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Discounted Labour: Women Workers in Canada, 1870-1939 (Themes in Canadian History)

Ruth A. Frager, Carmela Patrias

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The years between 1870 and 1939 were a crucial period in the growth of industrial capitalism in Canada, as well as a time when many women joined the paid workforce. Yet despite the increase in employment, women faced a difficult struggle in gaining fair remuneration for their work and in gaining access to better jobs. *Discounted Labour* analyses the historical roots of women's persistent inequality in the paid labour force. Ruth A. Frager and Carmela K. Patrias analyse how and why women became confined to low-wage jobs, why their work was deemed less valuable than men's work, why many women lacked training, job experience, and union membership, and under what circumstances women resisted their subordination.

Distinctive earning discrepancies and employment patterns have always characterized women's place in the workforce whether they have been in low-status, unskilled jobs, or in higher positions. For this reason, Frager and Patrias focus not only on women wage-earners but on women as salaried workers as well. They also analyze the divisions among women, examining how class and ethnic or racial differences have intersected with those of gender. *Discounted Labour* is an essential new work for anyone interested in the historical struggle for gender equality in Canada.

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