

Women Workers: "Men's Wages Should be Higher"

Below we print an extract from a standard school textbook. Women workers who have been in the forefront of the growth of such unions as CCAWUSA, NUTW, FCWU and SFAWU should note particularly point 2(11). Moreover, if women get tired so easily [2(5)], how is it that they are also able to perform all the housework as well [2(7)]?

Swanepoel and Stassen, Economics for Standard Ten, pp61-2:

"The wages of women differ from the wages of men. As a rule the wages of men are higher than those of women for the same work. Many women complain bitterly about such discrimination.

From research done by Dartnell Industrial Relations Corporation, personnel consultants, the following points emerged:

1. Findings in favour of women

- (1) Women work faster and more accurately than men in jobs where dextrous fingers are required.
- (2) Women evince a high degree of loyalty toward the company and the "boss".
- (3) Women are more conscientious than men in jobs where special attention and accuracy or attention to quality is required.

2. Complaints about women

- (1) Women are more emotional than men - more impulsive and inclined to get excited.
- (2) Disputes and trivial quarrels occur more frequently among female workers than among male workers.
- (3) It is not very likely that women will develop a team spirit.
- (4) Women can develop a strong aversion for their work and dislike for the people who supervise them (especially where much supervision is required).
- (5) Women have less resistance to fatigue than men.
- (6) The turnover of staff is much higher among women than among men.

- review -

- (7) Women have greater domestic responsibilities than men - household work, taking care of the children, the problem of illness in the family, going shopping which causes a higher absentee figure, a desire for shorter working hours and an aversion for overtime work.
- (8) Women are less ambitious and their aspirations for promotion are not as strong as it is among men.
- (9) Women also need more facilities than men, eg. rest rooms etc.
- (10) An important objection against women is that they often let their employers down by leaving them just when they have begun to know their work quite well (by getting married, household duties etc.).
- (11) Women are not as well organised with regard to trade unions as men and do not take such an active interest in associations or societies for the improvement of working conditions.

In addition, a man is traditionally the breadwinner and head of the family, and consequently he does not like working under a woman. It is an age-old custom for women to receive lower wages than men and it is usually very difficult to break with such established customs."

The conclusion, drawn from the above, is that the compensation of men is higher, and should be higher, than that of women. According to the authors, "The struggle for equal pay for equal work will most probably continue indefinitely."