

Melbourne "Argus"

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WOMEN AIM AT EQUAL PAY

Court Move Fails

An unexpected development occurred in the basic wage inquiry yesterday afternoon, when Miss Merida Cohen, on behalf of various women's organisations, asked for leave to intervene.

Her proposal was that the Court should increase the present women's percentage of the male basic wage from 54 per cent. to 60 per cent. at the forthcoming declaration of the basic wage, and that the percentage should be increased at subsequent declarations, until, within five years, there would be equal pay for men and women doing equal work.

Leave to intervene was refused by the Court on the ground that no such request had been made when the unions lodged their claims.

Miss Cohen said that although she did not appear for any union concerned in the dispute before the Court she desired leave to intervene in the public interest.

Chief Judge Beeby said that even in the most favourable circumstances he did not think that the Court, in the present economic position, would make a fundamental change involving complete economic reorganisation.

Miss Cohen replied that the organisations she represented were aware of that disorganisation, and, therefore, wanted the increases made in stages.

Chief Judge Beeby said he would not declare that the matter could not have been submitted by the unions, but no such claim had been brought in the present case. The Court could deal only with applications brought before it.

Judge O'Mara said that in his opinion no one but the Attorney-General could intervene in the public interest in the present case.

Mr. C. Crofts (advocate for unions) said that no reference to women workers had been made in the present case because it was intended to make a special claim on their behalf.

Organisations for which Miss Cohen appeared were:—

Australian Federation of Women Voters (N.S.W.), United Association of Women (N.S.W.), National Council of Women (N.S.W.), Business and Professional Women's Club (N.S.W.), Women's Union Service (N.S.W.), N.S.W. District Association, U.A.P. Women's Educational Circle (N.S.W.), Victorian Women's Citizens' Movement, W.C.T.U. (Vic. and S.A.), Housewives' Association (Vic.), Y.W.O. Association (Vic.), Labour Women (S.A.), S.A. Women Teachers' Guild.

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EQUAL PAY IN INDUSTRY

Women In Favor

Women's organisations, although not unanimous, generally support the principle that equal pay for equal work should be given to men and women in industry.

Unions with women members yesterday held a conference at the Trades Hall which decided to suggest to the Australasian Council of Trades Unions that an application be made to the Arbitration Court for equal pay in all new industries and all industries which women were entering for the first time.

The president of the National Council of Women (Mrs. Herbert Brookes) said today the Council had always supported equal pay for women if they did equal work with men, equally well.

If the application were granted by the Arbitration Court, it would help to solve post-war unemployment difficulties that would otherwise be created by women going into industry now at lower rates to take men's jobs.

WAR TIME ACHIEVEMENT

The Council hoped the unions would be successful in their attempt to get equal pay, which would be a great achievement during war.

The president of the Australian Women's National League (Mrs. Claude Couchman) said the League had debated the subject. Although members were not unanimous, most opinion seemed to favor equal pay for equal work by men and women.

The main reason was that this would prevent exploitation of women workers, while retaining employment for both men and women breadwinners. Jobs would be given not on the basis of cheap labor, but on the grounds of stability.