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NATIONAL MANPOWER COUNCIL

Information Memorandum No. 103

REPORT ON WOMANPOWER CONFERENCE
New York, N. Y., January 16-17, 1956



Summary

- a. This memorandum reports on a conference held in New York City to review with outstanding women leaders the proposed scope of the Council's study on womanpower and the Council's present tentative position with respect to the areas of policy recommendation.
- b. The participants thought that the Council should be aware that the term "womanpower," if it is used for the title of the report, will be viewed by some as too broad and by others as too narrow. Nevertheless, there does not appear to be another term better suited to convey the focus of the Council's study.
- c. The discussion emphasized two major problem areas in womanpower-- the career woman on the one hand, and the intermittent woman worker on the other. With respect to the first, i.e., the women who enter employment with an adequate educational background and training, and who remain as full-time workers making a major investment in their jobs, industry still fails to utilize them effectively. It fails to identify these women or to offer them opportunities for training and advancement to high level administrative and policy-making posts.
- d. With respect to those women who do not remain as full-time workers in the labor force, the problems are in many ways more complex. The declining age of marriage which interrupts the education and training process; the early withdrawal from the labor force for home-making and family responsibilities; the scarcity of part-time employment opportunities which might enable those women who had acquired skills to continue to use them; the de-valuing of volunteer experience which might serve a similar function; the inadequacy of training and guidance facilities for older women who wish to enter or re-enter the labor force; all these are aspects of the current problem which need fresh consideration with a view to making concrete and realistic recommendations.
- e. In searching for a basis for re-evaluating these problems, the conference stressed the following: Quite apart from what a high quality education might contribute toward the more effective utilization of women as workers at any stage of their lives, this education is needed if women are to survive as individuals in this scientific age. In the process of improving their education for living, a substantial contribution is likely to be made toward increasing their employability. Educational guidance for girls needs to place increased emphasis on the multiple roles which, the probabilities indicate, they will be called upon to play in the coming years. Industry, on the other hand, needs to place increased emphasis on the individual workers and to abandon some of its easy but false generalizations about women workers.



A. Introduction

1. This memorandum reports on a conference held in New York City on January 16 and 17, 1956, to review with women leaders the proposed scope of the study on womanpower, and the Council's present tentative positions in the areas of policy recommendation. Miss Margaret Hickey, Consultant on the womanpower project, was primarily responsible for selecting the conference participants, each of whom has a wide background and knowledge of many aspects of the subject, as well as personal experience in the world of paid or volunteer employment. Dr. Leo Bartemeier also attended the conference. A list of the participants will be found in an Appendix to this report.

2. The conference discussion can be summarized under two major headings: the scope of the study and the Council's present tentative position with respect to the areas of policy recommendation.

B. The Scope of the Council's Study

(a) An Appropriate Title for the Study

3. To the proposal that the title of the study include the term womanpower (e.g., "A Report on Womanpower"; "Report on Womanpower"; "Womanpower"; "Womanpower: A Report by the National Manpower Council"; or "A Policy on Womanpower") objections were offered by conference participants on two different grounds. Some indicated that, if the primary focus

of the study is to be on women in paid employment, the term womanpower is too broad and too ambitious because it suggests consideration of other aspects of women's experience as well. Others objected to the term womanpower on the ground that if "manpower" is a generic term, it presumably includes "womanpower". Consequently, "women in paid employment" or "women workers" are better ways of indicating the subject without being redundant. Furthermore, said these participants, unless manpower is regarded as a generic term, it implies that women are being treated as a separate and special group, rather than as an integral part of the labor force.

4. A Council staff member commented that the Council considers womanpower as part of the nation's total manpower resources, and its previous publications have consistently referred to women in precisely these terms. The Council recognizes that although women are a part of the labor force, they tend to be considered from a national policy point-of-view only in periods of national emergency; or they are considered only in relation to very separate and distinct problems, as for example, the clerical shortage, or the teaching or nursing shortage. The absence of a thoroughgoing consideration of women as half of the nation's resources, with an examination of all of the relevant questions, and of the more effective development and utilization of this "manpower" segment prompted the Council to undertake its study.



5. Titles suggested to avoid using the term womanpower included the following. "What Women have Contributed to the American Way of Life Through Paid Employment"; "Women Workers and Their Potential in the Labor Force"--a double title which emphasizes both women workers and the development of their potential; "Women in Paid Employment"--which was not assumed to exclude consideration of the development of potential; "The Changing Power of Women in the Labor Market"; "A Policy for Manpower: The Development and Utilization of Women in Paid Employment"--which emphasizes the Council's "trademark"; and "Women's Role in Industrial Development."



6. Further discussion indicated, however, general agreement that, even when the primary focus in a report on women is on their role in paid employment, the analysis has to touch on other aspects of their experience as well. A staff member pointed out that, although the Council regards women as an essential part of the manpower story, the facts about women's employment are still different from those for men. Although the differences between the employment of women and men seem to be growing smaller, their patterns of employment are still not identical. Therefore, the Council recognizes that the problems in employing the mothers of young children are not the same as those in employing men; or, similarly, that the discontinuous work patterns of many women represent a substantial difference by

comparison with men. The Council's primary focus is on women in paid employment, but other aspects of women's experience which bear on that must be taken into consideration.

7. Related to this comment was the observation of a participant that women who engage in volunteer work could object to a title such as "women workers", a term conventionally confined only to women in paid employment. The consultant to the Council pointed out that the objective of the study is not to deal solely with the paid employment of women, but to put that theme in the context of the larger contribution which women are making and of the relevant social and economic factors which affect the relation of the individual woman to her role in paid employment.

8. After this discussion, the concensus of the group seemed to be that, in preference to identifying the focus of the study as "women workers," it would be preferable to use the term "womanpower" and to suggest some of the special emphases of the study by a sub-title. One conferee pointed out that even "womanpower" might be too narrow a term, to the extent that it implied the utilization of women in the manpower sense, i.e., as part of the economically active working force. Since the other roles of men are usually not considered in relation to their paid employment, this might suggest that the multiple roles of women would also not be covered by the term "womanpower."



(It should perhaps be noted that manpower, in a technical sense, is usually distinguished from the working force by the inclusion of potential as well as active workers. This does imply a consideration of all of the factors which affect the utilization of the potential of any individual worker.

9. Following general acceptance of the term womanpower these titles were suggested: "A Study of Womanpower: Its Effective Development and Utilization for Society"; "A Policy for the Development and Utilization of Womanpower"; "Womanpower Report in a Transitional Period"--where transitional refers to the nation's social and economic development and not to the role of women in paid employment; and "Womanpower: Its Potentialities and Utilization." The latter title met with the widest agreement among the conferees.

(b) Adequacy of the Factual Material Relating to the Study

10. When asked to comment on the adequacy of the factual material which the Council staff is preparing for the report, participants identified five aspects of the subject which they believed needed some additional emphasis. These were employment opportunities for career women; the cost of employment for married women and the adequacy of present incentives; differences between the education of girls and boys, particularly at the secondary level, and problems of motivating girls at both the secondary and college levels; the role of women in the Armed Forces and as a civilian defense reserve; and the responsibility



of individuals themselves, both men and women, for contributing to a more effective use of women in paid employment. The discussion with respect to each of these subjects was as follows:

11. Employment opportunities for career women: One conferee pointed out that it was important not to overlook the women who stay in the labor market, with particular reference to their opportunities for advancement. An example of a specific problem in this area was provided from the banking industry. It was pointed out that three out of four of the graduate schools of banking, maintained by the bank associations for bank employees, are closed to women, even though three-fourths of the employees in banks are women. Persons eligible for this advanced training are generally older and already advanced in position and salary level. Therefore, among the women, there is really no question of the long-term consequences for home, family life, or the birth rate. Obviously these women are already "career women," and are going to remain in paid employment. The present policy, therefore, means that they will remain in the lower level jobs. Even though the number of women involved in this kind of problem may be relatively small, the principle of not advancing women has wide-ranging results and conflicts with the goal of effective utilization of the nation's total human resources.



12. In answer to the objection that an employer cannot identify those women who will remain in the field and become "career women," and who will thereby justify the training investment, it was pointed out that the very statistics which are used to point up the problems in employing women also support the possibility of identifying the "career woman." As the age of marriage declines, the chances that a woman of 30 will marry and, therefore, leave the labor market also decline. It was admitted that this does not answer the problem of the cost of recruiting and training women in their early twenties, many of whom will withdraw from employment after two or three years. Nevertheless, it was argued, it does suggest that it would be wise to provide both short- and long-term training for those women whose tenure is doubtful and for those who are clearly as permanent as male employees. Employers often lose their training investment in men also, it was pointed out, when they leave one company for another, or for a different field.

13. Another conferee emphasized the fact that much self-screening for long-term training, either by industry or in the graduate and professional schools, goes on among women themselves. Many women are not willing to make the investment of time and energy unless they have some idea that they will use it. Employers have failed to take advantage of this fact. Nor have they used the other selection devices available, even such a simple one



as observing those women who do a good job and take their work seriously and who thereby merit, in many cases, some executive training. It was pointed out that this is a subject in which employers have a great interest at the moment and are anxious for information on what other companies are doing. It was thought that many employers would "follow the leader," if their attention were directed to effective policies and practices in this area.



14. One conferee speculated on the possibility of using the device of the armed services to assure a return on a training investment, namely "x" years of service for "x" years of training. It was pointed out that to a certain extent industry does employ this device. Social agencies or educational institutions, for example, will grant a leave of absence if an employee wishes to undertake additional training. It was said, however, that in these cases the training must be paid for by the individual and so it is only job tenure which is given in return. It was agreed that, if industry were to adopt such a policy, the contracts would probably not be enforceable. The moral commitment on the part of the individual, however, would be a very strong one, similar to that now involved in the Rockefeller Awards, Ford Fellowships, trade union scholarships, etc.

15. It was also observed that this is not a problem which affects women alone. Industry probably does not rely sufficiently on "self-screening" in finding male executives either. Instead of offering incentives which might make the potential executive come forward and identify himself, industry tends to select those men who it believes--often with little or no evidence--will make satisfactory leaders, and then to push them ahead.

16. The cost of employment for married women: One conferee pointed out that in analyzing the factors which affect the decision of a married woman to enter paid employment it would be helpful to present data which would provide a basis for evaluating the cost of such employment to her and her family in terms of changes in the family income tax bracket, cost of household help, cost of additional clothing for the woman, etc. In many cases, it was speculated, these costs are probably so high, in relation to what the woman can earn, that it substantially alters the number of women who are willing to enter the labor market. Another conferee, commenting on case history data obtained a few years ago, indicated that it is difficult to formulate any generalization in this area..

17. It was also pointed out that the steady increase in the proportion of women in employment indicates that on balance women must find it economically advantageous to work. On the other hand, the shortage of women workers in certain areas also suggests that the economic incentives are inadequate.



Another conferee noted that "shortage" also suggested the absence of incentives other than economic, as, for example, the availability of only routine and uninteresting jobs. There was general agreement that the Council report should include an examination of incentives drawing women into the labor market, of what keeps the quit rates for women high, etc.



18. Differences between the education of girls and boys: The need for a detailed analysis of this problem and the difficulties involved, in view of the absence of information, were stressed by several of the conferees. The motivation of college women to think about the role which work might play in their lives was also underscored as an important problem.

19. The role of women in the Armed Forces: A question was raised as to why this topic appeared to be so de-emphasized in the proposed report. A staff member pointed out that the topic would certainly be covered by the report; however, it was seen as a much more specialized problem which should be dealt with after the more general problems had been covered. Related to this topic was the observation that the role of women as a civil defense reserve should also be covered by the report. It has been estimated that at least 60 percent of the civilian defense reserve are women who must be trained for their jobs.

20. The responsibilities of individuals for the more effective use of womanpower: One conferee indicated that in her opinion the report should not ignore what women themselves have, can, and must do to advance themselves. However, another conferee cautioned against over-generalizations about the attitudes of women, and urged that the report avoid discussion of the conflicts of roles among women, women's frustrations, etc. Several conferees pointed out that at the level of the individual any discussion of women would also require a discussion of men's roles as husbands and/or employers in contributing to the more effective utilization of women in paid employment.



C. The Council's Present Tentative Position With Respect to the Areas of Policy Recommendation

(a) The Proportion of Women in Paid Employment

21. In the special Working Paper prepared for the conference, there was an indication of the boundaries of policy concern upon which the Council has agreed. In this context the statement was made that the Council "has concluded that there are no compelling reasons to establish as a policy objective a continuing increase in the female component of the labor force as such." This was subject to considerable misunderstanding by the conferees. One commented that it implied that women are needed in the labor force only in an emergency. Another pointed out that it was a gratuitous observation and, as it is formulated, it is not clear

whether the Council would make the same or an opposite statement with respect to the male component. Another said that the sentence suggests that women workers reduce the number of jobs available to men.

22. In response to these observations it was pointed out that it is not possible to demonstrate that there would be a retardation in the economy if the proportion of women in paid employment remained stable. The Council was simply trying to indicate that the economy requires certain kinds of trained persons, but it cannot be argued that these persons must be women. It is true that almost all men who are able to work are in the labor force today, and, therefore, if additional persons are needed, they would most likely be women. However, the presence of so many other variables--a declining work week, the differential growth in automation, etc.--make it impossible to predict the shifts in employment or to determine accurately the need for additional workers, except on a very short-run basis. The concensus of the group, however, was that this point could be made in a less prejudicial way by emphasizing that there were no compelling reasons at the present time for urging an increase in the female or any other component of the labor force.



23. The consultant to the Council on the womanpower project pointed to another reason for the statement, namely, there is a body of public opinion which objects to an economy which draws women out of the home when, presumably, a rising standard of living would enable a larger proportion of them to remain at home. This opinion finds expression, for example, in the widespread objection to publicly supported child care programs which may make it easier for women to go to work and may contribute to the deterioration of family life. The Council has decided that it is not appropriate for it to take a position on this kind of social question. Another conferee pointed out that the facts show that the increase in women in paid employment has been accompanied by an increase in the number of marriages and in the birth rate and by a decline in the divorce rate.

(b) Development of Potential

24. Discussion of the present thinking of the Council with respect to policy issues revealed that there was general agreement among the conferees on the importance of emphasizing the need to develop in girls those skills which are taken for granted in a technological age-- driving a car, using a typewriter, repairing an electrical switch, etc. But the development of these skills cannot be at the expense of providing girls with a high quality education which stresses mathematics and science, not necessarily for their immediate "use" value,



but because this area of knowledge is essential for living in a scientific age. However, the education must also include languages, the arts, history, and the social sciences.

25. Women, it was pointed out, who grow up unprepared to deal with the technological and scientific world in which they find themselves are essentially illiterate. It does not much matter whether the consequences of this illiteracy show up in the home, in paid employment, or in volunteer work. In short, the primary objective of the education of girls should be to make them literate in this larger sense. The very fact that women have more than one role today underscores the need for more, not less, education for girls, if they are to be intelligent persons in whatever role they are called upon to play. The contribution which women have made and are making, and the even greater contribution which they will be called on to make, in the area of community life calls for more and better education for girls today.

26. With respect to secondary education, one conferee observed that the development of homemaking skills can be achieved much more appropriately in the home than in the school which, as an institution, in no way matches the real homemaking situation. Another conferee raised the problem of the kind of education most suitable for the girl who is not going on to college



and who will probably find herself in one of many "unskilled" jobs, for example, on the assembly line, or as a waitress. Automation, it was pointed out, is likely to make this problem more acute in the sense that it will bring an increase in leisure time.

27. The conferees were generally agreed that vocational training for these kinds of jobs was the responsibility of industry and not of the schools, which must use their time in providing an education that will be a preparation for living. The problem of the heavy concentration of girls in commercial programs in the high schools was noted by conferees as an instance of quite narrow vocational training presumably in answer to industry's demands upon the schools.



28. Another major problem in the view of the conferees is that of motivating girls at the secondary level. The falling age of marriage and the preoccupation of high school students with this goal, it was pointed out, seriously affects their performance in school. The studies of Macfarlane and Sontag, which report that the intelligence quotients and grades of girls in high school become lower when they consider that successful academic work militates against their popularity or femininity, were cited in support of this point. It was noted by other conferees that there is conflicting evidence on this question, and that the

changing attitude toward early marriage, as well as toward the employment of married women, calls for continuing investigation of it.

29. Several conferees commented on the changing pattern among women college students today, who no longer see marriage and a career as alternatives between which they must choose. The change was seen as affecting a whole series of choices which, in the past, a girl usually had to make, i.e., between getting married or going to college; between work and marriage; between having children or a career; between remaining permanently in the labor force and permanent withdrawal. It was noted that in the concentration of the women college student today on the combination of marriage and work, the idea of "a career" has been downgraded to "a job" in which a minimum investment will be made for maximum financial return. The objective now is practical, temporary employment to supplement the new family's income, and this objective frequently becomes clear only about six months before graduation.

30. This changing pattern, it was observed, is creating new problems in motivating college women to think in long-range terms in planning and completing their college program so that it will assist them in (a) their immediate job interests; (b) their homemaking role; (c) their service to the community;



and (d) their possible--and indeed probable--interest in entering or re-entering the labor market at a later date.

31. The conference discussion also dealt with training for the older woman who wants to enter employment and who, because of early marriage, acquired no training in her earlier years. This, it was said, is a much more serious and difficult problem than that of retraining, and likely to become more common in the future. The point was also made that where a woman has acquired some professional training or some work experience prior to marriage or child-rearing, there is still the problem of keeping her skills alive during the interim period when her family responsibilities make full-time participation in the labor force impossible. One conferee pointed out that college guidance counsellors should, perhaps, emphasize those jobs in which part-time employment possibilities, compatible with family responsibilities, are greatest, as for example, teaching, writing, public relations work, social or community relations work. Another conferee emphasized that experience in non-paid jobs as members of School Boards, as board of director members of community agencies, etc., should not be minimized and that the de-valuing of unpaid work was very unfortunate. Such volunteer work may be one way of enabling a woman to retain her skills for some later period when she re-enters paid employment.



32. The role of industry in developing the potentialities of women through the attitudes taken towards women's employment and their advancement was also noted. Most young women enter employment with the thought of simply holding down a job for some temporary period of time, but the possibility always exists of converting the job-holder into a career worker, if the proper encouragement and training are given.



(c) Employment Opportunities

33. Discussion of the Council's present thinking about policy issues related to employment opportunities turned primarily on the role of legislation. The conferees noted distinctions among equal rights laws, equal pay laws, and other kinds of special legislation for women. However, the discussion failed to distinguish clearly between the role of legislation in protecting women workers and in expanding or contracting their employment opportunities.

34. Among the women's organizations, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the National Women's Party, and the National Association of Women Lawyers have worked for the passage of an equal rights law. Other women's organizations, convinced that the passage of such a law would negate all of the laws specifically designed to protect women, and stressing equity rather than equality, have been opposed or neutral with respect to it. Equal pay laws, on the

other hand, have had the active support of all of the women's organizations, and an inter-organizational committee exists to facilitate their working together for the passage and improvement of these laws.



35. According to the conferees, special legislation for women workers is still considered by most women's organizations an important way of dealing with specific local situations in which women need protection, as in the case of limitations on hours or minimum wage laws, particularly in the South. It was pointed out that an educational process accompanies legislative action, and results are often broader than those directly attributable to the laws. When a basic rate is affected by a minimum wage law, for example, the whole rate structure of a plant is raised.

36. There was some difference of opinion among conferees, on how crucial the issue of special legislation is today. One conferee indicated that, while her organization still supports special legislation, the conviction is that such legislation has, in the main, already accomplished the objective which had been sought through it. This organization is now much more concerned with women as citizens, and the stress of its program has shifted to such issues as foreign policy, conservation, loyalty, etc. Another conferee also indicated that her organization had given up its concern with special legislation

and now considered other areas more important. Another conferee commented that special legislation served some function in establishing a floor, and that community, rather than governmental, action is required to improve employment conditions and opportunities for women. Such action should include general education to be undertaken by community organizations, helped by legislation, as well as collective bargaining.



37. Other conferees asserted that it is not accurate to say that women's organizations had given up an interest in special legislation. At the national level these organizations still vote on the broad principles they wish to support, much staff time is still devoted to considering the issues, and, at the local level, study groups are still organized to consider these issues and to stimulate grass-roots activity.

38. On the question of whether considerations of sex are identical with those of race, color, religion, or national origin in relation to discriminatory practices in employment, the consensus of the group was that they are not. Sex, it was pointed out, is a biological and functional factor which often must and should be taken into account and will, consequently, stand in the way of identical treatment of men and women workers. This cannot be properly described as "discrimination." In

many instances, it was observed, limitations on the employment of women are a form of social progress, and where women have special needs they must be singled out for separate action, as in the case of protective legislation.

39. Nevertheless, the majority of conferees argued that a real case could be made for the existence of actual discrimination against women in employment today. Among the examples cited were: well qualified women are often recommended but seldom chosen for higher administrative jobs in education, a field which they dominate at the lower levels; where women are selected for jobs, discrimination often persists in the form of salary differentials, removal of privileges usually associated with the job, or circumscribed policy-making functions; employers will frequently go out of their way to find reasons for not hiring the best qualified person who happens to be a woman, and will often hire a mediocre or second rate man instead. The number of women thus affected, it was observed, may not be large because such policies relate primarily to higher level, policy-making jobs. The consequences--in terms of failing to develop incentives for women and in maintaining a system of differential treatment based on irrelevant considerations of sex--are much broader. Several of the conferees indicated that it would be extremely helpful if the Council's work contributed to a clearer identification of the relevant and irrelevant considerations which bar women from certain jobs today.



40. In general, the conferees were agreed that it is not possible to legislate the elimination of discrimination. However, it was also agreed that legislation has an educational value in directing attention to the problem. Similarly, certain administrative measures can be taken to increase employment opportunities for women. As an example, the Defense Advisory Committee to the Secretary of Labor, on which representatives of the women's organizations served, was cited.

41. With respect to the special issue of making it easier for mothers of young children to work, the conferees were in agreement that the program of aid to dependent children should be such that mothers would be financially able to remain at home. However, in the absence of appropriate funds, the communities have a responsibility to provide adequate child-care facilities.

(d) Utilization Practices

42. Discussion of the Council's present thinking with respect to utilization practices stressed again the "self-screening" which goes on among women workers. The conferees shared the conviction that the most serious mal-utilization of women by industry occurs in the failure to identify those whose training, abilities, job investment, and work patterns are similar to men's. One conferee thought that the Council would be well advised to state forthrightly that, "if industry will use the right promotional ladders and take advantage of the cues which are available," it can solve a long-existing problem with profit to itself, the individual worker, whether man or woman, and the nation as a whole. Another conferee expressed



the same thought in saying that industry accepts too many conventional generalizations about women and, therefore, fails to utilize the potential among them. Industry cannot employ the same recruiting and training practices for women as for men in their early twenties, without losing money, but the situation is different for women who remain in employment through age thirty. For this group, there is far less risk attached to a sizeable investment in further training and development.

43. Another conferee pointed out that industry's investment in the colleges and universities of the country is not predicated upon a guaranteed return in terms of individual workers who will be hired for specific jobs. It looks to general gains flowing from investing in the institutions which develop highly trained manpower resources. It was thought that industry might be persuaded that there are desirable long-term results arising from investments in the training of women even though immediate labor supply gains appear to be lacking. Another conferee pointed out that tax relief considerations which operate in the support of colleges and universities are lacking when employers contemplate on the job training for women.

44. Another conferee urged a campaign to organize and promote acceptance of the combination of homemaking and employment for women today. This "combination" might vary at different times



in a women's life. At some stages it might be part-time employment and part-time homemaking; at others, full-time home-making, or full-time employment. This conferee thought that the time has come, perhaps, to take active steps to alter the social values currently assigned to the homemaking function on the one hand, and paid employment on the other.

45. There was no clear-cut answer to the question of whether extension of the practice of granting maternity leaves would contribute to the more effective utilization of women. The discussion revealed that underlying social issues were involved in the question. The conference thought that the Council should not register judgments of value upon social problems linked to changes in the paid employment of women. It was pointed out in the course of this discussion that in organized plants the number of maternity leave contracts have doubled or tripled in the last three years. It was also observed that many industries in which women are employed are not organized. Assuming that at present the majority of women work for reasons of economic necessity, the effect of extending maternity leave practices would be to protect and contribute to the economic security of the child, or of other children in the family. Where the effect might be other than this, namely to encourage women who did not have to work for economic necessity to return to the labor market, the conferees in general were non-committal.



46. One conferee pointed out that the practice did pose problems for industry, particularly with respect to keeping higher level jobs open while the woman is away on maternity leave. On the other hand, another conferee observed that woman as a child-bearer is performing a service to society, and she should not be penalized for this reason.

(e) Manpower Shortages

47. One conferee stressed the importance of the effective development, education, training, and utilization of individuals without reference to the specific shortages existing at present. Others, who thought the Council should deal with manpower shortages, emphasized that they should be considered in terms of the individual, whether man or woman, who prepares for an occupation in short supply.

48. The conferees admitted that, where facilities or finances for professional training are limited, it is difficult to determine whether training should be provided on the basis of ability alone, or with some consideration of the subsequent use likely to be made of the training. Nevertheless, there was general agreement that the degree of serious dedication shown by the individual, regardless of sex, should be a paramount consideration. In a free society, the long-term effects of such a policy would be the more desirable. Again it was emphasized



that in the case of professional training, much self-screening by the individual occurs, and that this fact makes the problem less difficult in practical terms than it appears to be in theory.

(f) Women in the Armed Services

49. There was no extensive discussion of this topic. One conferee observed that a deeper and more extensive study of the need for women in the Armed Services should be made. The biggest problem, she said, is the prejudice on the part of parents, clergy, teachers, and community leaders against the use of women in the services. This prejudice goes beyond the general antipathy to the military which is almost universal in this country.

50. Another conferee pointed out that, at best, there has been a kind of toleration of women in the armed services in peacetime and no active support except in times of emergency. As a consequence, recruitment has been difficult, and the goals, even though low, have never been met, although the services have a relatively good mark concerning fair treatment of women. On the other hand, there is little evidence that the numbers recruited have been inadequate. These considerations were said to confirm the need for a reappraisal of the numbers and the role of women in the armed services.



D. Summary Comments by Conference Participants

51. At the conclusion of the conference each of the participants was asked to identify some major consideration thought to be particularly significant for the Council in developing its Statement and Recommendations. These comments served to summarize the highlights of the preceding discussion.

52. The Council would be well advised, one conferee pointed out, to concentrate on the newer aspects of the problems in womanpower. These arise from the fact that women are marrying at younger ages and are, therefore, often prevented from acquiring any training for employment. Although the traditional "career girl" is vanishing, an increasing number of women are acquiring some work experience during the early years of marriage. Lack of training and/or limited work experience, however, pose major problems in integrating these women into the work force when they elect to return at some later date, as an increasingly large number of them are doing. This problem should be related to the manpower shortages in several occupations which require extensive professional training.

53. Other conferees stressed the importance of volunteer work as a means of keeping the skills of women up to date during the period of their withdrawal from the labor force.



Furthermore, it was said, the significance of the role of volunteer work in the community is perhaps even more important than the role of volunteer work in the life of the woman. This fact should be kept in mind in any treatment of volunteer work.

54. The importance of using the schools for the training or re-training of older women, and the need for more facilities and greater vision in the matter of guidance for these older women were also stressed. The desirability of developing more opportunities for part-time employment, both as a way of protecting family life and as a way of keeping skills in use during the interim years, was also urged.

55. Another conferee emphasized the need for "total guidance" for girls, as opposed to a narrower concept of vocational guidance. The inadequacy of the kind of guidance proposed in A Policy for Skilled Manpower --assumed to be vocational guidance in the narrowest sense--was decried.



56. Other conferees stressed the role of the true "career girl." They urged that attention be paid to her problems, particularly the importance of assuring her training opportunities at the appropriate time and of her advancement and promotion when she was qualified for a job at a higher level. These women, it was pointed out, demonstrate what women can do, and thus widen the horizons for other women.

57. Another conferee pointed to the danger of over-generalization, and observed that even in the same community different groups have different attitudes and convictions about women at work, and that the work patterns of women differ greatly. Caution is needed even on the extent to which major attitudinal changes have occurred, because all of the changes might be explained in terms of a continuing period of high employment.

58. Several conferees urged the Council to place primary emphasis on allowing the individual, whether man or woman, to develop in accordance with his own abilities and ambitions. The development of the individual woman, it was pointed out, is important for the development of the country. Pride can be taken in the contribution which women have made to the American way of life and the American standard of living, and this achievement is a result of the extent to which American women have been allowed to be and have been treated as individuals.

59. Other conferees stressed that the value of the Council's report on womanpower would lie in its overall consideration of the subject from the manpower point of view, rather than from the more restricted point of view of the feminist, the psychiatrist, the union, or the employer. At the same time, conferees also urged that specific, realistic recommendations be included in the report. It should not merely elaborate a philosophical



position or concentrate on the significant facts which would suggest ways of solving certain problems. It was also said that the Council should not emphasize problems of "discrimination," because in the last analysis these problems are going to be solved only with the passage of time.



Appendix I

List of Participants

Conference on Womanpower
January 16-17, 1956
New York, N.Y.

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National Manpower Council Staff

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Jean Scott Campbell
Henry David
Eli Ginzberg

