

# womanpower

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a study group

young fabian pamphlet 11

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“Don’t talk to me about manpower any more because the manpower question has been solved by womanpower”—  
Franklin D. Roosevelt

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January 1966

# 1. the missing 400,000

“New High Wycombe hospital stands empty, cannot get nurses.” “Children turned away from school until teachers are found.”

The cry for more scientists, secretaries, social workers, economists, hospital orderlies, teachers and workers of all kinds is only too familiar. Side by side with these needs are millions of women who are not working, many of whom would like to work. In this pamphlet we try to see why this situation exists. The first part looks at the unmet needs for manpower and the potential supply among married women. The second part examines the barriers preventing these women from satisfying the demand, and tries to see what changes are necessary to bring the women and the jobs together.

## manpower shortage

One of the basic economic problems of our time is shortage of manpower. Everyone knows about the extreme shortage of people in certain jobs—the need for more teachers, doctors or scientists. But there is also an urgent need for less specialised manpower—for skilled and unskilled manual workers, for people to work in the factories, in the shops and on the buses. The reason extra manpower is so urgently required is that the rate of economic growth of the economy depends on it. The more people who work the more goods and services we can produce.

Economic growth is generally agreed to be the answer to most of our problems—the goods and services we can afford to consume depend on it; so does the amount of aid we can give to underdeveloped countries. At the last General Election both political parties agreed on the need for at least a 4 per cent rate of growth of national output if we are to be able to afford the social programmes they advocate. The Government is now committed to a 25 per cent increase in output between 1964 and 1970—an average annual rate of growth of 3.8 per cent. This is far greater than the rate of growth in the past, however

far back one goes.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per year was roughly the rate of growth during the past decade and this was much higher than any sustained growth experienced before the war.

The problem of manpower is particularly crucial in the present decade. It is crucial for three reasons. First, because there is a great backlog of essential expenditure. The poor state of schools, hospitals, and towns is well known. But it is not only social capital that is urgently needed. British industry cannot compete effectively in world markets. Old and obsolete plant and machinery must be replaced by modern techniques. All this means that we need more labour to produce the buildings and equipment. Secondly, the rate of growth of the working force is expected to decline during the next few years. Over the past decade the working population has been increasing at about  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per annum. Official forecasts for the future are for a rate of increase considerably less than this, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. Thirdly, while the rate of increase of the working population is going to decline the rate of increase of the rest of the population is expected to increase even faster than the past. This means that each member of the working force will have to support an increasing number of dependents.

### INCREASE IN POPULATION

year	working ,000	non-working ,000	ratio
1953-58	700	300	2.3
1958-63	900	1,000	0.9
1963-68*	800	1,300	0.6
1968-73*	200	1,700	0.1

\* forecast

source: *Manpower studies no 1*

From 1953-58, for every addition to the non-working population there were two additional workers in the working population, but from 1963-68 there will only be about one half an additional worker for each addition to the non-working population, and from 1968-73 (this excludes the results of raising the school leaving age) there will only be one tenth of an additional worker.

The National Plan itself accepted a "manpower gap" of 400,000 in 1970. This was the number of workers industry said it would need over and above those forthcoming as part of the normal increase in the working force. This figure was arrived at after allowing for considerable increases in productivity. The Plan estimated that half this gap of 400,000 could be met by special policies to get workers in the depressed regions, older workers and married women, back to work. But this still leaves a gap of 200,000, and this is based on only a fairly moderate rate of growth, and a modest expansion in the social services. The number of workers required to meet all our needs is very much greater.

Nor is it only a question of numbers. The dependent population (nearly 60 per cent of the total by 1970) has special needs. It is the old, the young mother, and the very young, who make the greatest demands on the social services. They use nurses in geriatric wards, home helps, district nurses, health visitors, midwives, social workers and teachers. The social services will need to expand their labour force more than any other part of the economy.

## 2. the hidden reserve

In a situation where the need for labour almost amounts to a national emergency it is clearly vital to use the reserves of labour available. An obvious source of labour is married women. There are over six million married women of working age who are not working—over 15 times the missing 400,000. Married women are a particularly suitable source of labour for three reasons: first, because they are a rapidly increasing group, while the supply of single women is fast declining. Secondly, because the whole way of life of married women has been transformed in the last fifty years giving them more time and more energy for jobs outside the home; and thirdly, because at the moment relatively few work.

### the popularity of marriage

Ask a group of schoolgirls if they want to get married. The chances are that there will not be a single "No" and, fortunately for the girls, the chance that they will not find a husband is also small.

To begin with there are more prospective husbands available. The birth rate for boys has remained consistently higher than for girls, and boy babies, who are more delicate than girls, now survive almost equally well due to better medical care. Also, the last war did not distort sex ratios in the same way as did the battles of 1914-18. The result of these factors shows in the number and ratio of single persons aged 15-54. This age range is taken as the normal marriageable period and excludes the large number of women who outlive their contemporary males.

#### SINGLE PERSONS, AGE 15-54

year	bachelors ,000	spinsters ,000	ratio
1901	4,172	4,339	0.962
1911	4,631	4,820	0.961
1921	4,436	4,962	0.894
1931	4,811	5,135	0.937
1951	3,933	3,611	1.089
1961	3,948	3,147	1.254

source: Census tables.

So in 1961 every 100 spinsters had a choice of 125 bachelors. Other figures show that an increasing number of these women are getting married, and at an increasingly early age. A high level of employment and better wages, together with earlier physical maturity all contribute to encouraging couples to marry younger. Three quarters of all brides marrying for the first time are under 25, while in 1911 the proportion was not much more than a half (55 per cent). Amongst women of all ages the proportion who are married is steadily rising, but this trend is especially marked for those between 20 and 34 years old.

#### PROPORTION OF ALL FEMALES MARRIED

year	all ages %	20-34 %
1931	41.3	51.8
1951	48.8	70.0
1961	50.3	77.9

source: *Annual abstract of statistics.*

The supply of single women is therefore drying up and the middle aged spinster is disappearing. Between 1951 and 1961 the proportion of unmarried women in the 25-54 age group fell from 42 per cent to 32 per cent. If the same proportion of women in the future marry as now marry between the age of 20 and 34, nearly 80 per cent of women will be married compared with just over 40 per cent thirty years ago. This has alarming implications for the working force.

### the post-war wife

The life of the married woman has changed radically and in ways making her more capable of and willing to work. Eighty years ago 60 per cent of the brides were to have five or more children, and often they were occupied bringing them up until well into their fifties. By the age of 60 they could expect to be dead. Now, according to an estimate of the Government Actuaries department, the newly married woman will probably have only two or three children and by the time she is in her mid-thirties they may all be at school and she can

still expect another 40 years of life. This steady lengthening of life is one aspect of another relevant development. Married women today are much healthier than those in the past have ever been. With improved diet and better medical care there is a stronger and more energetic generation, and at the same time housework has become less arduous. Although there are still a tragically large number of mothers who have to cope with one cold tap and no bath, a majority of women do have the help of ample hot water, reliable cookers, gadgets for washing and cleaning and electric irons, not to mention shops providing food needing far less preparation than ever before. The same results can now be achieved without anything like the time and hard work needed in the past.

No gadget can reduce the time spent caring for children, but here again there have been great changes in many homes. Whereas the Victorian head of the household remained remote, fathers now enjoy comparing their infants' progress and contribute at home.

As society changes its attitude to husbands joining in the work at home, so it is also changing its outlook on women emerging and taking jobs. Poorer women were, of course, always expected to work, but status was often measured by whether a family could afford a full time housewife. Now correspondents to *The Times* regularly argue that an educated woman has a moral obligation to continue her career, and this new attitude towards professional women colours the employment situation for all working wives. Husbands attitudes, too, are increasingly favourable to the working wife. In only one of the surveys on this subject was "a woman's place is in the home" quoted as a reason for husbands discouraging their wives from working; and this was only among a very small proportion of those questioned. Generally attitudes seem to be more favourable among the young and among the middle class. In Bermondsey, according to Jephcott and Seear in *Married women working*, the younger couples pointed out the advantages of a joint partnership,

both in earnings and looking after the household. The active co-operation of husbands of women doctors to their wives working indicated their approval (A. H. T. Robb Smith, *Fate of Oxford medical women*).

## the number working

Despite all these changes about two thirds of married women do not work.

### PROPORTION OF POPULATION WORKING, 1964

Age†	single*		married	
	males	females	females	females
	%	%	%	%
25-29	99	98	30	31
30-34	99	98	31	39
35-39	99	93	39	45
40-44	99	88	45	45
45-49	98	82	43	43
50-54	96	73	36	36
55-59	94	60		

\* includes widowed and divorced.

† Under 25s not included as figures distorted by those in full time education.

source: *Ministry of Labour Gazette*.

Almost all men in the appropriate age group are working. For single women too the proportion working is very high. As one would expect, the picture is very different for married women. Less than a third of married women between 25 and 35 work. The proportion rises between 40 and 50, and then falls again. Between the ages of 25 and 35 a large proportion of married women are occupied having and bringing up a family and do not want work, though even in this group there is scope for increasing the number working. The interesting comparison is that between the number over 35 working and their single counterparts. Only 40 to 45 per cent of married women between the age of 35 and 50 work while between 80 and 95 per cent of single women of the same age work. Here there is most scope for increasing the working population, for the children of many of these women are grown up and most are well into their school years. There has been a trend towards more

women of this age working over the past ten years or so and the official forecasts of the working population assume some continuation of this trend. Half the married women, aged between 45 and 49, are expected to be working in 1970. But the forecasts still leave three million married women between 35 and 60 not working in 1970.

It is sometimes argued that there is a limit to the expansion of employment among married women and that this limit is being rapidly approached in Britain. This line of reasoning—which is implicit in some of the forecasts—is belied both by regional and by international variations in the numbers of women working.

## regional variations

Figures for different regions are only available for all women, married and single. The figures for married women probably show even greater variations since they tend to be the “marginal” labour.

### PROPORTION OF WOMEN WORKING, 1963

	females working† %	increase since 1951
South East	41.3	5.1
South Western	31.8	4.5
Midland	41.9	2.0
North Midland	36.8	2.9
E & W Ridings	39.1	2.3
North West	41.2	0.2
Northern	32.9	4.0
Scotland	38.3	2.7
Wales	28.2	4.3
N. Ireland	33.8	0.8
UK	38.6	3.3

† over 15.

source: *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, March, 1965.

As the table shows there are big regional differences in the proportions of women working in different parts of the country and in the increases in employment registered by the respective regions since 1951.

Generally, activity rates seem to be highest in the prosperous areas where employment is very full—over 41 per cent of all females work in the South East and the Midlands, and least high in the areas of higher unemployment and low rates of growth of demand for labour. In Northern Ireland, with its high unemployment the activity rate is only 34 per cent; in the South West with its slow growth 32 per cent, although this low figure partly reflects large numbers of retired people. However, the level of employment and its rate of expansion do not entirely explain the regional variations. The type of employment available and the traditions of the region also play a part. In the North West, where the textile industry gives employment to a large number of women, there are almost as many women working as in the South East, despite unemployment in the region. Scotland, too, has more employment than might be expected. Wales, on the other hand, with only 28 per cent of the women over 15 working, less than any other region, has very little female employment in relation to its general economic state. This is probably partly due to the type of industry in Wales—mining and steel—and partly to traditions of women staying at home. These traditions are themselves largely a product of the fact that few jobs have been available for women.

Activity rates have increased everywhere, but by much more in some places than others. As one would expect, the increases have been smallest in the very depressed parts of the country where the expansion in the total jobs available has been least. In the North West of England and in Northern Ireland there has hardly been any increase in the proportion of women working since 1951. The small size of the increase in the North West is probably due to the decline in the textile industry. Generally, increases have been greatest where the proportion working in 1951 was relatively low. In the South West, in Wales and the Northern regions, the proportion working in 1951 was considerably below the average and the increase in the proportion working since 1951 considerably above average.

These figures show there is a great potential for increasing employment among women. The trend towards more women working is happening everywhere and not just in isolated regions where industry is particularly dependent on female labour. Just levelling all the regions—getting the same proportion to work in all regions as at present work in the Midlands—would increase employment among women by 830,000; this levelling is happening already to some extent. The South East figures also contradict the suggestion that a limit to the expansion of employment among women will soon be reached. With one of the highest activity rates in the country in 1951 the South East has expanded its proportion of women working since then faster than any other region. The South East figures and those for other prosperous regions also show that an important way of bringing about an increase in the number of women working is to have a high level of demand for labour generally and a fast expansion of employment. This is borne out by other evidence from employers' quoted below, which makes it clear that they only really make an effort to provide part time work where there is a shortage of labour.

The figures we have been discussing were for all women over 15, and much the same regional pattern emerges for women between 45 and 60. But the increase of the proportion working within this group has been considerably faster everywhere than the increase in the proportion of women of all ages working. In the UK  $11\frac{1}{2}$  per cent more women were working in this age group in 1963 than in 1951. For all women over 15 the increase was under  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

## international comparisons

Figures of the proportion of women working in different countries also refute the argument that there is some natural limit, soon to be reached in Britain, to the number of women who might work. As with the regional data, figures are only available for all women, married and single; however the proportion of

women who marry in different countries does not differ sufficiently to make the use of these figures misleading. The British figure of 43 per cent of women working between 20 and 64 is very similar to the figures in many other Western European countries and in the USA. But it is significantly lower than the Eastern European and Russian figures. In these countries there are extensive day nursery and nursery education provision for the children of working mothers and the jobs available make many more concessions to the working mother. In Russia, for example, mothers are allowed time off to feed their babies. The less developed countries like Spain and Portugal have considerably fewer women working.

### PROPORTION OF WOMEN (AGED 20-64) ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE

	year	%
USSR	1959	66
Hungary	1963	51
Austria	1961	50
Czechoslovakia	1950	49
W Germany	1961	45
Yugoslavia	1961	45
USA	1963	44
Great Britain	1963	43
France	1964	40
Denmark	1960	38
Sweden	1960	37
Switzerland	1960	37
Canada	1963	32
Italy	1963	31
Ireland	1961	28
Norway	1960	25
Netherlands	1960	21
Spain	1960	18
Portugal	1960	17

source: *Year Book of Labour Statistics*.

These figures may be somewhat misleading since the retirement ages differ—in the US, for example, the retirement age for women is 65. Definitions of employment may also differ.

## a real reserve?

It is sometimes argued that women do not provide a real reserve of labour because the jobs available are not suited



to women. It is true that some jobs are clearly unsuitable for women. But the number of jobs in which they are ruled out completely is declining. In Sweden, the car manufacturing firm, Volvo, employs women on the assembly line. The increasingly wide use of automated machines is extending the possibilities of female employment throughout industry and not only in the jobs traditionally thought of as suitable for women. In manufacturing industry as a whole women constitute almost one third of the active labour force. In the clothing and textile industry the ratio is very much higher, and in such an unexpected industry as metal goods the proportion is 34 per cent. In engineering and electrical goods it is nearly 28 per cent, as in chemicals and allied industries. Shipbuilding and marine engineering is the only part of manufacturing industry employing a small proportion of women (5 per cent). In the rest of the economy the proportion of women employed in the respective industries varies as shown below.

#### WOMEN EMPLOYEES: 1964

	% of all workers	by 1970, ,000
agriculture, fishing	16.4	—142
mining, quarrying	3.5	—179
construction	4.9	+ 98
manufacturing	30.6	+292
gas, electricity, water	12.3	+ 44
transport	15.1	— 99
distributive trades	52.6	+ 20
insurance, banking	4.8	+ 90
professional services*	66.2	+460
miscellaneous services	56.9	+106
public admin., defence	28.6	+ 99
total	35.9	+789

\* includes health and education.

sources: *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, June 1965; *The National Plan*.

As is to be expected, women form a much larger proportion of the total employed in the service sector (distribution and miscellaneous services) than in the producing sectors.

The first obvious fact shown by these

figures is that the British economy is heavily reliant on women in almost all sectors. Thus the increasing proportion of women who marry, and the decreasing age at which they marry, have serious implications for the whole of British industry. The supply of single women is gradually declining and unless real efforts are made to employ married women in their stead, there will be a serious shortage of labour throughout the economy, not just in the peripheral jobs like domestic service, but also in industries at the heart of our growth and export effort.

The second implication of these figures is that women are increasingly doing traditionally men's work, which means that with a general shortage of labour, the increasing employment of women will help to solve the problem. A breakdown of the type of job done also suggests this. In manufacturing industry (excluding metals) about 20 per cent of women employed are in administrative, technical and clerical jobs, about 14 per cent are skilled operatives, 45 per cent unskilled machine workers, and the rest in other unskilled jobs. These proportions are very similar to those of men. Of course, in some cases the jobs where labour is needed most will not be suitable for women, but in these cases women will often be able to do other jobs at present done by men, so releasing men for the jobs only they can do.

A third factor of great importance is that the industries employing most women are also those expected to expand fastest in the future. The National Plan gave estimates of the increase in employment expected in different parts of the economy from 1964 to 1970, according to the results of the Industrial Inquiry. As the table above shows, the service sectors—distribution, insurance, banking, professional services and miscellaneous services—employ by far the largest numbers of women in relation to their total employment. And these industries are expected to increase their employment faster than any other—together they are expected to employ an additional 676,000 of the total expansion in employment expected. Em-

ployment in mining, agriculture and transport, all employing relatively few women, is expected to decline substantially. However, employment in construction, which also employs very few women, is expected to increase, and that in textiles, a large employer of women, to decline. But on balance the pattern of growth is clearly going to be favourable to the employment of women.

## trained women

Married women are the largest potential reserve of labour available to the economy. Perhaps more important, they are the largest reserve of trained labour. In 1961, 40 per cent of women with higher education, who had qualified ten years before, were in the working force. This means 60 per cent were not, and these figures include single as well as married women. Roughly half the education given to women is "wasted" from the strictly economic point of view. At present, over a third of all university places go to women, and the ratio is increasing. Given the extreme shortage of educated personnel and the enormous effort (with the envisaged expansion of the universities) devoted to increasing it, a policy to get more of these women to work should be given a first priority. Considering, for instance, the extreme shortage of scientists, and all the publicity given when a single scientist goes to the United States, the failure to use over 13,000 mainly resident women scientists is absurd.

As we said earlier, the social services will need to expand faster than any other sector, and they are generally staffed by women. A large part of our needs for skilled labour to staff the social and medical services could be met by trained married women who have left the labour force, as is shown by some examples of particular professions.

There is already an acute shortage of teachers, and to remove some of the worst aspects of the education system would increase the shortage even more. For instance, 55,000 new teachers are required to achieve the class size standards

of the 1944 Act, and it is estimated that another 20,000 would be needed to raise the school leaving age to 16 in 1971.

Married women provide both the reason for, and the answer to, the problem. Over 70 per cent of the non-graduate teachers trained are women; of those trained about four in ten will not be teaching in a few years. The Nuffield investigation showed that of those who had had a diploma course and started to teach in 1955, 27 per cent were not teaching in 1960. Of those starting in 1950, 55 per cent were out of the teaching force in 1960. But this wastage does mean that there is a source of trained teachers available *now*, just when needed 166,000 non-graduate women were trained as teachers between 1935 and 1959, according to the Robbins Report. Suppose half of these are not now teaching, if only a fifth of them returned, half the non-graduate teaching shortage would be removed. The situation is similar among graduate teachers, though the numbers concerned are not as great.

According to recent estimates (K. R. Hill, "Medical manpower—the need for more medical schools", *The Lancet*, September 1964; "The dearth of doctors," *The Guardian*, 5 February 1965) about 15,000 more doctors are needed. To reduce all GPs' lists to 3,000 patients would need another 2,000 doctors and the BMA have suggested maximum lists of 2,000. The hospital service also needs another 5,000 doctors (*British Medical Journal* 1964, ii suppl 46), and the gradual return of immigrant doctors to their own countries will further reduce the supply. Of those medical women who replied to a questionnaire in 1964, 17 per cent were not working and 26 per cent were working part time (*Medical Women's Survey*, 1964). Thus, some of these shortages could be met by trained women doctors not now in practice.

Although considerable efforts have been made in the nursing profession to adapt working conditions to the needs of married women, there remains a notorious shortage of nurses and yet one still reads letters in the press from married nurses

unable to get part-time work. About 40 per cent of all trained nurses leave the profession, many for marriage. There were 400 unfilled vacancies for midwives in 1963. Only 16,000 midwives were employed in 1964, though the then Minister of Health appealed for the return of the 25,000 lost midwives.

The Government's Health and Welfare Plan showed that by 1973 local authorities aim to employ another 13,240 home helps, 2,900 health visitors and 2,000 social workers. These increases are generally less than half as large as would be needed to bring the standards of all local authorities up to those of the best fifth. To do this, social workers would need to increase by 145 per cent compared with 1962, health visitors by 88 per cent and nurses by 70 per cent (W. Beckerman and associates, *The British Economy in 1975*, CUP 1965). These figures generally only represent maintenance of existing services, and exclude much needed new provisions, such as more care for the mentally handicapped, more residential care for old people, and, more important, more domiciliary services to look after the old and handicapped in their own homes.

# 3. what has gone wrong?

As we have shown there is an extreme shortage of many kinds of labour—particularly of people with specialised skills—and there is also a considerable supply of these very skills and of labour of all types at present unused, among married women. In the rest of this pamphlet we try to see why this situation exists and what sort of changes might bring the jobs and the women together.

## do women want to work

The first and most obvious question that must be answered is whether these married women want work. It is not our mission to persuade those who would rather stay at home to change their minds, though such a campaign could be justified.

However, the evidence supporting the view that many women who are not working would like to work is overwhelming. Nobody has done a full scale national enquiry into this subject—most of the evidence comes from small enquiries conducted by specialised institutions who are interested in particular skills, especially among the more highly educated. There is, though, some evidence on a national scale. First, a simple piece of national evidence is the regional variation in activity rates quoted earlier. Given the homogeneity of the population today, the fact that 42 per cent of all women of working age are employed in the prosperous part of the Midlands, while next door, in the North Midlands, only 37 per cent work, and in Wales only 28 per cent, indicates that opportunity rather than preference determines how many women work in many parts of the country. Dr. Viola Klein (Viola Klein, *Britain's married women workers*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965) did a survey in 1957 of a random national sample of 2,030 people—men and women. Among the married women she found 69 per cent were not working: of these 47 per cent wanted to work, mostly part time.

The more specialised enquiries support this conclusion. Enquiries have been undertaken by all sorts of institutions

among, for instance, women doctors (A.H.T. Robb Smith, *Fate of Oxford medical women*, 1964), architects (Architecture Association, 1963), teachers (Nuffield Survey, R. K. Kelsall, Ministry of Education, 1963), scientists (Social Survey of COI, Ministry of Labour, 1959), and three among university graduates generally (National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, 1964; J. Hubback, *Wives who went to college*, British Federation of University Women Ltd., 1965). Most of these surveys were conducted among a limited and sometimes unrepresentative group; neither the groups nor the questions asked were strictly comparable. Nonetheless, sufficiently similar conclusions emerged from all the surveys to make one fairly confident in drawing a number of general conclusions. First, like Viola Klein's national survey all the surveys showed that large numbers of women who are not working would like to work. The proportions, in fact, are somewhat higher among these women than women in general. Among the doctors about three quarters of those not working would like to work. Three fifths of the non-employed among university graduates (British Federation of University Women Ltd., 1965) wanted to work. Among those who wanted to work, a very large proportion wanted part time work. Almost all those questioned by Dr. Klein wanted to work part time; so did 85 per cent of the university graduates who wanted work. Another, and perhaps more surprising conclusion is that some of the women already working wanted longer hours. This was true of about one fifth of the doctors questioned and a fair proportion of Mrs. Hubback's university women (*Wives who went to college*).

It is clear from these surveys that there are large numbers of married women who are not working who would like to work, mostly part time. Among the highly qualified there are even more than among women in general. The paradox is that there is an urgent need for these women to return to work and simultaneously there are many who are not working but would like to.

The surveys shed some light on the obstacles preventing women working. These divide broadly into three groups: absence of suitable jobs with convenient hours and holidays; the need for training and refresher courses; and the lack of suitable care for the children and help in the house. Another often quoted reason why mothers should not work, particularly those with young children, is the effects on the children, and we discuss this in chapter four. The rest of the pamphlet looks at these obstacles and examines what might be done to remove them.

### part time work

Many women are not working because they cannot find suitable jobs with convenient hours. This was one of the main complaints of the scientists (A. H. T. Robb Smith, *Fate of Oxford medical women*, 1964), and the doctors (*Social Survey of COI*, Ministry of Labour, 1959) in the surveys. Part time work is often the only possibility for women with young children, and many married women with children of school age would like to work while the children are out, but want to be able to see them off to school and be home before them in the afternoon. Some would rather work in term time only. Even those with grown up children often prefer part-time work to the more rigorous discipline of the full time day.

Employers, on the other hand, generally tolerate, rather than welcome, part timers. The attitude is summed up in a letter received from Peak Freans, who are known for their progressive policy towards married women employees. Even they are only "reconciled that part time work is with us to stay".

The number of part time jobs available is extremely small. Only 15½ per cent of all women employed in manufacturing industry are part time. Compared with the 52 per cent of all women employed in manufacturing industry who are married, this figure is very low. Within industry there are wide variations in the number who work part time, varying

from 25 per cent of all women in food, drink and tobacco industries to 9 per cent in clothing, as the table shows.

### PERCENTAGE OF ALL FEMALES EMPLOYED MID-JUNE, 1964

	part time	married
food, drink & tobacco	25	57
chemicals & allied	15	48
metal manufacture	14	54
engineering & electrical	15	55
shipbuilding & marine engin.	10	49
vehicles	10	54
metal goods	19	62
textiles	13	56
leather, leather goods, fur	14	58
clothing and footwear	9	50
bricks, pottery, etc.	10	63
timber, furniture	13	56
paper, printing, publishing	12	45
other manufacturing	19	59
total	15	52

source: *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, August 1964, June 1965.

Retail shops and light industries, which complain of severe staff shortages, attract over a quarter of all full time women workers, but only an eighth of part timers (*Financial Times*, June, 1964). Generally speaking there seems to be particularly little part time work available in professional and secretarial jobs. Dr. Klein (*Britain's married women workers*) found that only nine per cent of the married women working part time were doing this sort of work, whereas 45 per cent were domestic and other cleaners, and canteen and school meals staff. Similarly, the only part time work mentioned as being abundant in the health and local government services by the National Union of Public Employees, was in jobs for cleaners and school meals staff. About half of the part timers employed by the Civil Service are cleaners. The Civil Service still does not recognise part time work for established administrative employees.

While the Government had confined itself to national advertising for part time teachers it had, until recently, left the initiative for employing them to rather

unenthusiastic local authorities. This was illustrated in some recent correspondence, summarised in *Where*, provoked by a letter to the *Observer* from a married woman, a trained teacher, who wanted part time work but did not even have her application acknowledged when she wrote to her local authority. 43 other married women, all ex-teachers, 18 of whom were graduates and all but one trained, wrote with similar complaints. The 43 covered 22 local authorities. In all these authorities there are some overcrowded classes in both junior and senior schools by the standards of the 1944 Act. Some of the local authorities did not reply at all to the applications. Some said there was no demand for part time work. This, and similar evidence in other fields, suggests the Government must actively encourage employers to welcome rather than barely tolerate part time work. The Minister of Education, Anthony Crosland, has been urging local authorities to employ at least ten per cent of their teachers as part timers by 1970.

Part time work does seem to be growing particularly where labour is in short supply. For manufacturing industry as a whole the proportion of women working part time was only 12 per cent in 1950 compared with 15 per cent in December 1964. Within manufacturing industry part time work has increased particularly fast in the very fast growing sector of chemicals and allied trades, and also in the food, drink and tobacco industries. Variations in the amount of part time work available in different parts of the country also suggests that, as one would expect, part time work forms the highest proportion of total work for women where the demand for labour is greatest. In June 1961 the highest proportion of part time work, 17 per cent of the total female employment, was available in the prosperous area of London and the South East, followed closely by the North Midlands with 16 per cent, while in Scotland the ratio was only seven per cent, and in Wales it was as low as six per cent.

Most banks have a system of part time employment, and one large bank employs

auxiliary staff on a fortnight on, fortnight off basis. In the Civil Service, in places like London, where there are staff shortages there is resort to all sorts of devices to attract and retain married women, like mornings only, one week's work in two and approved (unpaid) leave during school holidays. In the small survey we did of a few large firms one or two of the firms who replied seemed to provide opportunities for very flexible part time work. Both Sainsburys and Courtaulds have several shifts at various hours—the most popular is apparently one in the evening from six until ten. Both firms claimed that an employee could work whatever hours suited her. Peak Frean has a "school shift" it has just introduced after stopping it for several years because it was so uneconomical. At the moment only twelve women are working this shift, but it is considered worthwhile as long as the firm cannot find "normal" labour to work the plant. It looks as if shortage of labour is gradually forcing employers, public and private, to take a more flexible attitude towards hours of work. But these changes are taking place more slowly than we can afford.

## employers attitudes

The limited amount of part time work available is one indication of employers' attitudes. There are other signs of more general prejudice, particularly about professional jobs.

All but two of the firms contacted claimed not to discriminate against women, but in some fields there is discrimination. Over half the firms preferred a married woman with older children to one with young children. Dr. Klein found that many employers would not consider married women if alternative labour was available, and in some cases married women were the first to be dispensed with when there was redundancy (op. cit).

Considerable prejudice against women was revealed in a survey of appointments advertised in two "quality Sunday news-

papers" (Margherita Rendel, *New Society*, 27 August, 1964). A third of the advertisements referred explicitly to men, and of the replies to the ambiguous ones, a third would not consider women; 37 per cent would consider them, and the rest were doubtful. Much of this may be part of the old prejudice against employing women in professional jobs, particularly where they would be in authority over men. This difficulty was one of the most frequently mentioned reasons why managers did not employ more women scientists in industry, according to an enquiry conducted by the Central Office of Information. Fears that women would leave because of domestic commitments was another frequently cited reason. Of the establishments looking for more scientists and engineers in this enquiry, 60 per cent would not consider women.

In the teaching profession too there has been a strong preference until recently for men teachers, and this still exists in areas where the supply position is easier, but the quota system and the overall shortage of teachers is gradually eliminating this.

*Promotion:* Many employers, both public and private, are loathe to give women responsibility for various apparently good reasons. Young single women might get married and leave, young married women might have children, mothers might need time off and older women are thought to be more difficult to train. Few of the employers who held these views have tested their hypotheses. They might well find that by this policy they are losing, indeed, failing to attract at all, much valuable labour because they offer only routine work with no responsibility and little prospect of promotion. None of the firms in our survey offered part time employees the same prospects of promotion as a full timer. Most have no part time supervisors and one firm has no women shop managers at all, because of tradition. Viola Klein also found that many firms would not readily provide married women with skilled work or, indeed, with reasonable prospects for promotion.

In a survey by Nancy Seear (N. Seear, V. Roberts, J. Brock, *A career for women in industry*, 1964) just less than a third of the employees in the eight firms studied were women but less than five per cent of the responsible jobs were held by them. Some of the women did not seem very keen to hold more responsible jobs, but apart from this there seemed to be few good reasons why so few did so. Prejudice had a great deal to do with the failure of women to advance. Managers' views were inconsistent and often unfit for the type of work available, women were, in fact, doing the same work in another firm. Over half the sample of women scientists and engineers employed in industry thought there were no prospects of promotion for them and a quarter of the firms questioned said they did not promote women. One of the commonest reasons given for changing jobs was lack of scope or interest of the job. The most frequently stated reasons of the women scientists for taking their job was its satisfying nature and its convenience for home life.

Taken together these facts suggest a vicious circle. Employers do not give women jobs at a level of responsibility and interest consistent with their ability and qualifications because they fear they will leave after a short time. The women find their jobs unsatisfying and so leave, confirming the employers' original views. This sort of thing seems to apply at all levels. Peak Freen found that they had a much lower turnover rate among their female employees once they introduced training.

The employers' (both public and private) attitude of indifference towards the employment of married women, particularly part timers, is partly to be explained by genuine difficulties associated with this kind of employment.

*High turnover* is one problem. Three of the firms questioned said they found more difficulties with women with young children than with others. Many women try working, find they cannot manage and leave; some leave for the school

holidays and find other jobs afterwards. These kind of arrangements can only occur where there is a shortage of labour and when the woman only wants routine work with no prospects of promotion. Part of the high rates of turnover are also due to the vicious circle just described. The more interesting the jobs the lower the turnover rates are likely to be.

Female turnover rates are considerably higher than male ones as the table below shows. Since these cover the figures for single as well as married women the rates for married women are probably considerably higher.

#### TURNOVER RATES: 1964 MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

(Male figures in brackets).

4 weeks ending	engagements* %	discharges* plus losses %
15 February	4.0 (2.3)	3.8 (2.2)
16 May	3.9 (2.4)	3.8 (2.4)
15 August	3.9 (2.4)	3.4 (2.1)
14 November	4.0 (2.4)	3.8 (2.3)

\* per 100 employed.

The study by Nancy Seear (op. cit.) suggested that the turnover rate for women in higher positions—graduates and those earning over £800 a year—though higher than that for men was not sufficiently high to justify the view that “women do not stay”. Over 50 per cent of the women questioned had been working for over ten years and the majority expected to be with the same firm in ten to twenty years.

*Absenteeism* also tends to be higher among married women than other groups. The British Institute of Management survey of absence rates (Michael Stewart, *Absence from work* 1961) found that the incidence of absence for manual workers was 6½ per cent among women more than one and a half times the rate among men. Among married women absence rates tend to be considerably higher than among single ones. But although women are absent more the lengths of each absence tends to be shorter than

for men. And single men and married men with a large number of dependents also have high absence rates. The author suggests that absenteeism among women might be reduced if hours of work were fitted in with shopping hours and if day nurseries were provided at the factory. Absence rates were found to be higher with a longer working week (5½ days) suggesting that part timers might have lower absence rates.

Another reason employers shy away from part time work is their belief that it is a more expensive form of labour. To some extent they are right. National insurance contributions payable by employers are the same irrespective of the hours worked so long as the employees work more than eight hours a week. As the average part time working week is 21½ hours, most part timers need the full contribution paid for them. It would seem fairly simple to change this. There may be other overhead costs which are much the same irrespective of the length of the working week, for example, the administrative costs of employment are probably much the same for part timers as for those working full time—the costs of PAYE, for instance. And there are some jobs where it is considered necessary to have the same person there all the time. It is often argued that social work is not suited to part time work and the same is said of administrative work, in the public services and outside. But where the need for labour is sufficiently great to force employers to overcome the initial difficulties, these arguments are often found to be baseless. Two part timers can often do a job better than one full timer. In many jobs the concentration and output of a person working part time is greater proportionately than the full timer, and the advantages more than outweigh the disadvantages. In fact, if employers organised part time labour in the locality on a large scale, instead of regarding it as supplementary labour, the unit cost would fall, and the general frustration would be diminished.

Attitudes cannot be changed overnight by the wave of a wand or a simple piece of legislation. But there are a few



changes that could be made. A simple change is to allow nominal or wage related national insurance contributions for employers for part time women. The Government could set an example itself by recognising part time work for established administrative class Civil Servants and encouraging it elsewhere as it is in teaching. And it could exert a more positive influence over local authorities and over the nationalised industries to be more flexible in their conditions of work. The Government controls, directly or indirectly, nearly half the economy. If it wanted it could have an important influence in this sphere.

## the trade unions

If the right sort of part time jobs are to be available the attitude of employers will have to be changed since they are the people who decide what jobs to give. But the attitude of the trade unions could be equally important as a tremendously powerful pressure group on behalf of the women involved.

The trade union movement's prime concern for women is to obtain equal pay. Its interest in conditions of work and availability of jobs for the married and part time definitely takes second place, and its historical attitude of opposition to part time labour as a threat to existing membership is still widely held. It is significant that the TUC's six point Charter for Women, which it produced in 1963, does not deal with the problems of these women, apart from wanting re-training facilities for older women. This attitude is not surprising in view of the traditional concern of the women's side of the trade union movement with equal pay. The campaign for equal pay began early this century, but equal pay is still far off in many parts of industry. In manufacturing industry as a whole, for example, hourly earnings of women are only 57 per cent of those of men. The unions' main preoccupation, as far as part time and auxiliary work is concerned, is to see that employees are not exploited so that pay and conditions of work for the full time employees are not

diluted. This attitude, too, is reasonable in the light of past experience. But it seems to us that in this respect the trade union movement is living in the past. Over half the female employees are married and this proportion is likely to grow steadily in the future. The main concern of these married women employees is with flexibility of hours, availability of part time work, provision of care for the children and training and re-training in middle age. Equal pay, dilution and conditions of work remain important, of course, but the success of the trade union movement among women in the future will depend on its interest in the problems of the married and part time who already form the largest proportion of its potential membership and whose numbers are growing almost as fast as those of traditional women trade union members—the single women with full time and permanent jobs—are declining. The growth sector of the trade union movement as a whole has been concentrated among unions with large increases in women members (John Hughes, *Change in the trade unions*, Fabian Research series, 244), and this too emphasises the need to organise women workers.

The TUC Women's Advisory Committee are gradually placing more emphasis on the married and part time. In its most recent report (Annual report of TUC Women's Advisory Committee), a long section is devoted to their problems. The main needs are mentioned: NEDC, and the Ministry of Labour are criticised for failing to recognise the need "to provide adequate child care facilities at reasonable charges to assist the mother of young children". The inadequacy of re-training facilities is also mentioned. The TUC women's section has conducted various surveys about the positions *vis a vis* the care of the children of working mothers and forwarded resolutions to the Ministry of Labour on this subject.

But despite this attitude, individual trade unions on the whole have taken little action on this front. The National Union of Public Employees has had the largest increase in women membership in the local government and public services and

has set up some branches for women only which has helped in recruiting part timers. A few unions have women's officers and a couple have publicity directly aimed at women. Some unions, such as the Civil Service Clerical Association, have lower subscriptions for part timers. Most unions seem to have accepted that women, especially those who work part time, are difficult to recruit and few play an active part in the branches. Some of this may well be due to the fact that the unions are not primarily concerned with their problems. If greater efforts were made to attract and organise such women the trade union movement could well become the most powerful pressure group in this field, but the old opposition to women and part timers will have to be overcome first.

## employment exchanges

The system of finding jobs, especially part time, is haphazard. Plenty of part time work is only advertised in shop windows, local newspapers and outside factories, and opportunities are easily missed. And other part time work, in the professions for example, is even less widely advertised.

The employment exchange ought to be the answer to these irrationalities. It does a very great deal, but it only touches part time work. This is not a question of principle. The exchange handles part time vacancies and often takes considerable trouble helping applicants. 38 of its 900 branches maintain a professional and executive register, catering for men and women wanting professional, managerial and executive posts, full or part time.

Nevertheless most married women do not use the Ministry of Labour. Not paying full insurance in most cases, married women do not bother to register as unemployed, and not being compelled to go to the exchange, rarely think of doing so. This process spirals so that employers look elsewhere and do not bother to register their vacancies, thus supporting the prejudice that the exchange will not have

anything much to offer anyway.

This situation has led to the growth of a number of private organisations. Apart from all sorts of specialist agencies concerned with particular trades or professions (for example, Alfred Marks for catering, Stella Fisher for secretaries, Gabbitas-Thring for teaching) there are ones like the agency for the employment of mothers, and the University women's part time employment agency. These latter organisations have grown in direct response to a demand by housewives for jobs, usually part time and often at home.

Other groups are also concerned by this whole problem. The Women's Information and Study Centre hopes to set up a counselling service in London particularly for women returning to work after rearing a family. The Women's Employment Federation tries to co-ordinate the work of its members, as well as advising individuals on training and jobs. The Ministry of Labour has a women's consultative committee, although this only meets twice a year. The TUC also has a women's advisory committee. Other professional bodies have shown their concern recently in the reports they have published, whilst the problems of women in industry have been examined lately by both the London School of Economics and the Ministry of Labour.

We consider the employment exchange is best suited to encourage the provision of such jobs and to see that women are properly informed about them. It already possesses the necessary machinery, although it will mean extending its services, and venturing into some new fields. An officer, similar to a youth employment officer, should be attached to the employment exchange and should be responsible for part time jobs for women. She would need to take an active role and encourage all employers to keep her informed of their vacancies, and should discover what part time work in general was available in the area. She should also find potential openings and persuade employers that they could take more part timers. A national campaign would be

needed to encourage women to come to the exchange to discuss the type of work they would like as well as the hours and conditions they would accept. The officer would also learn what factors could prevent them considering a job at all. She might then provide a focus for pressure for services such as more nursery provision, being in a better position than most to assess the needs of the area.

The exchange could take the initiative in schemes beyond the scope of individual employers. At present many mothers leave their jobs at the beginning of the school holidays and either apply for re-appointment of a new post altogether when term starts. Employers might find it in their own interest to give set leave of absence to otherwise reliable staff, if they had a regular supply of temporary labour laid on. It should be possible for the labour exchange to arrange for students to fill these gaps. The Post Office and certain factories apparently have no difficulty in finding a large body of students year after year, but the organisation required may need to be on a larger scale than the individual employer.

## training

Our educational institutions have failed so far to adapt themselves to the changed lives of women, in particular to the special needs of the married woman. This failure—the lack of opportunity both to train and re-train—is a major obstacle to getting many married women back into highly skilled jobs. Most women, as we have shown, marry early, have children early, and can look forward to another 30 years of active life. But our educational institutions still cling to Edwardian concepts of educating a girl. Either she is trained for years of service to a profession or it is assumed that she will soon marry and retire to the kitchen with her children and need no training. These alternatives are unrelated to present social patterns. They do not cater for two important groups of women.

First, there are many highly qualified women who have left their jobs to bring

up a family and feel out of touch with their profession. They want some instruction to bring them up to date with the latest information and techniques before taking jobs again. Among the groups of women surveyed (see above) many architects, doctors and teachers made this plea. This is hardly surprising when one considers what changes there are in, say, ten years. The practising GP finds it hard enough to keep pace with several new drugs a week; in offices, in banks and in industry techniques of ten years ago are useless in the face of a computer. In both primary and secondary schools the maths or science teacher of ten years ago could feel utterly lost. The language teacher may find herself thrust into a laboratory. In most subjects she will have a drastically revised syllabus, with new aims. And the teacher of today may return in a few years to work as one of a team, needing entirely new class techniques. The architect would feel equally lost if industrialised building becomes widespread.

Secondly, there are large numbers of women who could be trained, who have the ability and desire for training, but who have never been provided with the right sort of education. They form two main groups: first, those who leave school without any form of higher education or training; and second those who stop short in the middle of their training.

The first group is by far the larger. There is no reason to believe that girls are not as academically able as boys. Only two fifths of either sex stay at school after 15, and of those very similar proportions succeed in getting a General Certificate of Education. In 1961, 29.2 per cent of boys and 27 per cent of girls passed GCE ordinary level in one subject, and 16.1 per cent of boys and 15.4 per cent of girls obtained passes in five subjects.

It is in the sixth form that the wastage begins. Parents are less inclined to maintain their daughters at school, and girls themselves often reject study in their teens. By the age of 17 there are 10.8 girls for every 13 boys in full time education. The comparison on day release

courses is even more significant, only one girl attending for every four boys. Boys also predominate in all age groups in evening classes. Thus 62 per cent of girls have no further education after leaving school, while this is true for only 39 per cent of boys.

The same sort of disparity shows at all levels of education after ordinary level.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 1961		
	boys %	girls %
5 plus O levels	16.1	15.4
2 A levels	8.7	5.1
3 A levels	5.9	2.9
university entrance	5.6	2.5
some form of higher education	22.4	7.9

source: Robbins Report.

These figures, like most of the existing analysis, concern the under 21 age group who have had the benefit of more generous grants and more opportunities than their parents. Amongst older women there is an even greater likelihood of finding talent that has never been given a chance of training. Here then is the nation's greatest reserve of untapped talent, as both the Crowther and Robbins Reports have emphasised.

The next group (those who stop in the middle of their training) is smaller, but so also is the amount of help they need. Each year 800 girls who enter university leave without qualifications. With the new three year training for teachers there may be 2,000 girls leaving annually without finishing. In all these instances several years of valuable teaching, as well as of learning, are partially wasted. The reasons given for the wastage are various, but later, perhaps after marriage, many might like to finish a training in order to get a particular job. They have at least the basis for that training. Their situation is similar to that of a number of graduates who need a further diploma before they can take posts in social work or teaching, for instance.

Some idea of the potential among married women was suggested by a recent

survey carried out by the St. Pancras Association for the Advancement of State Education. With very little publicity large numbers of enquiries were received from married women who had brought up a family and now wanted to train to become teachers. Most of these had been to grammar schools and over half had some form of further education. Some had taken teacher training courses which they had not finished. Others were trained in completely different fields—e.g. social science, music, drama, art. All the women wanted part time training with hours that would fit in with their family responsibilities, though many were prepared to return to teaching full time once trained.

The problem here is much the same as that described earlier in relation to jobs. If these women are to be brought into the labour force the educational institutions must be transformed to cater for mothers, many with school or pre-school age children or with elderly dependents. The institutions must recognise a mother's pattern of loyalties. She will want to see her family off in the morning and be ready for their return at night. She may be happy enough to allow someone to look after a toddler for most of the day, yet still want to feed him in the evening and put him to bed, and she cannot leave her home so readily in the school holidays. Work and training schedules must adapt to this, and although there are some examples of allowances being made, these are few in number and limited in scope, bearing no comparison with what could be done.

Given the will, teaching establishments could cater for many student mothers. Residential courses are obviously unsuitable, and yet, for example, there are only four day colleges for prospective teachers in the country. And if residence is necessary, some thought could be given to its length and timing. The Architects' Association, for instance, found that mothers would prefer two short stays to one longer period. Most of the women in the ASE survey were unable to attend existing teacher training courses for mature students because they were full

time—9.30 to 5.30 every weekday in term time. The women could only manage part time training a few mornings each week or two or three full days, and some could only manage one or two sessions each week. Many of them wanted to work full time once trained, however. Mothers will rarely be able to reach lectures before 10 a.m. and will want afternoon sessions to end before school is over. This can often be arranged without cutting lecturing time, and might even enable a mother to be the lecturer.

There is enormous scope for reaching mothers through other media. Here the way has been pointed by the National Extension College, which offers a combination of the correspondence course, sound and television lectures, local tutorial groups, together with short intensive residential study. Nottingham University adult education department has also been experimenting with lectures on television, followed up by local tutors. But as yet the scope is limited. Much educational broadcasting stimulates interest, but is not directed towards qualifying examinations. Very little is even directed at adults. Amongst the many schools' programmes on the radio there were, for instance, three brief sessions a week encouraging women to think about entering social work and teaching.

## financial rewards

Another obstacle frequently mentioned as discouraging women from working is the remuneration they receive—their pay and tax position. Generally, part timers are paid proportionately to the full time rates. This is true, for example, of civil servants, teachers and all the firms who answered our questionnaire. But the National Union of Bank Employees considers the rates of pay for part timers and auxiliary staff as only "fairly satisfactory".

Despite the fact that rates of pay are on the whole fair, part timers still lose. First, their hourly earnings tend to be less as they do not qualify for overtime rates.

This difference is shown in the figures for hourly earnings.

### AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS: WOMEN (in pence)

	Full time	Part time
April, 1956	34.8	33.2
October 1964	54.5	41.4
increase	57.0%	54.0%

source: *Ministry of Labour Gazette*.

As the table shows, hourly earnings of part timers were less than those of full timers in 1956 and since then the gap has widened slightly. Fringe benefits also tend to be less for part timers than for those who work full time. Two of the firms we questioned mentioned that part timers cannot qualify for long service pension or sickness schemes.

One difficulty that seems to arise particularly for would be part time workers is that of finding out how much they would be paid. The complexity of the methods by which part time pay is calculated is illustrated in the case of teachers. No two local educational authorities seem to pay their part time teachers in the same way. Most use a scale based on the Burnham scale for full time teachers. The most common practice for arriving at a full time equivalent is to take the number of school days in a school year., normally 200, divide the appropriate salary by this and then multiply by the number of days the teacher works. Other authorities divide the school year into hours and pay one thousandth of the full time salary for every hour worked. But some authorities calculate on the basis of 1,080 hours in a school year.

Of course a part timer can be paid the same proportionately as a full timer, but her net benefit per hour will be less because overhead costs of working are much the same in either case.

## the tax position

Husbands and wives earnings are taxed jointly. This has led to the widely held misconception that the tax on a woman's

earnings is heavier if she is married than if she is single. In fact the opposite is true as long as the couple jointly earn less than £5,000. (The explanation for this lies in personal allowances. Before marriage a man and woman get a personal allowance of £220 each. After marriage the husband can claim an allowance of £340, an extra allowance of £120. The wife can still claim her own allowance of £220. Like any other taxpayer her earnings above this are taxed at reduced rates.) Above this level surtax is chargeable and only then does matrimony become less profitable.

#### INCOME JOINTLY EARNED EFFECTIVE TAX RATE 1963/64.

£	both* single	married*	husband only
1,000	1s 7d	1s 0d	3s 0d
2,500	3s 7d	3s 1½d	4s 9½d
5,000	5s 0½d	5s 0½d	5s 8½d
8,000	5s 5d	6s 9d	7s 3d
10,000	5s 8½d	7s 8½d	8s 2d

\* both earning equally.

source: Report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue (figures based on the new tax rates are not available).

## expenses

It is frequently argued, however (*The Times*, 21 April 1965) that married women should be given an extra tax allowance towards the household expenses they incur when they go out to work. We feel this is altogether wrong.

From a strictly economic point of view it is desirable that a woman should work if her gross, pre-tax, income is greater than the costs of her working. In some cases women find that although this is the case, their pay after tax is not enough, or is only just enough, to meet the additional expenses they incur by working.

We do not want to discourage these women from working, but we do not feel the answer is expense allowances.

Every woman, married or single, and

every man, for that matter, has domestic expenses that they would not incur if they did not work. There could be no justification for allowing expenses to be claimed by married women but by nobody else. If expenses were allowed for everybody tremendous scope for tax avoidance would result—as it already does in the case of Schedule D taxpayers.

More important, any tax allowance inevitably benefits most those who earn most. Women whose income is too low to pay tax would not benefit at all. Tax relief is also an indiscriminate way of helping married women. The same help is received irrespective of the job the woman does—whether it is teaching, nursing or advertising.

There may be some cases in which it is worth subsidising married women. If a woman has a particular skill which is in short supply, it may be worth paying her more than the normal net wage. We feel this would be done best through a system of negative taxation, or family allowances, paid for specified jobs. Until recently the universities normally paid their academic staff in this way, adding to their salaries according to the size of their families, around £50 pa per child. The scheme is used in other professions too. Although “unfair” we would be prepared to see it adopted for doctor-mothers, for instance, if the medical profession could show, as they claim, that this increase would make the difference in bringing back many of the 1,000 doctors not working.

Apart from this exception, we are against changes in the tax system which treat the married woman's expenses as exceptional and benefit most the better off.

There is little evidence that women are discouraged from working by the tax position.

# 4. the children

“Where I differ from you is that I think the interests of the children should come first.”

This sort of attitude prejudices the issue before discussion has begun. The inadequacy of our provisions for the care of children can largely be attributed to it. The laggardly attitude of many employers towards employing mothers is excused by it, and the mothers themselves are able to stay virtuously at home and disapprove of those who work in the light of it. In this section we look at some of the facts and arguments about the effects on children of their mothers working.

## psychological effects

The widely held belief that considerable psychological damage is imposed on the child if the mother works, is largely due, at least in its more sophisticated expression, to the work of Dr. John Bowlby on maternal deprivation. He suggested that partial deprivation brings “acute anxiety, excessive need for love, powerful feelings of revenge, and . . . depression; and that complete deprivation . . . has even more far-reaching effects on character development, and may entirely cripple the capacity to make relationships” (Bowlby, 1964). Bowlby later modified some of his conclusions on the effects of long term separation (1956) suggesting that much depended on the circumstances, in particular the immediate response of the child after separation.

Bowlby’s conclusions were derived almost entirely from studies of children completely separated from their families, often in institutions, and where the emotional atmosphere in the family before separation was frequently bad. Bowlby did not seriously examine the effects on children of being separated from their mother for only part of the day—and he himself differentiated between such children and those who are permanently separated from their mothers. He implied that separation for only part of the day was harmless. Nonetheless, many have used Bowlby’s deprivation hypo-

thesis—for example, the World Health Organisation Report on Mental Health, 1951—as a major argument against mothers going to work.

A number of sociologists have carried out research into the effects of mothers working, expecting it to confirm the popular belief of bad psychological effects on the children. But as yet no evidence of this has been found.

A recent series of articles published in *Marriage and Family* (August, 1959—November 1961), is typical of research on this topic. Five specialists looked at different aspects of child development and how they were influenced by mothers working. The studies covered children of all ages. One looked at the personalities of the children particularly at about 12 and 16 years old; others looked at the social life, co-operation in the family, discipline and academic achievement of those whose mothers worked compared with children whose mothers stayed at home.

None of these studies found any evidence that the children of working mothers felt deprived, performed poorly at school or led narrower social lives than the other children. Indeed the opposite conclusion was suggested—the children with working mothers were more extended in perception and outlook than the children with non-working mothers. Nor did any of the studies find any connection between delinquency and the working mothers—another widely held misconception.

Other studies, also covering all ages, have come to much the same conclusion. Again no significant differences in general development nor liability to delinquency has been found between the children of working mothers and those whose mothers are not working. One analysis (Macoby, National Manpower Council, US, 1958) suggested that the main difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent children was the quality of maternal supervision, and that the child whose mother is at home but keeps no check on him is more likely to become

delinquent than one whose mother works but arranges adequate care for him.

Most studies agree that the type of substitute care provided is particularly important for children under five, especially for the very young, though little empirical work seems to have been done on the effects of different types of substitute care on the development of the child. It is generally accepted that a child needs stable and constant relationships in its early years, but this need not be only with the mother. So long as the substitute care is consistent and is not a different baby minder, or a new nursery, or a strange au pair girl each week, no harm seems to be done. There may be bad side effects of these arrangements, such as over compensation from a mother who feels guilty at working, or a confusion of allegiance in the child's mind. But there are also benefits; the mother may be more relaxed and willing to play with the child when she is there because she has had a break and maybe gained satisfaction from the work she has done, and because in some cases financial worries have been lifted. (A more comprehensive discussion of the literature on this subject is to be found in Yudkin and Holme, *Working Mothers and their children*.)

A great deal of work has been done on this subject—though much remains to be done, particularly on the effects on the child of different types of substitute care and of differences, as far as the child is concerned, between full time and part time working. But none of the evidence supports the popular belief of the harm imposed on the child by the working mother. This then is one argument that can no longer be relied on by those who wish to encourage mothers to stay at home.

## substitute care

Lack of adequate substitute care for children stops many women from working. This applies to women with children of school age as well as those with children under five. Older children still need

care after school hours, during illnesses, and in the holidays. Unless jobs are flexible and have convenient hours, some care besides that of the mother is needed. But the major problem is that of providing care for the under fives.

## the under fives

Two Government departments share responsibility for Government policy towards care of the under fives: the Ministry of Health is responsible for all day nurseries, for private nurseries and for baby minding schemes; the Ministry of Education deals with nursery education—i.e. nursery schools for children over two, nursery classes attached to primary schools and pre-school play groups. It is also responsible for holiday classes for school age children.

Our policy towards nursery provision of all types really dates from the early post war years. From 1918 nursery care was in the hands of the local authorities, but during the war their efforts were supplemented by the Exchequer paying directly for special nurseries. These were dismantled when peace came as it was supposed there would no longer be the same need for female labour. Local authorities were again to take full responsibility for the under fives, following a policy laid down in the Ministry of Health Report for 1945/46 and a joint circular from the Ministries of Health and Education to local authorities in 1948 (Joint circulars 221/45, Ministry of Health, and No 73 Ministry of Education. Policy since then has broadly remained unchanged.

A clear distinction was made between children under two and those between two and five. Mothers of children under two were to be discouraged from working since the Ministers felt that the proper place for such a child was at home with its mother "in the interest of the health and development of the child no less than the mother". Day nurseries and daily guardians for the under two were to be limited to those cases where the mother was forced to work because of special circumstances. Nursery educa-



tion, on the other hand, was to be expanded. Local authorities were offered special grants for their "enlarged service" in nursery education, and were told they could admit children of non-working mothers as well as of working mothers if space was available.

As the table shows, day nursery provision declined as intended, but the expansion in nursery schooling did not take place at anything like the necessary speed.

#### NUMBERS OF STATE NURSERIES

year	day nurseries	nursery schools
1946	915	276
1947	902	353
1951	820	434
1960	468	454
1964	455	460

#### NUMBERS OF PLACES

1947	42,365	19,000
1951	39,247	21,321
1960	22,142	22,504
1964	21,532	23,175

source: Ministry of Health reports.

Both the number of day nurseries and the number of places in day nurseries halved between 1947 and 1964. The rate of decline was increased by the 1952 National Health Service Act, which allowed local authorities power to charge substantially for day nurseries "having regard to the means of the persons concerned". This provision had dramatic effects. The cost of running nurseries was rising and the additional charges (previously only meals and equipment had been charged for) were expected to help recoup much of the expenditure. But the mothers whose children attended the nurseries were almost all special cases whose circumstances forced them to work; so the "means test" allowed them to pay very little. Thus paradoxically the new charges made the nurseries appear so uneconomical that some local authorities closed them and found less expensive schemes such as daily minders.

The decline in day nurseries was supposed to accompany a reduction in the number of mothers working. In fact,

there was a drop in the number of married women working immediately after the war, but this drop was not as large as expected, and from 1950 onwards the number working increased steadily. While the number of places in day nurseries fell by about a third between 1951 and 1963, the number of married women working increased by 44 per cent. The local authorities were forced to establish priorities for admission to their day nurseries; often they only accepted children up to the age of two where the mother was the sole breadwinner.

In nursery schools there was some expansion in the immediate post war period, but since 1953 both the number of schools and the number of places at them has remained constant. The State now provides for the education of slightly less than one in ten of children aged two to four in England and Wales (Annual Abstract of Statistics). Here again priorities and long waiting lists are the rule. Despite the Government's request in the 1944 Act for expansion of nursery education, few schemes got farther than the paper on which they were written. The chief reason was the acute shortage of teachers. The situation was so bad in 1962 that the Minister asked local education authorities not to propose more nursery schools or classes and to keep the number of children to the 1956/57 level.

The failure to expand nursery education is, of course, important from a wider point of view than that of working mothers. On the whole educationalists feel that every child should have the opportunity to benefit from nursery education. To confine this to the children of working mothers would be to give them an unfair advantage.

#### private provision

The decline in State provision, together with the increase in the number of working mothers resulted in a dramatic growth in private schemes of provision for the care of children of working mothers.

As early as 1946 factory nurseries were instituted in the textile areas where there was a tremendous demand for female labour. The Government pressed local authorities in the North West to open more nurseries but despite some expansion mill owners and others continued to open their own. They were often more popular with the mothers as they were nearer to their work. There were no regulations governing these nurseries and in some there was overcrowding, bad diet and lack of sanitation. With outbreaks of infection it became clear that control was essential. The 1948 Nursery and Child Minders Regulation Act required local authorities to keep a register of all premises, other than private houses, where children are looked after, and also of people who look after three or more children in their own homes. It also authorised, but did not force, local authorities to supervise such arrangements and laid down conditions of sanitation, etc.

Since the Act, as the following table shows, both the number of private nurseries and of registered child minders has grown at an ever increasing rate in sharp contrast to the decline in State provision.

#### NURSERIES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

year	maintained	factory & other	child minders
1949	885	250	271
1951	820	326	415
1953	712	391	638
1960	468	1,601	1,531
1963	459	1,243	2,597
1964	455	1,585	2,994

#### PLACES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

year	factory & other	child minders
1949	6,893	1,703
1951	8,965	2,638
1953	10,773	4,737
1960	14,595	11,881
1963	31,045	not given
1964	38,144	not given

sources: Ministry of Health and Education reports.

Daily minders who take in less than three children are not required to register under the 1948 Act, but local authorities can provide schemes where suitable minders are encouraged to register, for instance by receiving a fee, and the minders agree to conform to standards of hygiene and so on. The LCC started their scheme in 1949, and paid a fee of 6/- a week. In 1964 there were 833 registered in London. The national total was only 973, leaving the ridiculous figure of 140 minders for the rest of England.

This does not include illegal baby minding, which is widespread in our large cities. Even in London, where the LCC's baby minding scheme is well established (costing £11,000 in 1964/65) the amount of illicit minding is causing concern.

The conditions of space and sanitation among those illegal baby minders which have come to light are extremely bad. Many children are minded in overcrowded and dirty conditions, some in appalling squalor. If this is to cease much more supervision is needed and the Government must recognise this. To argue that the children ought to be in their own homes is unrealistic. They are not, and it is up to the Government to provide for them in some way.

Among a sample of Londoners questioned about the social services (*Family needs and the social services*, PEP, 1961), a large proportion (27 per cent of the sample) had wanted a day nursery place but failed to get one. Only nine per cent of the sample had used day nurseries at any time. According to these figures only one quarter of the demand is being met. The unsatisfied demand was much greater in this field than in any of the other social services covered by the survey. An example of the tremendous shortage of accommodation can be seen in the London Borough of Camden. At 31st July, 1965, there were 596 children in nurseries, with a waiting list of 85 priority cases, only 18 of which had been accommodated by the 11th August.

If children under five with working mothers are to be cared for adequately

the public authorities must increase their contribution. In some cases more day nurseries may be the best solution, but where a number of mothers of young children are working together a creche attached to the job might be better for both children and mothers. If the Government or local authorities took the initiative and provided part of the cost the factory or office would find it well worthwhile to finance the rest. In some cases offices or factories might combine to start a nursery. These suggestions all involve a few trained women looking after a lot of children. But for young children—between, say, six months and three years—individual care by one person is probably better for the child. This is the great advantage of the limited baby minding scheme.

The baby minder looks after at most two children besides her own. This sort of system can be a pleasant way of earning extra money for the baby minder who does not want to leave her own home, and who can look after her own children at the same time. It is also relatively cheap for the local authority, which only needs pay the cost of supervising the baby minders, and the registration fee, if any. Local authorities should be encouraged more vigorously, perhaps forced to introduce this scheme, especially where a lot of illegal baby minding goes on.

For the over threes nursery education seems the answer both to the educational needs of the child and the problems of the working mother. Whether working mothers should be given priority is a difficult question. The answer must depend on the local circumstances. But whatever the short run answer, in the long run the solution must be to expand State nursery education so that all children who want or need it can have it.

## the over fives

The care needed here is for the time before and after school, half terms, holidays and when the children are ill. It is impossible to tell how the needs are be-

ing met nationally. A few local authorities run pre-school play groups, play centres and holiday camps. But the Yudin and Holmes survey (*Working mothers and their children*, 1964) found that needs were not being met. Grandmothers and neighbours were usually doing the job, but because families are younger and more dispersed, this is becoming more difficult, and the children are left to manage alone. Twice as many children with working mothers got their own breakfast as those with mothers at home, and 25 per cent arrived home to an empty house. Only six out of 1,650 went to play centres after school and 15 in holiday times. Only three local authorities run play centres—Liverpool, Coventry and London; in London there are 140 in term time and 80 in holidays, catering for 17,000 and 13,000 children respectively.

These figures suggest pretty clearly that local authorities are not providing for the needs of the school age children. This is not surprising since the central Government has given no clear lead in this matter. A new local authority service should be provided of women able and willing to run before and after school hours play groups, possibly helping interested teachers in this, and to run an emergency service to look after children at home when either they or their parents are ill. A short diploma course should be instituted to train these women in child care, though they would not need very elaborate training. A child minding scheme, similar to that of baby minding and fairly easy to administer, would help to look after children before and after school hours, if their mother was out at work.

# 5. summary and recommendations

There is a vital need for more labour in Britain today. To obtain a 25 per cent growth in output, the nation will need at least 400,000 additional workers by 1970, apart from the normal increase in the working population.

The only substantial reserve of labour is married women, of whom only about a third work. The number not working is growing owing to the trend towards more and earlier marriages. The number of single women, whose activity rates are high, is declining, so unless more married women work, the activity rate of all women will fall. Married women aid even mothers are freer to work outside the home and are more educated to it than their Victorian counterparts. Here then, is the country's largest and most highly trained reserve of labour. The women themselves would like to work. Despite these two apparently complementary factors, six million women are not working.

The chief reason for their inactivity is employers' reluctance, in both the public and private sectors, to use married female labour, especially on a part time basis, except in certain industries with this tradition. Those women with jobs have little responsibility, few promotion prospects or fringe benefits.

The trade unions, too, are historically opposed to part time labour, and see it as a threat to their existing membership. In the past they have concentrated most of their efforts for women on equal pay.

If women are to supply a large part of the expanding labour force, many of them will need refresher courses, and others will want and need training. At present there is very little opportunity for those who left school without any higher education, or who failed to complete their training. What courses there are, with one or two exceptions, do not have hours suitable for mothers.

There seems to be virtually no evidence of adverse psychological effects on children whose mothers go out to work, when there is adequate alternative care. Inabil-

ity of mothers to find substitute care for their children is, however, an important restriction on the number working. The number of places provided by both public and private nurseries and nursery schools is sadly inadequate. Since the closing of the war nurseries successive Governments' statements on the subject have been blind to the rising demand, so local authorities have not been made aware of the importance of this service.

Present attitudes towards the employment of married women slow down growth. To remove the obstacles we have discussed changed attitudes are necessary. This can only happen slowly, but there are some ways in which the Government, local authorities, unions and employers can help to secure the labour needed so badly.

## the government and employment

The Government must make a determined effort to provide part time work and flexible hours for all classes of employment. It should use its influence in the large sector of the economy where it has indirect control—the Health Service, local authority services and nationalised industries—to persuade them to do likewise.

It should make the employer's National Insurance contributions vary with hours worked.

The local employment exchanges should have special sections for married women, particularly for part time work.

## the government and substitute care

The Government should take a more responsible attitude towards the provision of substitute care for children of all ages.

It should end the ban on new day nurseries and increase their number.

It should expand nursery education, and allow auxiliaries to help in the nursery schools.

It should make all local authorities adopt the scheme of supervised baby minding, and encourage them to eliminate illegal baby minding by increasing the penalties.

It should take the initiative in setting up creches at the place of work, and offer to pay some of the cost of such nurseries, and send expert advice on organisation.

It should play a much more active part in providing more extra school facilities for the over fives.

The Government should introduce a special diploma in child care to enable people to work in day nurseries, nursery schools and after school play groups as auxiliaries. A service of people with this diploma should be provided by local authorities to mind children in their homes when they or the parents are ill.

## the government and training

The Government should introduce training and refresher courses aimed to fill the particular needs of the mother who has been out of the labour force for some time. It should also take more account of women in its industrial training programme.

## local authorities

Much of the action suggested for the Government involves the local authorities.

They should offer more part time jobs in all their services.

They must completely revise their attitude to pre-school, after school and holiday play groups.

Teachers, women with the diploma suggested and even untrained mothers could run these services.

A child minding scheme, similar to that for baby minding, should be introduced to care for children before and after school hours, when mothers are out.

## employers

Employers in all industries must now do more than tolerate part time staff, and should begin to incorporate part time labour into their work schedules.

They must be more flexible in the length and timing of hours they require, and give more training, responsibility and promotion to part time employees.

More phased employment and unpaid leave during school holidays should also be introduced.

They should be more active in providing nursery accommodation for the children of employees. Offices and factories together should consider setting up joint arrangements for children.

## the trade unions

As the prospects for the trade unions movements' membership are closely associated with their success with women workers, they should initiate schemes for part time work, and put pressure on the employers to introduce them.

They must protect the interests of part time workers and women as vigorously as those of other workers.

They should demand that either the Government or the employer provide suitable nursery facilities for working mothers.

We cannot reiterate too often that it is the general climate of opinion that has to be changed before all women who want to will be able to find suitable work and make satisfactory arrangements for their families.



# young fabian group

The Young Fabian Group exists to give socialists not over 30 years of age an opportunity to carry out research, discussion and propaganda. It aims to help its members publish the results of their research, and so make a more effective contribution to the work of the Labour movement. It therefore welcomes all those who have a thoughtful and radical approach to political matters.

The group is autonomous, electing its own committee. It co-operates closely with the Fabian Society which gives financial and clerical help. But the group is responsible for its own policy and activity, subject to the constitutional rule that it can have no declared political policy beyond that implied by its commitment to democratic socialism.

The group publishes pamphlets written by its members, arranges fortnightly meetings in London, and holds day and weekend schools.

Enquiries about membership should be sent to the Secretary, Young Fabian Group, 11 Dartmouth Street, London, SW1; telephone Whitehall 3077.

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Cover design and typography by Geoffrey Cannon. Printed by The Walrus Press Ltd. (TU), 769 Harrow Road, Sudbury, Wembley, Middlesex.

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