

**MPP's report from Queen's Park**

# Women's job status needs counselling

By JULIAN REED, M.P.P.  
Halton-Burlington  
Career Counselling for women  
Part I

It's now widely accepted that appropriate career counselling is essential to the provision of equal opportunity for the increasing numbers of women entering the paid labour force.

If women are to move beyond the traditional areas and gain equal access to all aspects of the workplace, they must be made aware of all available options. Yet in recent years, particularly over the past decade, it has been difficult for career counselling to keep pace with the rapid changes in the workplace.

Notwithstanding the increasing participation of women in

the labour force, there is little evidence that the status of working women has improved significantly. Anti-discrimination legislation and the encouragement of equal opportunity-affirmative action programs have had only minor impact on the wage gap, and have done little to diminish occupational segregation.

There is widespread concern about the mismatch between the skill requirements of industry and the people seeking employment, and the full potential of the female labour force can no longer be overlooked. Women with mechanical, scientific and technical ability must be encouraged to consider non-traditional occupations in business, industry and construction.

Women who seek career counselling today, vary widely in their needs and expectations. During the '60s and '70s, career programs were developed primarily to meet the needs of the large number of women wanting to re-enter the workforce. The economy was expanding and women were needed to fill jobs in sales, service, and the clerical sector. Special programs for women usually included consciousness raising, career planning and academic upgrading.

Today, however, career programs must adapt to the rapidly changing needs of working women. While child care and the special problems of re-entry women are still very important issues, there is

a growing awareness of the dual difficulties of women who are poor, handicapped, or over 50. These, as well as immigrant or native women, can suffer double discrimination when they seek training and employment.

Other issues facing women, are blocked career paths, barriers to better paying skilled jobs, and inadequate options for retirement pensions.

A wide variety of career counselling services are available to women in Ontario. In almost every community, there are local centres run by the federal government. In addition to basic job placement, these centres have counsellors available to provide personal assessment, testing

and information on occupational trends. A variety of job search and skill training programs are also available on a limited basis. Career II is a special workshop for women re-entering the workforce. INTO (Introduction to Non-Traditional Occupations) is an 8-week program for women interested in exploring non-traditional jobs in industry.

Every Canada Employment Centre has a women's employment co-ordinator specifically assigned to help women with difficult job search or training problems.

All community colleges and universities in Ontario have counselling services for students. Many offer special courses in career exploration. In some cases there are special programs and counselling services for women.

Some communities have career counselling services, either serving both women and men, or offering special services for women only. For information on these services, women can enquire at their local information centre, library or Y.W.C.A. They can also contact the Career Consultant at the Women's Bureau.

The Bureau is located at 400 University Avenue in Toronto; telephone number (416) 965-1537. A number of publications are available from the Bureau on the subject of career counselling. For example:

**Career Selector:** Seven booklets listing approximately 200 occupations, with job descriptions and information on working conditions, training requirements and representative pay levels.

**Job Search:** A self-help workbook that takes a person through the process of planning for a career. Sample resumes are included, along with information on available resources.

**New Skills for Women:** A brochure outlining how to go about exploring career options in technology and the skilled trades; includes a section on apprenticeship training.

**Options:** A resource book for career counsellors and their clients, which provides information on the changing role of women, education and training, and the labour market.

## Mechanics' liens extra remedy when collecting due debts

By Symon Zacker, LL.M.

The law provides a variety of remedies to help people collect money that someone else owes them. This article is about one remedy in particular - a Mechanics' Lien.

The rights to a Mechanics' Lien are given to people involved in the construction industry either as contractors, sub-contractors, workmen, or material suppliers. This remedy is given by law in The Mechanics' Lien Act. You can still sue for the money you are owed; The Mechanics' Lien Act provides an extra remedy.

Roughly, the Act provides that the owner of the property that is being worked on, and every contractor and sub-contractor, must keep a small fund (a percentage of the money owed on a project) until 37 days after work is completed. This fund is kept for contractors, sub-contractors, work people and suppliers, just in case these people are not paid by the person who hires them.

Once the 37 days have gone by, the "holdback" can be paid. However, if an owner or contractor receives notice of a lien, no further payments can be made until the lien has been paid off, or settled, or until the case is taken to court.

What gives the Act its "muscle" is the fact that when a lien is registered, it is filed on the title to the property. This means that the owner of the property doesn't have clear title (ie: full ownership) of his or her property until the lien claimants (the people who filed the liens) are paid what they are owed.

To sum up, The Mechanics' Lien Act gives a kind of insurance that, if you are a person working in the construction industry, you will be paid at least part of what you are owed for your work, as long as you claim your lien properly, and in time, and as long as the work is properly done. This is true even if, for example, the person who should pay you has gone bankrupt.



Once a lien has been filed the owner of the property may be notified. He or she may then determine whether or not to pay off the lien. If the owner disputes the amount owing or the quality of work performed, he or she can pay the disputed amount, plus costs, into Court and thus have the lien "vacated", or removed from the title to the property. The case will then be heard in Court, and your claim will be paid if the Judge decides it should be.

For more information on this and other topics contact Community Legal Education Ontario, 111 Queen St. E., Suite 310, Toronto, Ont. M5C 1S2.

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