

for the Local stated, "The welders recognize the importance of women playing their part and their eagerness to do so."<sup>5</sup>

However, attitudes towards women working in the yards tended to define them as temporary workers who would return to the home at the end of the war. As hostilities drew to a close and lay-offs were imminent the probability that they would be the first to lose their jobs threatened many women workers. They feared a return to Depression level conditions and a dependency that they had left behind them. Sectors of the shipyard labour force, including some union leaders believed that women should be the first to leave. The suggestion was made that if two partners in a marriage worked in the yards, one of them must leave. By inference this person was the wife. Some men, such as Bill White, President of the Prince Rupert local of the Boilermakers along with Vancouver Executive members, defended women's right to continue in their wartime jobs.

By the end of the war women had established the right to equal pay for equal work in the shipyards and the right to equal participation in their unions. Despite these important gains they were unable to keep their jobs. The extensive lay-offs left only male workers with long years of service in the shipyards.

This transcript illuminates the experience of female shipyard workers. Mrs. Jonnie Rankin wrote a column in the Main Deck, the Boilermakers paper while working in a variety of capacities in the Burrard yards. The interview describes some of the ways in which employment in this non-traditional workplace encouraged women's union consciousness and activity.