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# EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK IN THE CIVIL SERVICE



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THE FEDERATION OF WOMEN CIVIL SERVANTS

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REFERENCE

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## Equal Pay for Equal Work in the Civil Service

ON May 19th, 1920, the following resolution as regards Equal Pay in the Civil Service was passed by the House of Commons :

“ That it is expedient that women should have equal opportunity of employment with men in all branches of the Civil Service within the United Kingdom and under all local authorities, provided that the claims of ex-Service men are first of all considered, and should also receive equal pay.”

On August 5th, 1921, a further resolution as regards Equal Pay in the Civil Service was passed by the House of Commons as follows :

“ That, having regard to the present financial position of the country, this House cannot commit itself to the increase in Civil Service salaries involved in the payment of women in all cases at the same rate as men ; but that the question of the remuneration of women as compared with men shall be reviewed within a period not exceeding three years.”

Since that date no action has been taken by any Government to deal with the matter, and, in view of the expiry of the three years mentioned above, an endeavour was made to obtain some statement of policy more definite than the election pledge given by the Labour candidates in support of Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Finally, on July 3rd, in answer to a question in the House, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated:

"The Government endorse without qualification the principles embodied in the Resolutions referred to in the Noble Lady's question. With regard to pay, I would remind the Noble Lady that under those Resolutions the House of Commons, in view of the then financial position of the country, declined to commit itself to the increase of Civil Service salaries involved in the payment of women at the same rates as men, but resolved that the question of the remuneration of women as compared with men should be reviewed within a period not exceeding three years. The Government, after full consideration, have decided that the state of the country's finances is still such as to make it impossible to justify the enormous increase in expenditure that would be involved."

At this time no attempt had apparently been made to ascertain what was the "enormous" cost referred to, and, in view of the small number of women who would be affected, we felt that the financial burden had been greatly exaggerated.

A further inquiry as to details of the cost was made, and, as will be seen by the following question and answer, we were justified in our refusal to accept the cost as enormous:

*July 29th, 1924.*

Mr. Foot asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury what is the total number of women in the Civil Service who are engaged in the same grades and upon the same work as men, and who would, therefore, be affected by the introduction of the principle of equal pay; what is the actual cost as estimated by the Treasury and on what basis the cost has been calculated; and whether the cost as calculated is the cost of placing women on the same point in the salary

scale that they would have reached had they always been paid on the men's scale, or the cost of putting the women affected on to the men's higher increments until they reached the men's maximum?

Mr. GRAHAM: The number of women in the Civil Service now employed in the same grades as men is estimated at about 40,000, but it is obvious that the effect of introducing the principle of equal pay could not be confined to these grades and that consequent adjustments would be inevitable in the pay of women employed in separate grades of the Civil Service, the number of whom is not far short of 40,000. It would also be necessary to allow for the extension of the principle to women teachers, and on this basis the cost would be at least £10,000,000 a year. If, however, the estimate is confined to the Civil Service, the cost, based upon a comparison of the means of the scales in grades in which both men and women are employed, with a moderate allowance for adjusting the pay of other women civil servants, may be put at £3,000,000 a year in round figures for the existing numbers employed, without any allowance for increase in the proportion of women employed in the Civil Service. It is not considered that the method of calculation mentioned in the concluding words of the question would give any adequate measure of the effect of the application of the far-reaching principle in question.

This reply shows clearly that the Treasury had great difficulty in justifying its previous statement, and in order to do so had to introduce an "enormously" inflated estimate of the cost of granting Equal Pay to Teachers, who for the first time have been included in the Civil Service estimates, and, finding even this insufficient, had calculated the cost of introducing Equal Pay into the Civil Service by the most expensive method, and added to it imaginary increases covering all the women in the Service who would not be affected

by the adoption of the principle. We have, therefore, made a rough estimate ourselves of the actual cost of granting Equal Pay for *Equal Work* in the *Civil Service*, with the following results.

It must be remembered that only women in the same grades as men would be affected by the introduction of Equal Pay, and that the number of women employed on what is called "women's work" far exceeds that in the mixed classes.

Writing Assistants, Typists, Shorthand Typists, certain Manipulative grades in the Post Office, Women Pension Officers and many others would not be affected, and it has been necessary to ascertain the cost only so far as the Administrative, Executive and Clerical classes, the Inspectorates, Employment Officers and Employment Clerks in the Ministry of Labour, certain other Manipulative grades in the Post Office, and a few other smaller groups are concerned.

It would be as well at this stage to state what the Federation has always considered would be a moderate and non-revolutionary method of introducing Equal Pay, namely, that women should proceed by the normal increments of the men of their grades to the men's maxima, provided that no woman remains on a salary which is less than the man's minimum.

Thus, a woman Clerical Officer on her maximum of £180, attainable at the age of 34, would proceed, *not* to the salary obtainable by the man Clerical Officer at that age, but by his normal yearly increments of £10 to his maximum salary of £250.

In other cases such as that of the woman Higher Clerical Officer and the woman Higher Executive Officer, where the woman's minimum is well below that of the man, we have calculated the initial cost of jumping the woman to the man's minimum in those cases

where she has not already reached it. Although it might well be argued that it would be fairer to the women generally to let the women in these cases also proceed by their ordinary increments, we have used the more expensive method.

It will be observed that the cost of the increase, on our basis, depends on the point in the salary scale reached by the women. During the first few years of service Equal Pay is already granted; therefore there is little initial increase in the case of the Junior Administrative or Executive women or the Tax clerks who, owing to the recent creation of their grade, are still on the same scale as the men. In the case of the Clerical and Higher Executive grades to which the women's old grades were assimilated, the women at present are on all points of the salary scale, and we have made exhaustive inquiries to form a just estimate of the initial cost, which varies from a £5 difference in increment to a jump of £100 from the women's to the men's minimum. On this basis, therefore, we estimate the approximate cost of the first year's Equal Pay to be, exclusive of bonus:

Treasury Classes	...	...	...	£43,200
Departmental Classes	(including			
Inspectorates)	...	...	...	£5,300
Manipulative Grades	...	...	...	£45,000

On a liberal estimate, the bonus on this amount would not bring the initial cost over £150,000.

So far we have dealt only with the initial increase, but it is obvious that the cost would continue to increase until every woman had reached her new maximum. We have, therefore, taken the average cost of a male officer of every grade and multiplied it by the number of women in that grade at present in the Service, and we have thus ascertained the approximate ultimate cost of placing all the officers in a grade on the same salary scale irrespective of sex.

Working on this basis we find that the ultimate cost (exclusive of bonus) in about ten years' time of placing every woman on the same scale as the man would be approximately £490,000.

The principle of Equal Pay has been conceded so far as the first few years' service is concerned. It has been conceded in the case of the Factory Inspectors. It was conceded twelve years ago in the case of the National Health Insurance Commission, where the men and women Health Insurance Officers and the men and women Insurance Commissioners were respectively on equal salary scales. The Insurance Commissioners are abolished; the equal scale for men and women Health Insurance Officers was altered on reorganisation; but, only the other day, when a woman was appointed Parliamentary Secretary she was appointed on the man's scale. If the Government cannot afford £150,000 next year, what can it afford? Let it accept the principle and put it in operation gradually. The women will accept any reasonable scheme having regard to the financial position of the country, but it must be a scheme and not an evasion.

