

MEMO FOR ATLANTIC CITY TALK

[Inequality of Pay of Women in Industry]

A Variety of problems constantly in industry

when we come to the value of services. There is the question of the discrepancy between the salaries of men and women. In the last forty years there has been a constant increase in industrial and business life of women employees. They are doing now scores and scores of tasks formerly done only by men. The increase of automatic operations in the factory, the increase of salesmen in shops, the increase of clerical work also the increase in the devices which are employed to save time and secure efficiency, keep things up to date and also keep full and satisfactory records, have called in great numbers of women, but rarely in any of these occupations do you find that the salary of the man and woman is the same for the same work. That excellent organization, the National Industrial Conference Board, recently published a report on the investigation into clerical salaries in the United States and it has some interesting data on the discrepancy between earnings of men and women in this field where there are such numerous numbers of women. For the sake of comparison this report divides the wages paid for clerical work into two classes, the highest and

MEMO FOR ATLANTIC CITY TALK

- 2

the lowest, an arbitrary condition of course. This report finds clerical positions can be divided into twenty different classes. that there are different grades of clerks, chief clerks, senior clerks, junior clerks. There is a Head bookkeeper. There are classes of stenographers and typists. There are filing clerks, mailing clerks, switchboard operators - twenty kinds in all in a modern well equipped office. For the purpose of classes this Board divides these office workers into two classes, the highest and the lowest paid. You take the highest paid group and you find that in almost every case the men are drawing larger salaries than women, that while there are women in this highest paid group, they are very many more men. There will be one women chief clerk for six men; one women head bookkeeper to eleven men; one women cashier to fourteen men. But when you drop down into the lowest paid group you find the women far outrun the men, that is take it in an office of the lowest paid group and you will find 69 women chief clerks to nine men. You will find 52 order clerks to 35 of the men. Take it by and large in office employment as in factory employment the

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MEMO FOR ATLANTIC CITY TALK

- 3 -

the great body of women occupied have to be satisfied with the low wage while men take the high. Many women complain bitterly. They claim that they are doing the same work and therefore they should get the same pay. They will tell you in Wall Street that there is now and then a woman who will command a salary not only equal to, but far outstrip that of a man, but these cases are rare. The general opinion seems to be that, comparing the two in office employment, the woman has less initiative, she is more afraid of responsibility, she is less regular and also there is less hope of her staying on in the business. As I see it, there is more in this last reason than in any other, unless it may be the lack of initiative. Women are not cut out by nature and not expected by society, to give themselves to offices and factories. They have a far more important task on hand and in justice to that task, it is not possible for the great body of women to give their eight or ten hours a day to a regular employment. Moreover, the great body of these women do not want to do this. They feel no call for that, while they feel a very strong and imperative call to the work cut out for them by nature and

MEMO FOR ATLANTIC CITY TALK

- 4

society. Employment for the great mass of them is a stop-gap, a tide over. Nevertheless it is true that larger and larger numbers of young women are locking on life different from what women once did. The whole attitude towards the home as an institution is changed with the changes in the productive life of the nation. The tasks for the women are not what they once were, the responsibilities are not what they once were. She has not been able to develop the educational, spiritual, intellectual and superior social side of her task in such a way as to employ all her time. She prefers to work, frequently prefers to work if she is married and it is the women who come in as a steady factory, not merely working a short period, with an expectation of staying on, that suffers for the transients. It effects the whole position of women in industry. Here is where we need a measuring stick. Justice demands that if she gives equal service she should have equal pay and also if she is more or less she should suffer for that. It is one of the complicated and difficult problems of

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MEMO FOR ATLANTIC CITY TALK

- 5

of adjusting the pay to the service, something that must be done if we are going to have peace in Industrial life. One great difficulty in making these adjustments has been in the past and is to a lesser degree true today, the unwillingness of the employing class to consider the workers point of view. They offer so much and the workers can take it or not, no discussion. This has led to numerous abuses in seasonal and poorly organized factory. There is going on now in New York City and has been for many weeks, a strike of the paper box worker. Paper boxes are made in great quantities in New York City. In fact under unsanitary conditions and the wages paid are the lowest. A Union of the girls has attempted to elevate the industry but they could get no sympathy/<sup>or cooperation</sup> from the manufacturers and the result is a painful industrial war, not the less painful because it is unimportant. The necessity of some form of organization which will permit the workers to negotiate, to present grievances is absolutely essential from their point of view and any enlightened employer with an eye to the stability and pro

progress of his business, knows that he must have some way to enlist, encourage and develop workers. There are various forms of organization which more or less satisfy these needs of the two sides. There is the Union. There is the old fashioned organization of industry, where foreman and superintendents are supposed to go as liaison officers between the ranking file of the managers, listen to complaints carry instructions, presenting the case of the worker to the officer higher up, they are his representative as well as the representative of the management. Then there is the system of employers representation. Here your representation comes from the management. Then there is the more recent employer representation, ~~an former organization~~ a varied form of organization in which representatives of both sides sit together in regular sessions and consider the problems to come to a decision and both sides abide by the decisions. Now, all these forms are working well in industries where there has been patience and good will. In the early days, when employers refused consideration of workers conditions, the Union was the only method. It was, as I have said, a military body, but as time has gone, it has been more of a negotiating body and less military. Still, its primary appeal is to force.