Prospects for Women in the Paid Labor Market*

The sharp rise in the number of women working outside the home is one of the most dramatic and important economic developments of the twentieth century. Its impact goes far beyond its consequences on the economy and on the labor market. I will discuss the prospects for women in terms of the number who will be working outside the home over the next decade or two and what they will be doing. I would like to make four major points:

1. Women's participation in the paid labor market has been rising at a rapid rate, and most have found jobs. This has already resulted in profound social and economic changes.

2. The jobs that women find, however, are typically within a narrow range of occupations. This pattern of segregation is deeply entrenched and results in lower pay and status for working women.

3. Women's job market prospects are closely linked with the prospects of the general economy. Economic growth encourages more women actively to seek work outside of the home and reduces their problems in making this transition.

4. With an improved economic climate, women's participation in the labor market should continue to increase faster than men's—but the pattern of occupational segregation is likely to continue as well. The rate of female labor force growth, employment growth, and occupational integration each will depend on the strength of the economy, the types of jobs

*The opinions expressed in this paper are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Urban Institute or its sponsors.
available, the structure of demand, male attitudes, government actions, and many decisions that will be made by women themselves.

The changing role of women has been the subject of numerous research projects and conferences in recent years. My own research is part of a large-scale research program on the social and economic status of women begun at the Urban Institute in 1975 with a grant from the Ford Foundation. The observations I am presenting are heavily influenced by the recent literature, including that of my institute colleagues.

Growth of Female Labor Force and its Consequences

In just a quarter-century the female labor force — that is, the number of women working or actively seeking work — doubled. In 1950, 34 percent of all women aged sixteen and over were participating in the labor force. By 1975, 46 percent were in the work force. Meanwhile, the percentage of men participating in the labor force slightly declined. Consequently, six out of every ten additional people in the paid labor market over the past quarter-century have been women. In other words, over 10 million of the 37 million women in the labor force last year would not have been there if major changes in women’s status had not occurred. I will discuss first some of the causes of the change in women’s place, and then some of the effects that these changes have had thus far.

The decision of a person to participate in the labor force can be described as choosing between working for pay or pursuing other activities, including keeping house, going to school, or leisure. The decision is pretty well made for the prime-age man. It is expected that, barring health or other exceptional circumstances, he will either be working outside of the home or looking for such work. For an unmarried prime-age woman without children at home, the decision is almost as simple. For a married woman or a woman with children (or both), the decision is much more complicated. Essentially, the woman must decide either to devote all of her time to keeping house or to divide her time between keeping house and working outside the home. In the past the decision was usually the former. In this century, particularly since World War II, more and more women are opting for the latter choice. One major reason for this change probably has been the increase in the potential rewards from working outside the home; their wages have risen and, as the economy has become more service-oriented and as job opportunities have become more “white-collar,” there have been more jobs for women to seek. In addition, the productivity of being at home may have declined as families have had fewer children and as various labor-saving devices have become more widespread.
The effects of this growth in the female labor force have, for the most part, been beneficial. Total output and income of society has increased. Families of working women have higher incomes and in many families this factor determines whether they live in poverty. There is greater economic stability within a household that has more than one earner, since the loss of one worker's job does not erase all of their income.

Increased output and income come with a price. The time spent by the woman working outside the home takes away from time spent either working in the home or pursuing leisure activities. Some work that was done in the home simply will not get done. Some work will be done at the expense of a longer total workday or workweek for the wife; other work will be done by the husband, who had not previously participated in household work and raising children. This undoubtedly causes quite a bit of conflict in many families, and probably is linked to the increased divorce rate. It is difficult to tell how much of the increase in divorces is due to the working wife's sufficient economic independence to end an already unhappy marriage, and how much of it is due to increased marital disputes. These are essentially adjustment problems that should diminish over time. More people may opt to remain single or to delay marriage. Some of the work that must be done can be shifted out to commercial services, as is already occurring; other work can be reduced by having fewer children.4

Another consequence of the growth in the female labor force is that it has caused a reassessment of some of our basic public institutions that were developed at a time when the stereotypical family (with the husband working and the wife at home) was far truer than it is today. Research being done at the Urban Institute and elsewhere is examining the degree to which the social security system, tax structure, welfare programs, and child support and alimony rules need to be restructured to take into account the realities of working wives.

Occupational Segregation

Despite all of the attention that has been focused on patterns of sex segregation in the labor market and all of the energy expended to remove the barriers that have kept women out of many fields, jobs that are identifiable as men's and jobs that are identifiable as women's are all around us. The library profession, of course, is one of these segregated fields. In 1975, 81 percent of librarians in the United States were women.5 Nonetheless, this profession is less segregated than many of the traditional women's jobs, e.g., elementary school teacher (85 percent), cashier (87 percent), bookkeeper (88 percent), waiter (91 percent), telephone operator (93 percent), typist
(97 percent), registered or practical nurse (97 percent), receptionist (97 percent), prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers (99 percent), secretary (99 percent), and dental assistant (100 percent).  

Women’s jobs are characterized by lower pay and often lower status than men’s jobs requiring an equivalent amount of education and training. In many instances, the supervisor is a male. Often the jobs are logical extensions of the mother or wife role. Most disheartening for those interested in the attainment of equality for women is that the degree of sex segregation is not changing very much. A recent Economic Report of the President found that the extent of occupational dissimilarity in 1970 was barely below that of 1960. Offsetting progress in some occupations has been the tendency of many new participants to enter traditional fields.

Which “men’s jobs” have women been entering in significant numbers? Employment data since the early 1960s, tabulated by occupation and sex, suggest progress in a wide variety of occupations. Women’s share of total employment rose from 34 percent to 39 percent between 1962 and 1974, and their share of professional positions showed a similar increase. Within specific professions, however, some dramatic developments occurred: the female proportion of lawyers and judges rose from 3 percent to 7 percent, of pharmacists from 10 to 16 percent, of physicians from 6 to 10 percent, and of college and university teachers from 19 to 31 percent. Because each of these occupations both requires considerable specialized training and is well-paying, these gains are quite encouraging. A few less-specialized occupations became virtually integrated within a dozen years: in 1962, 18 percent of bakers, 12 percent of bus drivers, 21 percent of bill collectors, and 9 percent of insurance adjusters were women; by 1974 women held at least 37 percent of the jobs in each of these occupations.  

I should note here several conditions which are most conducive to integration, as well as the characteristics of the occupations that become integrated and of those that do not. One condition that seems to make a difference is whether the occupation itself is growing. Most of the occupations mentioned above (pharmacists and bakers being the exceptions) experienced rapid growth during the period of integration.

What causes occupational segregation? Why are women more likely to be nurses and secretaries and men more likely to be physicians and administrators? Part of the answer can be found in the preferences (i.e. prejudices) of the people who make the hiring decisions, of the users of the services provided, and of the suppliers of the education and training. The remainder of the answer lies in the education, training, and occupational choices made by women themselves. These two sets of explanations interact. For example, many employers have a stereotype of a woman worker who will not work
long hours or go on business trips, who will become pregnant and quit, or who will quit if her husband's job is transferred. With that image, it is no wonder that the employer is reluctant to place a woman in a responsible, demanding position, or one that requires a long period of expensive on-the-job training. This situation leads to statistical discrimination, by which the employer assigns his image of the typical female employee to the individual female job applicant. As more women are willing to work long hours, etc., these employers' stereotypes will change, but with a lag. Government action speeds up the adaptation process.

Women's Prospects in the Economy

The basic theme of much of my work at the Urban Institute involves the relationship between the status of women in the labor market and the state of the general economy. Because there is such a close linkage, a few words about the state of the economy are appropriate.

The recession that we have just been through was the most severe since the depression of the 1930s. It brought the unemployment rate from a post-war average of about 5 percent up to almost 9 percent in mid-1975. We are now only gradually coming out of that recession. The unemployment rate dropped to 7.3 percent in June 1976, but during the following six months it has been gradually rising again. In the recent political debates there was a great deal of contention over whether this was a signal that the recovery had aborted or whether it was a "pause that refreshes."

I think it is safe to say that the economy through the remainder of the decade will improve. Although the pace of the recovery is certainly in doubt, there is no doubt that recovery will occur. The president-elect's chief economic adviser, Lawrence Klein, has predicted that under the new administration the overall unemployment rate could be brought down to about 4.5 percent of the labor force by 1980. This is not likely to be a steady decline; indeed, there is a good chance that there will be an interruption of the recovery again in 1978 or 1979. Beyond 1980, it's uncertain where we'll be headed. My best guess is that there will be a continuation of the kind of cyclical behavior in the economy that we have had since World War II, but that the basic trend will be an increased total number of jobs, sufficient to provide employment to all but about 5 percent of those who are actively seeking work. This still leaves a very important question for women—the composition of those jobs. Some mix of demand is more favorable to traditional women's jobs than others. After the initial recovery from the recession, the long-run trend away from blue-collar jobs and into white-collar jobs will probably resume. In the past, this trend has encouraged women to
enter the labor force and has helped them to find jobs. One important exception to this trend is teaching positions. The basic change in age distribution of the population necessitates a decline in the proportion of job opportunities in elementary and secondary education.  

The relationships among the overall state of the economy (including the number of job opportunities that are available), the labor force participation of women, and the number of jobs women hold have been well documented. In my own study of the effects of the recent recession on women, I found that the long-run growth trend of the female labor force was interrupted, but not stopped, by the recession. During the 2-year period beginning in the fourth quarter of 1973, the female labor force (the number of women working outside the home or seeking such work) increased by 2.3 million. This was about 400,000 fewer than would have been added to the labor force had the recession not occurred. Female employment rose during that 2-year period by about 900,000; this was 1.6 million fewer than would have found jobs without the recession.

I also found that the extent of women’s job losses during the recession was limited considerably by the industrial composition of the recession. The industries that were hardest hit—construction and durable goods manufacturing—were industries that employ very few women. Less than 6 percent of all construction workers in 1974 were women. About 22 percent of workers in durable goods manufacturing were women. I estimated that had the recession struck all industries with equal force, women would have lost several hundred thousand additional jobs. One consequence of women’s entering the traditionally male blue-collar fields will be to make them more vulnerable to cyclical unemployment.

In projections I have made of the size of the female labor force and the number of jobs women would hold by the end of the decade, I concluded that the difference between a strong recovery (the kind that would bring the overall unemployment rate down to 4.5 percent) and a more moderate recovery (that would still bring the overall unemployment rate down to 6.3 percent) corresponded to about 1 million women in the labor force. That is, one consequence of a stronger recovery would be that an additional 1 million women would be induced to look for work outside of the home. Another consequence would be that a higher proportion of women would find jobs if the recovery were strong. About one-half of all the additional jobs that would be generated by a stronger recovery would go to women. Under the stronger recovery rate, the female unemployment rate would decline from its present 8.7 percent to 5.4 percent of the labor force. Under the weaker recovery, the rate would be close to 7 percent.
Women's Future in the Labor Market

What is known and not known about the likely course of women's future labor activities? First, will the sharp increase in the number of women working outside the home continue? The major source of projections on the size of the labor force by sex comes from the U.S. Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics. In September 1976 a new set of projections was issued. These are based on U.S. Bureau of the Census population projections by sex, race, and age, and on the Bureau of Labor Statistics analysts' estimates of the proportion of the population in each group that will choose to participate in the paid labor market. Because we are dealing with a population whose members are at least sixteen years old, the former can easily be projected through the year 1990, and will err only if there is a major catastrophe. The latter is extremely difficult to predict. The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects that the proportion of women who will participate in the labor force will continue to rise. They project, for example, that between 1975 and 1980 the participation rate of women will rise from 46.3 percent to 48.4 percent. This means that the number of women who will be in the labor market will increase from 37 million to 42 million. This projection is based on the assumption that the increase in the proportion of women participating in the labor market will not be quite as great as that which we have experienced in recent years.

I have made some alternative projections which also begin with the census bureau's population statistics, but which use different assumptions about the rate of increase of the female participation rate. Essentially, I assumed that the participation of women would rise fairly sharply through the end of the decade in reaction to the economic recovery and with a continuation of the trend of their participation rate over the last decade. If that were the case, and if we had a strong recovery, then I would expect more than 44 million women, i.e. 51.5 percent of the female population, to be in the labor market by 1980. This is roughly twice the rate of increase of the participation rate of women assumed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

We could, of course, both be wrong. To give you some idea of the difficulty in projecting even the number of women that will be in the labor market, let alone what they'll be doing, I examined the projections of the 1980 labor force that the Bureau of Labor Statistics made in earlier years. In 1965 they projected that in 1980, 36 million would be in the labor force. In 1970 they projected that in 1980, 37 million would be in the labor force. In 1973 they projected that in 1980, 39 million would be in the labor force. As I mentioned earlier, they are now projecting that 42 million will be in the labor force. As new information is acquired, their projections have
consistently been raised. I don’t know of anyone who has come close to predicting accurately the size of the labor force even five years in advance. (You will notice that I am not making any guesses about projections beyond 1980.)

Why is it so difficult to project the number of women who will be working or looking for work outside the home? I think the main reason is that there are so many factors in the individual decision of whether to seek work. I have already mentioned the combined impact of the overall state of the economy and of the types of jobs that are available. Other factors are the availability to the woman of other income and the potential rewards of working. The more that a woman can expect to receive from working outside the home (i.e. the higher the wages and the job satisfaction), the more likely she will be to seek work. Another extremely important set of determinants is demography. Women who are not married more often seek work. Women without children in the home are more likely to seek work. These variables are very difficult to project, and they can make a large difference. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projections made a few years ago were based on the assumption that women would have an average of 2.1 children. This is roughly the replacement rate — the number of children needed to replace the population over a long period of time. They estimated that if, in fact, each woman had an average of 2.5 children, the size of the labor force would be decreased by about 700,000 women. If the average number of children per woman were 1.8, their projection of the female labor force would be raised by about 400,000. Nobody really knows whether the low levels of fertility that we have seen in recent years will continue, or for how long. The most important point here is that everybody who has looked into the matter agrees that the female labor force will continue to increase and that an ever-increasing share of jobs will be going to women in the foreseeable future.

As more women seek work outside the home, changes should and will occur where they work, at home, and in some of our major institutions. At work, I would expect that the continued increase in female participation will help to stimulate changes in work schedules — changes that will result in greater flexibility, fewer hours worked per day, and fewer days worked per week. Increasingly, husbands and wives will be sharing the responsibilities for working both outside and within the home. Also, as more women seek and find interesting jobs, fertility rates may continue to decline. In effect, it becomes more expensive to raise children.

The tax laws, social security laws, and other institutions presently tend to favor families in which the husband works and the wife stays at home. As the balance of power shifts toward families with more than one income-
earner, this should force a change. Considerable care will need to be taken, however, that such a change does not penalize women who want to stay at home.

Turning to the issue of occupational segregation, I am convinced that, in time, the roles of men and women in the paid labor market will become much more similar. I doubt that the rate of progress will be very rapid, however. The obstacles that have prevented occupational integration in the past are probably at least as formidable as those that have kept most women out of the paid labor market until this century. For example, many employers believe that certain jobs require men and that certain other jobs require women. Many women undoubtedly still share that belief. From the first toys that were put into their cradles through the education that they had in secondary schools and colleges and the first jobs that they held, these beliefs have been reinforced.

My basis for optimism for the future is that the forces of change already have been set in motion. The attitudes of young women today are somewhat different than those of their older sisters and mothers. This difference is reflected both in the education and training which many of them are choosing and in their first jobs. I suspect that the formation of role expectations is cumulative. Women in nontraditional jobs provide alternative role models to girls not yet locked into a career pattern.

The attitudes of employers, too, are changing. Expectations of what women can do change as employers see women doing nontraditional tasks. Expectations that women will drop out of the labor force very quickly (and therefore do not merit the investment of on-the-job training) decline as employers see women staying in. Attitudes change in response to the enforcement of the law. It has been only in very recent years that federal legislation has been enacted that prohibits discrimination against women in the labor market. Beginning with the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, employers were prohibited by law from paying women at different rates than men for equivalent work in the same establishment, and then were prohibited from discriminating in hiring, firing, promotion, job assignment, training, and other conditions of employment. These laws have been enforced actively only in the past five or six years.

The pace of occupational integration for women who decide to work will depend on the kinds of jobs that are available, the rate of change of women's attitudes, and the rate of change of employer attitudes. I have no quantitative prediction of how rapidly these will occur. Some of the information needed for this projection is available: school enrollments, apprenticeship enrollments, and economic projections by industry and occupation. These data need to be analyzed. Other information requires prediction of
basic economic and social trends. Just as a prosperous economy stimulates more women to seek work outside the home, it also stimulates employers to hire them. There is some evidence that the pace of desegregation will be closely linked both to the rate of aggregate economic expansion and to the industrial composition of demand.18

The extreme form of occupational segregation in which men worked outside the home and women worked within the home is rapidly breaking down. I have tried to provide some basis for optimism that the pattern of segregation within the paid labor market will eventually be broken as well. I have said almost nothing about the persistent patterns of lower compensation and higher unemployment experienced by women. In 1975, the median weekly earnings of women who worked full time was $145, compared with $234 for men.14 The female unemployment rate was 9.3 percent, versus 7.9 percent for men.15 The exclusion of these problems was not intended to suggest lack of interest or importance; both are closely linked to the occupational segregation problem. As long as women's job opportunities are more limited than men's, they will be paid less and have a more difficult time finding work.

REFERENCES


5. Green, Gloria P. "Employment Data for Detailed Occupations, 1975," Em-

6. Ibid.
13. A new conference board study of jobs that do not require a college degree also predicts very slow progress in reducing occupational dissimilarity over the next decade. The report notes that the projections are based on a continuation of patterns over the past ten or fifteen years, and that changes in counseling, vocation education, career aspirations and acceptance of equal employment methods would accelerate integration. See: Lecht, Leonard A. "Women at Work," Conference Board Record 13:16-21, Sept. 1976.
15. These figures underestimate the disparity between the two groups, because many jobless women were not actively seeking work and therefore were not counted among the unemployed. Inclusion of these jobless women raises the female rate to 11.9 percent versus 8.8 percent for men; see: U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, op. cit.
CHANGING TIMES: CHANGING LIBRARIES

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Response

Numerous issues have been raised during this institute which serve to point out just how much current economic events can affect libraries. Smith focused on one aspect of the economic scene, namely, women in the paid labor market. In responding, I will try to discuss that topic as we know it best, i.e. women in libraries. It should be remembered that I will be speaking as a Canadian librarian, and that some of the illustrations I will be using will be taken from the Canadian scene. I am speaking also as a special librarian and will be drawing some examples from that area of library work, although I hope to be able to resist the temptation to tell you "how I run my library good."

Library Manpower

It seems that only one participant at this institute has read the Bureau of Labor Statistics' report, Library Manpower: A Study of Demand and Supply.¹ I am not surprised at this, because for some reason this document seems to have been suppressed by the library world. In my opinion, however, it is one of the most important reports related to library science released in recent years. Following are some of the highlights of this report.

1. The bureau predicts that employment in libraries will grow much more slowly between now and 1985 than it has for the past few decades. The giddy, optimistic days of the 1960s are obviously over for us.
2. Employment of library technicians is going to grow much more rapidly than employment of librarians. While the impact of library technicians has not yet been felt in special libraries to any great extent, I am sure that many of you who are from public and academic libraries have already seen the bureau's prediction in this regard come true.
3. Three-fourths of all job openings in libraries will be replacement positions. In other words, not many new jobs will be created.
4. New graduates will be available to fill 80 percent of all positions which
become available. This does not bode well for librarians who are now in the field and might wish to change jobs within a few years. These new graduates will, however, have to be very mobile, and they may have to accept positions which are not really in their preferred line of work, nor are located in a geographic area in which they would otherwise choose to live.

5. Demand is likely to remain strong for minority librarians, community outreach librarians, media/audiovisual specialists, and experienced library administrators.

Individual librarians can readily see how the bureau's forecast might affect them in the future, but the report has even greater implications for library educators. Courses of study will have to be revised to emphasize the skills and specialties for which there will be a demand. Previous qualifications and personal characteristics of prospective librarians will have to be carefully examined by library school recruiters to ensure that the qualities which "make a good librarian good" are possessed by persons entering the field.

Women in Libraries

Smith mentioned that roughly 80 percent of librarians are women; we have been referred to as the "4/5 minority." This was not always the case, however. At the first ALA conference in 1876, only 13 out of 104 attendees were women. Men were running the libraries then. At a conference in London in 1877, Justin Winsor of Boston opened the doors for female employment in libraries. We can probably thank him for that; however, he deliberately encouraged women to join the profession because they would work for less money. He anticipated that library administrators could get much more work out of women than out of men, for much less money. He pointed out that women were very good at housekeeping chores, and would therefore be excellent library workers. At that time, it was felt that the presence of women in libraries would provide a spiritual "uplift" to the masses. That is where the famous "little old lady in tennis shoes" image began; unfortunately, we have not progressed very far beyond it.

As women entered the profession in greater numbers, they slowly began to attain positions of power, and by 1950 they had more or less done so; it has only been since then that women began to lose their grasp (see Table 1). Data for academic and special libraries have not been included in Table 1, because statistics on the latter are virtually nonexistent, and statistics on the
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<th>Type of Position</th>
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Table 1. Percentage of Women in Top Library Positions


The former indicate that from the beginning, women in academic libraries could not attain such positions.

When the Association of Research Libraries was founded in 1933, fifteen of the forty-three directors were women. Between 1934 and 1969, two of the 147 directorship appointments were made to women. Between 1970 and 1973, four women were appointed; all four were already employed in the library in which the appointment was made, and two were over sixty years of age. These women had to take the route of seniority to get where they wanted to go.

It is a little more difficult to evaluate the special library situation. An “eyeball” examination of the proofsheets of a forthcoming directory of Canadian special libraries indicates that roughly 73 percent of all heads of Canadian special libraries are female. This percentage also holds true for the heads of the largest corporate and government libraries in Canada. Thus, it may be true that some female special librarians are moving ahead faster than female librarians in other fields. (A thorough analysis of the *Canadian Library Directory, Part II* can be expected in the future from Beryl Anderson, who is chief of the Library Documentation Centre, National Library of Canada.)
Institution | Male | Female |
--- | --- | ---
Public Libraries 1975 (median) | $24,000 | $18,750 |
Academic Libraries 1975-76 (avg.) | $22,242 | $17,062 |
Library Schools 1975-76 (avg.) | $31,644 | $30,373 |

Table 2. Salaries of Directors


| Type of Library | Male | Female |
--- | --- | ---
Public | $10,063 | $9,683 |
School | $12,415 | $10,996 |
Academic | $11,142 | $10,269 |
Other | $10,328 | $10,252 |

Table 3. Average Beginning Salaries, New Graduates (1975)


Women and Salaries

Concerning the subject of salaries, we note that again men fare better than women (see Tables 2 and 3). In all types of libraries at every level, women earn less than men. I don’t think I need to repeat all the figures in Table 2 — their implications are obvious. The library school salaries show much less gap than any of the others, but library school faculty members and administrators are generally the best paid of all people in library work.

Librarians may have been conditioned to expect that most library directors are going to be male, and that they are going to be paid more than females; however, it is very difficult to understand the salary differentials at the starting level shown in Table 3. Despite the equal pay legislation that prevails today, men are still being paid more than women.

The narrowest gap in salary ranges for new graduates is in the “other” category, which includes all types of libraries that do not obviously fall under
public, academic, and school categories. These figures were also borne out in the 1976 salary survey conducted by the Special Libraries Association (SLA), the results of which will appear in the December 1976 issue of *Special Libraries.* The association discovered that the average beginning salary for all special librarians was $11,000, with only a minute difference between male and female salaries at the starting level. As special librarians get older, however, the male/female salary differential begins to widen. Between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine, it remains small (around $200), but when a librarian reaches the age of thirty, the gap starts to expand. Between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine, the average salary differs by about $1,000; this difference increases to $4,700 between the ages of forty and fifty; and from age fifty onward the gap is in the range of $5,500 or more. It seems that international women's movements have had little effect on the library world.

Whenever librarians are discussing salaries, the question "How well are all of us paid?" usually arises. Most librarians certainly feel that they are underpaid, and some observers consider that because librarianship is predominantly a female profession, librarians have tended to accept lower salaries than would members of a predominantly male profession. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that female librarians, while earning less than male librarians, do relatively better than women in other professional occupations. The situation is slightly different in Canada, where, in fact, women librarians fare even worse in terms of salaries than women in most other professions (see Table 4).

Table 4 has been adapted from a larger chart published by the Ontario Ministry of Labour. The original table includes 1971 census data for approximately 400 selected occupations. For our purposes, I have tried to select some of the occupations with which I believe librarians sometimes tend to compare themselves. For Smith's benefit, and also because I work with economists, I have extracted the data on economists. Of 400 occupations ranked by salary, male librarians and archivists place 118th. The female librarian ranks 25th among females in 400 occupations. It does, of course, appear that women librarians tend to do much better than many other women, but it is disheartening for librarians of both sexes to see many occupations which require less education, training, and responsibility ranked ahead of librarianship in salary.

The third column of Table 4 offers an encouraging note for librarians, i.e. female librarians in Ontario earn 88 percent of what male librarians earn. Among the professional groups in this table, social workers form the only group with better male/female pay ratios than those of librarianship; and of all 400 occupations, there were only 5 or 6 categories (namely, in
Table 4. Selected Occupations — Ontario (1971)


medical and elementary school teaching occupations) where the ratios were better for women.

Equal Value Concept

A comparison of salaries raises the question of the “equal value concept,” because librarians frequently try to compare the value of their work with that of other professional workers. The equal value concept is one which is extremely difficult to measure, and its application to the labor market in terms of salaries is an even more difficult task. The Ontario government's analysis of this debate has been published in the hope that interested parties will respond to the document and add their thoughts to the scant information now available. The Ministry of Labour points out the current lack of value measures to indicate the existence of equal value jobs, as well as the lack of knowledge about how much it would cost to implement such a program, how it would relate to Canada’s anti-inflation program, and whether an excessive amount of government intervention to determine wages would be necessary. The government's report is a document which librarians as a group should study carefully. I think U.S. librarians would also be interested in the contents of this report. Special librarians in particular need to consider it, because it is in the special library environment that this kind of evaluation is most keenly needed.
The lot of the special librarian is often a very lonely one. Currently, more than 75 percent of librarians in Canadian special libraries are operating a one- or two-person library. Frequently, these librarians are viewed by management as glorified secretaries or file clerks. In the past the SLA salary surveys have illustrated that librarians in one- or two-person libraries are the lowest paid. Such a librarian is also likely to be female, and in the question of equal pay she must ask: “equal to whom?” If we feel that we are underpaid, we must ask whether this is because (1) most of us are females, (2) the library is unimportant in our institutions, or (3) we are earning what we deserve. This last possibility must be considered as objectively as possible. The question of “good” service has been raised at this institute. Most library users are surprised when they find it, because for the most part their experiences as users have not led them to expect it.

Another interesting item which emerged from the 1976 SLA salary survey (this will appeal to the special librarians among you) is that librarians whose library entities are known as “information centers” earn an average $1,100 more than librarians who call their entities “libraries.” I will not discuss here the definition of information center versus that of library; many articles have been written about that. I do think, however, that the fact that information center librarians are paid more is significant, and I can illustrate this from our own experience at the Bank of Commerce. A few years ago the company had two libraries, the library and the economics library. As happens so often in special libraries, there was a merger. The new unit was called the information center, and the results of this name change were unbelievable. Our clientele changed, our reference questions became more sophisticated, and our circulation statistics skyrocketed — yet we were doing little different from what we did before. I am not suggesting that we all go out and change the names of our libraries, but I think there is an indication here that the information function has become more important than ever before.

It is also apparent that with tightening budgets and unhappy economic conditions, librarians are going to need all the support they can get from their friendly clientele. In order to do this, we must find out who makes up our clientele and what their needs are. (Special librarians have a distinct advantage here.) We all still have a long way to go in that regard, however. Librarians have been notoriously unsuccessful at measuring their performance. We keep great amounts of statistics, none of which really tell us how well we are satisfying our clients’ needs, nor how our customers feel about the services which they are receiving (or not receiving). Thompson mentioned earlier the fact that economists are trying to measure the quality of life; GNP has little to do with it. The same thing must be done in libraries.
Our circulation statistics may be growing, but they really do not help to tell us what kind of job we are doing.

Cooperation

In addition to learning how to measure the quality of library service, librarians from every sphere must learn to cooperate with each other more effectively. We must try to forget about the "bigger and better" philosophy and concentrate on ensuring that all members of the population in all parts of both of our countries, from every field of interest, can obtain access to the information which they require. The prevailing concept of resource-sharing is extremely disheartening to special librarians. Special libraries are not well understood by other types of libraries, and consequently have frequently been bypassed by many cooperative programs of resource-sharing. Special libraries have been criticized as being takers rather than givers. They are the first to admit that they must borrow, and borrow frequently; nevertheless, by eliminating special libraries from some networks, the public is being deprived of access to some of the best mini-research collections in existence. Special librarians also have a great deal of skill in face-to-face interviewing with their clientele, and in evaluating information for people. These are contributions which I think special librarians can make in networks, too.

Related to the entire networking problem is the present controversial issue of interlibrary loan charges. Many large organizations in both the United States and Canada have instituted a fee for this service. People seem to be jumping on the bandwagon without giving much thought to the overall implications in terms of public access to information. Members of the Canadian Library Association passed a unanimous resolution at the annual conference in June 1976 calling on librarians not to levy interloan charges until the question has been studied more carefully.11 This resolution does not seem to have had much impact. The Metropolitan Toronto Library Board has recently started to levy charges, and once again special libraries have been singled out for higher fees than those levied on some other library institutions. This state of affairs is particularly upsetting when we frequently note that the public library does not hesitate to send us its customers when its own resources fail. We are always happy to help a member of the public when we can, but we do feel that the arrangement should be reciprocal.

In regard to the subject of cooperation, the time has probably come for library associations to forget about some of their differences and to think about the common good. Associations must learn to cooperate with each other in pooling their resources and expertise when dealing with common problems such as copyright legislation which affect members of the profession
in every field. The president of the Canadian Library Association pointed out this year that there are more than ninety different library associations operating in Canada. It has become evident that this is far too many for our country to support, and I think that there will be some mergers in library association activity in the coming year. Canadian librarians are about to embark on an examination of proposals for changes in Canada's copyright law, and we hope that we have learned something from U.S. experience. The Canadian Library Association has asked for commitments from other library groups for a unified effort toward our mutual goal of satisfactory copyright legislation. There are undoubtedly numerous other objectives toward which we can set our cooperative instincts.

It is my opinion that our associations and library schools have a joint responsibility toward the most important resource of libraries: library staff. Very few librarians are able to attend meetings such as this; only a small percentage of library association members ever attend a real conference. We need to have more continuing education programs, and it is time to hold some local and regional workshops aimed at people who cannot get to national conferences. You might be interested in a pilot project initiated by the SLA Education Committee. An expanded 1-day workshop, originally presented in a shorter form at the 1976 annual conference in Denver, will be tried out in four geographical areas in North America between January and June 1977. If these workshops are evaluated to be successful (both from the educational and financial points of view), the same "traveling road-show" will be available to librarians in other geographic areas.

REFERENCES


2. A graphic example of this factor was noted in Toronto last year. About 26 percent of placements of new graduates from University of Toronto's Faculty of Library Science were in special libraries. At the same time, the local SLA placement service had on file the names of sixty individuals who wished to change jobs in special libraries, plus an additional thirty-five names of unemployed librarians.


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