

BPW Canada

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
La Fédération canadienne des clubs de femmes de carrière

Brief presented to:

Pay Equity Task Force

June 20, 2002

Toronto, Ontario

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The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
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INTRODUCTION

Since 1930, the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW Canada) has worked to elevate the economic and social status of working women in Canada. Our membership is made up of women who are employed or have been employed in the workplace; in the professions, in traditional and non-traditional work and in business ownership including home based enterprises. Our Organization encourages and supports female students and young women to become involved with BPW, as their voices are important in addressing the needs of the working women of the future.

BPW Canada is a member of BPW International, one of the world's most influential organizations - the only organization that focuses primarily on issues affecting working women worldwide. BPW is a non-partisan and non-sectarian network of women who share common objectives for all women.

BPW Canada is pleased to present this submission highlighting the resolutions included in our Policy Handbook on topics related to the work of the Pay Equity Task Force. The delegates from our affiliates across the country that comprise our federation, considered, discussed and approved these resolutions at past conventions.

BPW Canada was incorporated on June 7th, 1930. For over seventy years, BPW Canada members have worked with the government and agencies at all levels to:

- Improve the economic, employment and social conditions of working women
- Stimulate interest in federal, provincial and municipal affairs.
- Encourage women to participate in the business of government at all levels.
- Assist women and girls to acquire education in preparation for employment.

BPW Canada is grateful to the Pay Equity Task Force for being accorded the privilege of presenting the position of our organization in the report being prepared by the Task Force for the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour in the fall of 2002. We look forward to a continued dialogue with the Task Force and to be able to provide input to the report following our upcoming annual convention in Quebec City July 14 to 18th, 2002.

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BACKGROUND

In preparing for this presentation, the Policy Handbook of BPW Canada was reviewed and applicable resolutions were identified as appropriate for presentation to the Pay Equity Task Force.

This policy handbook is an extract from the index of resolutions of those resolutions which form statements of BPW Canada policies that:

- a) have not been accomplished;
- b) are still relevant to BPW Canada's Objects and Purposes.

The policy handbook provides guidance and authority for the President, Officers and Directors to act on behalf of Federation in respect to events and circumstances that occur between conventions. At any time, an established policy can be used as a guide for immediate action.

A policy, established by resolution, does not die at the end of a Biennium, but remains as policy as long as the purpose is current and has not been accomplished.

Once adopted, it is not necessary to consider that topic at future conventions. However, it may be desirable to re-affirm a policy which will give emphasis and direction to strive toward its implementation. Through resolutions at convention, these policies can be kept current by means of amendments, substitution or withdrawal.

The policy handbook is a resource for members and officers at each level -club, provincial, national -to identify the policies that implement the objects and purposes of BPW Canada.

Affiliates (clubs) are encouraged to review the policies contained herein as a guide for study and action and for the preparation of resolutions to be presented to a convention.

The key search topics in the Policy Handbook were:

- Pay Equity
- Employment Equity
- Equal Pay
- Affirmative Action

These topics identified eight resolutions which are presented in later this brief.

KEY ISSUES

Respect - Equity in the workplace

One key issue for women in the workforce is respect. Women and men need to respect each other in the office environment and to separate office roles from their family roles. This shift in attitude is ongoing. There is still a need for attitudes in Canada to shift towards greater equity in the workplace.

In some ways, the union environment in Canada has lead the way by clearly defining a job in the collective agreement and establishing the pay scale, regardless of gender. Women who work in a unionized environment are aware that their salary is on par with their male counterparts. Equal pay for equal work.

In other work environments, salary levels are confidential, so the comparison is more difficult. According to a press release in March 2001, income imbalances between women and men are declining, but women's after-tax income is only 63% of men's. Women still do more work than men -an additional 15 minutes a day or the equivalent of more than two additional weeks per year.

With the union example, the contracts are written down and publicly made available. Legislation supports the ability for women to be respected in the workplace, but that legislation is not effective on its own. Core values of Canadians are important in making this concept a reality.

Participating in Greater Numbers

Even in non-traditional career choices, women are participating in greater numbers. Twenty years ago, the percentage of Canadian women in male-dominated fields such as engineering and physics was 15%. In 1998 it was 25%. Women are 54% of the students in medicine and 55% of the students in law. This is a relatively new situation for women; however it will be many years before these numbers are reflected in the workplace. But there is strength in the numbers of women entering these positions.

Success for women in these fields relies on more than just numbers. The attitudes towards women in business need to shift. Women must be allowed to enter the field and then to be able to practice without discrimination. Attitudes are shifting to accept women in positions of power. And power is not necessarily limited to the privileged class of citizens. Opportunities are opening for women who have a dream and work towards it.

Boardrooms in Canada, though, remain bastions of the status quo. Only 7% of directors are female, a level that has not changed in seven years. About half of all public companies have one female director, 11% have two and only 5% have three or more. Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce has the most with five.

Wage Gap -Discrimination

The wage gap between men and women in 1998 (Stats Canada) was 28%. That means for every \$1.00 a man earns, a woman earns only \$0.72.

We know that not all of the wage gap is due to discrimination. Other factors also contribute such as:

- higher rate of unionization among men;
- higher education;
- seniority levels; and
- women leaving the workforce for home responsibilities (affecting seniority).

The Federal government has had many initiatives to help decrease the gender gap, including campaigns encouraging women to enter a greater number of jobs, for instance, in science and technology. These initiatives help address that aspect of the wage gap that is due to women entering a very narrow number of jobs which tend to be lower paid jobs whereas men enter a much greater number of jobs.

Previous reports have speculated that 1/4 to 1/3 of the wage gap is due to gender discrimination. The article in today's *Globe and Mail* speculates that this may even be as high as 50%. Initiatives like employment equity and campaigns to encourage women to expand their career choices are needed to address aspects of the wage gap. Pay Equity is also needed to work in conjunction with these initiatives to affect those aspects of the wage gap that are due to gender discrimination. This means that the federal government can attack the wage gap from several different avenues and have a significant affect on those factors that play a role in the wage gap.

BPW Canada's Resolution -Supporting Pay Equity

The main resolution in BPW Canada's Policy Manual addressing Pay Equity directly was adopted in 1990 and reaffirmed in 1992. This resolution urges the Government of Canada

*to legislate immediately, pro-active **PAY EQUITY** programs throughout the federal public sector and by federally regulated employers, using as a starting point the requirements of its own Regulations which apply to the implementation of the **EQUAL PAY** for Equal Work provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Code.*

The second part of the resolution addresses the shared responsibility at the provincial level where BPW Canada urges Provincial BPW Organizations to:

1. *Work for the implementation of pro-active **PAY EQUITY** programs to be implemented in both the public sector and private sectors within the jurisdiction of their provincial governments, to speed up the process of eliminating discrimination in wages paid for the "women's work" and*
2. *Apply pressure on their provincial governments to ensure that the various provincial Human Rights Commissions and agencies are granted the resources and people necessary to effectively carry out their mandates.*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

BPW Canada continues to be supportive of Pay Equity which is evidenced by RESOLUTION 90/12 (REAFFIRM) 92/15.

Associated topics and areas of advocacy work by BPW Canada include Employment Equity, Equal Pay and Affirmative Action.

The governance structure of BPW Canada requires its members to meet once every two years at a biennial convention to discuss, debate and approve resolutions which become part of BPW Canada's Policy Handbook (until the resolution has been accomplished).

The next biennial convention is being held next month in Quebec City (July 14 to 18th) when BPW Canada can formally receive approval on more detailed (and current) input to the Pay Equity Task Force. BPW Canada, therefore, requests permission of the Pay Equity Task Force to forward a supplementary submission following the convention in July.

RESOLUTIONS

EQUITY PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE AND

PAY EQUITY CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

1990/12 (Reaffirm 1992/15)

THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to legislate immediately, pro-active **PAY EQUITY** programs throughout the federal public sector and by federally regulated employers, using as a starting point the requirements of its own Regulations which apply to the implementation of the **EQUAL PAY** for Equal Work provisions of the Canadian Human Rights Code.

THAT BPW Canada urges Provincial BPW Organizations to:

- 3. Work for the implementation of pro-active **PAY EQUITY** programs to be implemented in both the public sector and private sectors within the jurisdiction of their provincial governments, to speed up the process of eliminating discrimination in wages paid for the "women's work", and
- 4. Apply pressure on their provincial governments to ensure that the various provincial Human Rights Commissions and agencies are granted the resources and people necessary to effectively carry out their mandates.

FREE TRADE

1988/11

THAT BPW Canada strongly urges the Federal Government and in particular, the Ministers of International Trade and Finance, the Secretary of State and the Employment and Immigration Commission to:

- 1. Be vigilant in monitoring and assessing the impact of the free trade arrangement on Canadian women to ensure the arrangement does not adversely affect the employment status and opportunities of Canadian women or those legislation and social programs such as **EQUAL PAY** and **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION** which positively benefit Canadian women;
- 2. Consult and assist Canadian women to develop and establish economic goals and priorities which would form part of the basis of economic policy in Canada;
- 3. Ensure that prospective job loss caused by the arrangements in such labour intensive industries as clothing, textiles and electrical products, manufacturing, which employ a large proportion of females is countered with ready access to alternative employment opportunities and retraining programs, opportunities for relocation and adjustment assistance programs fostering adjustment to new working conditions, and is countered also by ensuring strict adherence to the ten year phase-in provision in these industries; and
- 4. Provide training programs and ensure employment opportunities for women in the area of predicted job growth under the arrangement, such as the service sector.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS

1980/EM5

THAT BPW Canada recommends to all Business and Professional Women's Clubs in the Canadian Federation who have not already done so, to recommend to their respective local and municipal governments, that all necessary action be undertaken to ensure a local **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION** programme, and to their Provincial BPW Organizations with respect to their provincial governments, that all necessary legislative action be undertaken **to require public service commissions and companies under provincial jurisdiction to implement Affirmative Action Programmes.**

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION-VISIBLE MINORITY WOMEN

1986/24

THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada as a priority in the implementation of the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** Act to ensure employment equity for women of visible minority.

APPRENTICESHIPS/SKILLED OCCUPATIONS

1994/01

THAT BPW Canada urges the Federal Government through education and Canada Employment Centres to encourage employers to implement **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** for women in apprenticeship trades.

THAT BPW Canada urges the Federal Government through education to promote the public perception of skilled occupations for women as attractive career opportunities by portraying skilled occupations as the essential and financially rewarding careers they are and by portraying women in skilled occupations.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

1990/07

THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada:

1. To ensure that the Canadian Human Rights Commission has sufficient resources to effectively perform their mandate under the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** Act;
2. To develop stronger incentives for eligible employers to implement employment equity programs in their workplaces; and to immediately amend the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** Act, 1986 to require:

(1) That the plan of goals and the timetable which the employer must prepare each year so as to implement employment equity, according to Section 5(1) of the Act, shall be incorporated in the annual reports required to be made under Section 6 of the Act; and

(2) That these employers' plans for the implementation of the employment equity be monitored by the designated agency, i.e.: the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the goals and timetables assessed at the same time as the Commission reviews the results reported in the occupational and salary data reports required under Section 6 of the Act.

THAT if the above resolution is accepted at the 1990 Convention, the BPW Canada delete the following policy Resolutions, which are updated by this motion, which calls for plans to be developed and reported by the employer, and monitored by the Canadian Human Rights Commission:

1. Resolution 1986/19 which urged that employers be required to maintain their policies and plans for employment equity, and that these be monitored by the "**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY Commission**" -(on final passage of the Act, the idea of a separate **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY Commission** was not implemented).
2. Resolution 1986/25 which urged the use of Goals and Timetables in the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY Act**. (They were not required at all until the final draft of the Act).

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

1992/16

THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to:

1. Strengthen and broaden the covenants of the Legislated **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY Program**.
2. Provide a legislative base including enforcement capabilities for the Federal Contractors' Program.
3. Provide a legislative base including enforcement capabilities for Departments within the Government of Canada.
4. Provide supporting services and programs to assist in meeting the goals of employment equity as outlined in the paper "A Matter of Fairness" which was recently submitted to the Government.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY ACT

1992/17

THAT BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to amend the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY Act** as follows:

1. To compel each employer covered by the Act to set up plans, set goals and prepare a timetable by forecasts based on past years of operation, projected vacancies and availability of qualified designated group members in the employable population in the geographic region, and to report each year.

2. To make sure that revisions to the Act contain methods of monitoring and enforcing the development and implementation of the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** plans and programs, and that there be sanctions and penalties of sufficient severity to ensure respect of the law, with specified minimum penalty and rewards and recognitions.
3. To create a Commission of **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** to be responsible of the implementation of the revised Act and that there be two parts to this Commission:
 - (a) The **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** Office whose responsibility would be to issue publicity to inform the public, the employers and the employees of their rights and responsibilities under the law; to monitor, report and enforce the implementation of this Act, and
 - (b) The **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** Hearings Tribunal which would resolve **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** disputes between employers and employees which cannot be settled either in the workplace or by the **EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** Office; the recommendations of this Tribunal should be binding.
