

Status of Women Commission.

March 26th, 1954

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EQUAL PAY

Statement by the representative of the Women's International
Democratic Federation, Mrs. Dora Russell

Madam Chairman:

In opening the discussion yesterday on the subject of Equal Pay, the distinguished delegate of the United States expressed the wish that Non-governmental Organizations would contribute to The Commission some information on the measures they take to press for equal pay and to publicise this matter. May I say that I appreciate the motive of her suggestion and understand from her statement that the question of equal pay is of great importance in her mind.

But, while representatives of NGO's may be glad to respond to her request, I am sure that many of them will feel, as does my organization, that this matter has had world-wide publicity from every kind of body or union supporting women's rights for very many years, and that it is rather for the Governments who have not so far ratified the Convention on Equal Pay to explain to us, if they can, the reasons for their procrastination.

The document E/CN.G.231. - report of the I.L.O. which is before the Commission is a very depressing one. Only six countries as yet adhere to the inadequate Convention of 1951 and many of the others, by their own statements in this document, are opposed to it, or taking evasive action. Yet this economic right of women to a just reward for their labours is as important, perhaps even more important - than political rights in raising the status of women. So long as it is withheld women will continue to be locked down upon as second class citizens.

My organization, the WIDF, has vigorously supported this demand for Equal Pay in all countries where such advocacy was needed, and our members are encouraged by their knowledge that we also have membership in countries such as the Soviet Union, Poland, the Peoples Democracies, including China, where the principle is applied and actively promoted by the Governments, and where its results can already be seen in the greater dignity attained by women.

At the World Congress of WIDF in June 1953, our Swedish delegate and Vice President presented a long report on women's rights in which the position on equal pay in many countries was reviewed. Practically every delegate who spoke stressed the burning injustice of the conditions and reward for women's work still prevailing in the greater part of the world. Nearly two thousand women from 70 countries supported the declaration of the Congress which is to be found in our Memorandum forming one

**[Carta] 1954 Mar. 26, [Estados Unidos] [a] Madam Chairman
[manuscrito] Dora Russell.**

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