

A Message to the Women

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There are an estimated 7,000 full time employees of the State of Oregon. In 1940 approximately 32 percent of all state employees were women. During the last four years the percentage of women employees has increased possibly to as much as 40 percent inasmuch as women have replaced men who have been called to the service and men who have taken more lucrative positions elsewhere.

On November 1 of this year, however, the percentage of women members in the Oregon State Employees' Association was much less than even 32 percent. This percentage should be raised so that women employees may assume their rightful voice in the Association's activities. The opportunity to affiliate oneself with such an organization should be a challenge to every thoughtful and progressive-minded woman employee of this state.

Many women express a reluctance to join an organization which is or might become affiliated with a "union." Such reluctance is completely unwarranted for the Association is not affiliated with a union. It is an independent, non-political organization of Oregon men and women bound together by the common bond of all being state employees seeking to improve the status of public employment. By joining together, we can each contribute to making this organization an influence beneficial to both the State and its employees.

Women who feel that their years of employment are temporary are generally disinterested in joining, but many women have come to work for the state "for a year or two" and have

stayed for ten or twelve years or even longer. Even though married, a woman is seldom certain that she will never need to work again outside of her home. Because of unexpected circumstances, she may later return to a state department, so that financial support or time given the Association now will then repay her many times over.

Most women whose husbands are overseas will leave public employment after the war; but, when such women offer their services to the Association now, they are helping to build at home a better, more democratic way of life for which the men in the services are fighting abroad.

Even if not interested in remaining in State service until we reach the retirement age, we will benefit by the other objectives of the Association. A sound retirement system is only one of many objectives. A merit system of civil service, equitable working hours and wages, improvement in working conditions, security of employment, and an opportunity for advancement based on merit will all help us whether we are employed for one year or twenty. We must also realize the value of an organization which can speak for those women who have accepted men's work but who still receive a "women's wage"; for women who support children, parents, or disabled husbands on a meager salary; or for those women doing a bookkeeper's job though classified as a clerk. The financial support we are asked to give is nominal considering the benefits to be derived. No chapter has dues which are excessive or burdensome.

One of the chief obstacles to overcome in enlisting the active participation of women is an unexpressed but

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