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UNITED ASSOCIATIONS OF WOMEN. 61 Market Street, SYDNEY. 4th July, 1939.

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ederated Clerks Union, State Shopping Block, Market Street, S Y D N E Y. des - !

Bear Sir,

Re Application to Full Bench of the Industrial Commission for Equal Pay.

No member of the Industrial Commission of New South Wale or the Federal Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, has yet investigated the implications of the principle of equal pay for men and women. It is our wish that all suggestions dealing with the achievement of a policy of equal pay should be examined by th Benches concerned.

The application of the Federated Clerks Union for equal pay for occupational rates, has, we understand, been referred to the Full Bench of the Industrial Commission. We ask that the request should be made to extend the scope of the enquiry, first to investigate the principle of equal pay for all occupations, and second to investigate suggestions for giving effect to the princil of equal pay, with special attention to the suggestion that regula periodic increases should be made in the percentage of the rate of the female wage to the male wage, until equal pay for men and wome is attuined.

UAW ML MS 2160

The method we advocate in this latter case is that the Court should either make an over-riding award or make provision in every award for an automatic half-yearly increase of 5% in the emale rate as compared with the male rate of wage. If this uggestion were adopted, the principle of equal pay would be in peration at the end of five years.

We believe this method of establishing the principle of equal pay to be the most practical yet suggested. It would cause minimum of adjustment on the part of employers, and it would emove the possibilities of wholesale disorganisation of business ith possible closings down, which would be the probable onsequences if equal pay for men and women were adopted by making in immediate increase of about 46% in the female rate of pay.

As the Full Bench of the Industrial Commission is conside ng one particular aspect of equal pay, i.e. occupational rates, he near future, it is most unlikely that they will allot the time

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consider this subject again for some years, and we believe we fill be missing an opportunity if we fail to approach them on the eneral subject at the same time as the particular aspect already eferred to them. As to whether the subject is outside their scope, is for the Bench to decide. We are advised that it is within heir scope. We are further advised that any adjustments or ecommendations arrived at by the Full Bench of the Industrial commission would have a great influence on the future policy of the ederal Court.

In making awards, the Federal Court of Arbitration and onciliation is not guided in its decisions as to the rates of the espective male and female wages by any legal directions. They are free to award any wage which they in their wisdom decide upon. heir guide to date has been custom. If it can be shown before the all Bench of the Industrial Commission that the principle of paying males at a lower rate than males is not in the public interest, t is bound to influence the decisions of the Federal Court in a your of equal pay. The outcome of such proceedings might be a rogressive move towards the final achievement of the principle of qual pay for men and women.

We ask you to give serious consideration to our request to stand the scope of the application so as to ventilate the whole bject of equal pay before the Full Bench of the Industrial manission.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) JESSIE M. G. STREET,

President.

UAW ML MS 2/60