

the repair shop threading bolts.³

There were mixed reactions to the entry of women into the shipyards. Women themselves generally favoured this new opportunity. The Vancouver Sun of September, 1941 quotes a female welding trainee: "I think the time will come when the welding companies will be forced to hire women." When women, soon afterwards, began to enter the yards, they were at first harrassed by the **craft** unions. These followed their traditional exclusionist practices and tried to force women out of the industry. Women who were intent on working the yards were forced to challenge the unions. A Mrs. Harvey describes being told by the Machinists' Union that she was taking a "man's" job and that the men would walk off the job in protest if she were hired. She retorted by defending the principle of equal pay for equal work to convince the men of her concern that union pay rates not be undermined by the entry of women workers. She also suggested that the solution to the employment of women workers was to ask them to join the union, rather than excluding them. She stated, "I'm not denying any man a job, I am proving that women can do this sort of work satisfactorily."⁴ Protests aside, the shipyard management was bent on hiring more workers, women provided the only possible labour supply and thus were hired.

By August of nineteen forty-two the Vancouver Sun reported that women had been granted membership in the shipyard unions. Local "E" of the Boilermakers Union had voted unanimously to accept women and stipulated that they were to receive union pay rates. There were seventeen hundred women in this sub-local. V.W. Foster, Business Agent