

right to another group of employees. A chemist may receive \$175 to \$235 a month, a timbercruiser \$250, an assistant engineer \$285 to \$360. These positions require comparable training to that required for a librarian, who receives from \$150 to \$175 (not including department administrators).¹

Typists and stenographers are skilled workers in the use of typewriters and other office machines and in shorthand and filing. Some of them receive as little as 56c an hour—\$100 a month. Many receive 61½c or \$110 a month. This is 10½c lower than the minimum for unskilled laborers.²

Chief administrators receive from \$300 to \$600 a month. Their secretaries may receive from \$150 to \$190 after many years of service. Anyone who has worked in an office knows the tremendous responsibility that falls upon these women secretaries and their value to their employers and to the department.

At the General Council Meeting of the State Employees Association, one of the chapters introduced a resolution requesting equal pay for one group of women employees. In accordance with its function, the General Council referred the resolution to the Board of Directors for action and established by vote the following policy: "Female employees should receive the same basic rate of salary as male employees when their duties, qualifications and classifications are similar." Women members will be glad to know that this policy has been officially adopted by the Association.

The policy of equal pay for equal work is not a new one. The policy, we say, is not new; the practice is, when it is observed. The policy was first established by the War Labor Board of World War I to meet the labor problem of 1917-1918. It was lost somewhere between wars, however, for the recent

War Labor Board found it necessary to restate it to meet labor needs in World War II. Civil service, when justly administered, has established pay for job classification, regardless of the sex of the employee performing the work. Women employees should, therefore, be extremely interested in the working out of our Oregon state civil service system. Various women's organizations, the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, and some labor unions have also campaigned for the adoption of the equal pay principle. Then last year the Federal Equal Pay Bill of 1945 was introduced into the Senate of Senators Wayne Morse of Oregon and Claude Pepper of Florida. Equal pay legislation will be discussed in the second of these articles.

Senator Francis J. Myers of Pennsylvania in the January issue of the *Women's Home Companion* declares, "There is only one safe and sane course to follow—to employ men and women alike in accordance with their experience and ability, regardless of sex. Such a policy . . . would benefit all workers. An army of unemployed women, desperate for jobs, ready to grab at anything for starvation wages, is bound to depress wages for men. Jobs for women are inextricably bound with the larger problem of jobs for all."

But why have these men and women presumed to think that women should have equal pay? First, millions of single, and often married women must work to support themselves. Second, extensive surveys of women workers show that a large percentage of them are the sole or partial support of one or more dependents. Third, women on the job have proved their efficiency when properly adjusted to their work, thus earning the right to equal base pay. Fourth, low wages drastically limit women's purchasing power and lower the standard of living for them and for their dependents.

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¹Wages as quoted in the *Twelfth biennial budget, State of Oregon, 1945-47.*

²Hourly wage based on 41 hour week.