Federal Arbitration Court to allow female labour at female rates in the boning rooms, is a good example of this in the meat industry.)

So long as cheap labour exists in our society, it will constantly threaten the whole of the wage structure, and is used to depress living standards. Automation with its potential of simplified production methods will be a fertile field for the use of cheap female labour.

The real threat to men's jobs does not come from Equal Pay but from CHEAP FEMALE RATES.

During the year ended March 1958:

- Females in non-government employment increased by 4.1 thousand, but
- Males in non-government employment decreased by 1.6 thousand.

Q. HOW WILL EQUAL PAY BENEFIT JUNIOR FEMALE?

Answer: The principle of Equal Pay would apply as for adult females.

Junior girls would receive the same as junior boys if they were to do the work. THE RATE FOR THE JOB, without discrimination on account of sex is the principle to be applied.

This would help eliminate many other discriminations operating against junior females. For instance in the meat industry, boys receive the adult male rate at 19 years, but girls have to wait until they are

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21 years before they receive the adult female rate.

This is a further example of discrimination on account of sex, and enables the employer to receive two extra years' labour at the cheaper rate. This shows how there is a greater exploitation of women workers, because in most cases these junior females are expected to do the same work as adult females.

Q. WOULDN'T EQUAL PAY PREVENT WOMEN FROM GETTING MARRIED?

Answer: Equal Pay would enable women to marry sooner if they desired, because they would be able to save more in a shorter time. In any case, it is ridiculous to assume that two people in love would stay single because of Equal Pay.

In countries where women already enjoy the benefit of Equal Pay, the marriage rate and the birth rate has INCREASED not decreased. This is proof enough.

Q. WOULD EQUAL PAY MEAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN?

Answer: Equal Pay would raise women's status in society, and is an important step towards achieving equal opportunity. At present, particularly in the Public Service, the lower rate paid to women prevent them from qualifying for promotion to higher-paid jobs.

Women's Rights are affirmed in the Charter of the United Nations and were proclaimed for the entire world in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10th, 1948:

"FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS . . . WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF ANY KIND SUCH AS RACE, COLOUR, SEX . . ."

WHY? WHY? WHY?

WOMEN WORKERS SHOULD RECEIVE EQUAL PAY

When campaigning for Equal Pay for Women, speakers are often asked questions on specific issues connected with this major reform. This leaflet lists some of these questions—and the answers.

Q. IF WOMEN WERE GRANTED EQUAL PAY — WOULDN'T THEY GET SACKED?

Answer: Over 900,000 women are employed in industrial, clerical and professional occupations and have proved their competence and ability to do this work. Withdrawal of these women from employment would obviously bring chaos to the Australian economy.

There is NO labour force available to replace these women workers.

It is an indisputable fact that the combined abilities of MEN AND WOMEN in industrial, clerical, technical and professional life, are absolutely essential for the maintenance of an efficient labour force in any country.

Work performed competently by women workers for many years WILL STILL HAVE TO BE PERFORMED, and an employer attempting to replace his women workers with male workers would still have to pay the FULL MALE RATE, and would suffer inconvenience and loss of output endeavour-

ing to train male workers, who in most cases would be totally unsuitable to take over the type of work being performed by women.

Women have special qualifications and ability for many types of occupations, e.g. nursing, kindergarten teachers, dressmakers, shop assistants, etc. and employers admit that women's special manual dexterity for conveyor belt and other process work gives a far greater output of production.

The creation of "female classifications" by industrial courts, accompanied by the term "women's work" has opened the way for employers to get certain types of work done for cheaper female wages. This separation of work under male and female classifications has no relation to the value of the work performed. The term "women's work" gives rise to the concept that work performed by women is inferior. This is completely false. Very often the standard of work performed by women is far superior to that of a male worker having to do the same work.

THE RATE FOR THE JOB—is the only

just method of assessing wage rates. The sex of the person performing the work should have no bearing on the rates to be fixed. Ability to perform the task should be the main factor.

The firm of Malleys (sheet metal industry) N.S.W. employs 400 workers, half of these being women, and they have been receiving Equal Pay SINCE 1948, and are still employed there.

Once State Governments legislate for Equal Pay, working women can be confident of the wholehearted support of the labour movement, and majority public opinion (69% voted in favour of Equal Pay in the last Public Opinion Poll conducted), to back them.

Q. WOULDN'T WOMEN BE EXPECTED TO DO HEAVY LIFTING IN FACTORIES?

Answer: Queensland Industrial law prohibits women lifting over 35 lbs. bulk weight, and 28 lbs. loose weight. This ruling is based on the fundamental need to protect women workers as mothers and mothers-to-be. This is an important safeguard to prevent physical injury which could seriously jeopardise women's opportunity to bear children. This is a commonsense, human and civilised approach to women workers and society has the responsibility to protect them.

The value of a person's work is not determined by its weight or the sex of the person performing the task, but depends on the amount of work produced and the skill involved, otherwise a labourer could argue that because he did heavy work he was entitled to more pay than a skilled tradesman. The value of a job performed by men is not determined by weight, and this should not be an argument against Equal Pay for women.

Men would naturally be more efficient at heavy work, and no employer would put a female on to a job which would be done better by a male. The prime consideration

of the employer is always to utilise in any job the most efficient labour and that which will always return the greatest amount of profit.

Q. HOW WILL MECHANIZATION AND AUTOMATION AFFECT EQUAL PAY?

Answer: Mechanization and automation are new methods of industrial technique introduced to increase production and decrease the number of workers. These new methods are becoming a growing feature in present day economy, and embrace all types of work, industrial, clerical, etc.

These "press-button" machines can eventually be operated by men or women. While women are available as "cheap labour" obviously the employer will employ the cheapest available, which is all the more reason why the fight for Equal Pay is important to ALL MALE WORKERS too.

Q. A MAN HAS HIS WIFE AND FAMILY TO KEEP, SO SHOULDN'T HE BE PAID MORE?

Answer: The male Basic wage is paid to all male workers whether married, single or widowed. They are not paid for the number of dependants they have, they are paid the rate for the job.

For many years now the Federal Arbitration Court has determined that the Basic Wage is based "on the capacity of industry to pay" which means the question of a "needs" basic wage plays no part in determining wages.

The family man should receive Government assistance by way of greater income tax concessions, higher child endowment, financial assistance for secondary school education for his children, low deposit and interest rates on homes, furniture, and other household needs, family concession fares, cheap holidays, totally free medical and dental treatment, etc.

Of more than 800,000 working women, six out of ten contribute partly or wholly towards the upkeep of dependants, whether aged parents, younger brothers and sisters, food, clothes and education for their own children. Widows, deserted wives and unmarried mothers also bear full family responsibilities.

In any case, a man is not supporting his children all his working life, only until they are able to go to work and keep themselves.

Nowadays, single girls equally accept their share of the financial burden of getting married, such as the deposit on a piece of land, deposit on a home, furniture, furnishings, etc.

Women pay the same as men for their FOOD AND CLOTHING — RENT AND FARES — MEDICAL AND DENTAL EXPENSES — ENTERTAINMENTS, etc.

Aged women receive the same Aged Pensions as men, why not Equal Pay during her working life?

Q. WOULDN'T EQUAL PAY CAUSE THE COST OF LIVING TO RISE?

Answer: The existence of cheap female labour does NOT keep down the cost of living. In fact, the cost of living is continually rising due to many factors such as inflation, higher taxation, to pay for huge defence spending on nuclear weapons, etc., lifting of price control on everyday needs, unrestricted profiteering by monopolies, etc.

Despite the fact that the Federal Arbitration Court "froze" the Basic Wage in September 1953, the cost of living still rises. Equal Pay would assist women workers to meet the higher living costs.

The benefit of cheap labour is not passed on to the public by way of cheap prices. Cheap female labour gives employers a greater margin of profit, at the expense of working women.

If we used the argument that Equal Pay

would cause the cost of living to rise, this could be used against all the other urgent needs of society, e.g. restoration of quarterly basic wage adjustments, margins claims, flood prevention schemes, roads, schools, hospitals, higher pensions, sewerage, and so on.

Increased costs arising from Equal Pay can easily be paid out of the huge profits of the employers. Since the Federal wage-freeze in 1953, employers have saved between £150M. and £200M. in cost-of-living adjustments which should have been added to the basic wage.

Price control, properly applied, could prevent profiteering by employers who overcharged the public following the wage increase.

Equal Pay would mean a greater spending power in the hands of the working people, which in turn would increase the demand for more goods, thereby increasing the demand for more workers, particularly in the food and clothing industries, where the Equal Pay increase would mostly be spent. (Incidentally, these industries employ more women than men, which means that Equal Pay would increase the demand for more women workers.)

Q. CAN THE ECONOMY STAND THE COST OF EQUAL PAY?

Answer: Our economy absorbed many other progressive reforms, such as the eight-hour day, the forty-hour week, annual holidays, sick leave, pensions, long service leave, compensation, banning child labour in industry. There is no reason why it cannot absorb Equal Pay.

For many years now there has been record production in all branches of industry, due to mechanization and greater efficiency, speed-ups, etc. and wealthy monopolies and their shareholders have been enjoying fabulous profits from production, interest on loans, hire purchase, and increased rents. They can well afford the cost of Equal Pay.