

American BRASS Co.

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE
PRODUCTION DIVISION
WASHINGTON

To insure prompt attention,
in replying refer to

No. _____
Attention of _____

C 3-6845

December 16, 1918.

From: Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Industrial Service Section,
Womens Branch, Mrs. C. M. Tead, Director.

To: Woman in Industry Service, U. S. Department of Labor,
Miss Mary Van Kleeck, Director.

Subject: REQUEST OF THE AMERICAN BRASS COMPANY, WATERBURY, CONN.,
FOR VARIATION IN THE STATE LAW RESPECTING THE EMPLOYMENT
OF WOMEN.

1. I am enclosing for your information a complete file of the data
on file in this office in regard to the request of the American
Brass Company, Waterbury, Conn., for variation of the State Law
respecting the employment of women.

Clara M. Tead.

CLARA M. TEAD, DIRECTOR,
WOMENS BRANCH,
INDUSTRIAL SERVICE SECTION,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE.

December 16, 1928.

From: Office of the Chief Of Ordnance, Industrial Service Section, Womens Branch, Mrs. C. M. Tead, Director.

To: Major F. W. Tully, U. S. A. Office of the Secretary of War, State War and Navy Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Subject: REQUEST OF THE AMERICAN BRASS COMPANY, WATERBURY, CONN., FOR VARIATION IN THE STATE LAW AFFECTING THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.

1. The attached papers on the above subject are herewith returned to your office.
2. The matter was investigated by the Womens Branch, Industrial Service Section, Bridgeport office, with the results cited in Miss Dudley's report of November 14, herewith attached.

CLARA M. TEAD, DIRECTOR,
WOMENS BRANCH,
INDUSTRIAL SERVICE SECTION
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE.

December 16, 1918.

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CLARA M. TEAD, DIRECTOR,
WOMENS BRANCH,
INDUSTRIAL SERVICE SECTION,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE.

1085-08
Noted
Nov 16 1918

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT
Office of Ordnance District Chief
945 Main Street
BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

PRODUCTION DIVISION

November 14, 1918.

From: Edith Dudley, Women's Branch, Industrial Service
Section Bridgeport District Ordnance Office.

To: Mrs. Clara M. Tead, Women's Branch, Industrial
Service Section, Office of the Chief of Ordnance,
Washington, D. C.

Subject: Request of the American Brass Company, Waterbury,
Conn. for variation in the State Law respecting
the employment of women.

SUMMARY:

An interview with Mr. E. L. Frisbie, Vice President
of the American Brass Company, revealed the following facts:-

1. That women were employed by the company five additional hours on Saturday afternoons from October 5, 1918, through November 2, 1918.
2. That both men and women objected to the increase in hours.
3. That the proximity of unionized plants in Torrington, Conn., to the branch of the American Brass Company there made inadvisable in the opinion of the company the employment of men and women more than 10 hours per day.
4. That, consequently, the company discontinued on November 9th, 1918, the employment on Saturday afternoons and intends to continue to employ men and women not more than 10 hours per day and 55 hours per week.
5. Therefore, the American Brass Company wishes to withdraw its request for variation in the state labor law affecting women.

S. Wunder, Director,
Women's Branch, Industrial Service Section,

Bridgeport District Ordnance
by (Signed) Edith Dudley Office,
Edith Dudley

7M 2231.65-181

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT
Office of Ordnance District Chief
945 Main Street
BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

PRODUCTION DIVISION

November 14, 1918.

From: Edith Dudley, Women's Branch, Industrial Service
Section Bridgeport District Ordnance Office.

To: Mrs. Clara M. Tead, Women's Branch, Industrial
Service Section, Bridgeport District Ordnance
Office.

Subject: Request of the American Brass Company, Waterbury,
Conn. for variation in the State Law respecting the
employment of women.

I. Reason for Visit.

Request of Clara M. Tead, Director, Women's Branch,
Industrial Service Section.

II. Persons Interviewed.

Mr. E. L. Frisbie, Vice President, American Brass Co.,
Mr. Budd, U. S. Employment Service, Waterbury,

III. Organization.

President: Charles F. Brooker
Vice President: E. L. Frisbie.
Ass't Secretary: E. H. Gates.

The American Brass Company has three plants in Waterbury
Benedict and Burnham Branch,
Waterbury Brass Company,
Waterbury Brass Goods Corporation.

IV. Contracts.

The American Brass Company has 60 odd prime and secondary
U. S. government contracts for raw material and finished
brass products.

V. Production.

Mr. William Thompson, of the Carriage and
Battery Vehicle and Trench Warfare Section, Bridgeport
District, Ordnance, stated that the American Brass Com-
pany, is 25% behind in production on the majority of its
contracts and 40% behind on a few, due largely, in his
opinion, to the shortage of common labor in Waterbury
which has been aggravated by the epidemic of grippe.

MI 23165/82

To: Mrs. C. M. Tead. -2-
Subject: Visit to Waterbury Brass Co.

VI. Salient features regarding employment.

1. As the vice president stated that the company wished to withdraw its request for exemption, no inspection of the plant was made.
2. Numbers employed.

A. Women.

American Brass Company,
Waterbury Brass Branch, 300
Benedict & Burnham, 500
including office employees.

3. Hours.

Mr. Frisbie stated that from October 5th through November 2nd, 1918, the mills and offices of the plant were open and that all employees including women and minors worked until five P.M. Saturday afternoons, making a 60 hour week, which is contrary to the State Labor Law regarding women and minors.

Mr. Frisbie also stated that since October 5th, the company had reconsidered the question of additional hours and decided to reduce the working hours to 55 per week. This change was made, Mr. Frisbie stated, because the majority of the men who are unorganized and the machinists' union had not received the increase in hours favorably and also because of the proximity of unionized plants and the company's plants in Ansonia, Conn.

For these reasons, Mr. Frisbie stated, the company had decided to withdraw its request for variation in the state law respecting employment of women and is not now employing women and minors more than 10 hours per day and 55 hours per week.

Upon request Mr. Frisbie agreed to put this statement in writing. (See attached letter).

Mr. Budd, Director, U. S. Employment Service, Waterbury, stated that the American Brass Company had found its 60 hour week unsatisfactory because the additional money earned was not sufficient to prevent the men from seeking employment at plants having a half-holiday on Saturday.

S. Wunder, Director,
Women's Branch, Industrial
Service Section,
Bridgeport District Ordinance
by (Signed) Edith Dudley, Office
Edith Dudley.

THE AMERICAN BRASS COMPANY

WATERBURY, CONN. November 13, 1918.

Miss Edith Dudley,
Ordinance Department,
Bridgeport District,
Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Dear Madam:

Referring to our conversation of this A.M. in regard to the request made by this Company that we be allowed to employ women in our factories sixty hours per week, we would now say that this matter has ceased to be of interest to us, as we found that for various reasons it did not seem to be practicable to operate our factories on Saturday afternoons, as we had intended.

As the matter stands at present, we are not operating our Mills on Saturday afternoons, consequently, we cannot employ women and girls more than fifty-five hours per week, even though our request had been complied with.

I remain

Yours truly,

(Signed)

VICE PRESIDENT.

ELF/C

*Mailed
Nov 19 1918*

W 1 L 231.65190

1918 Nov 7 PM 4-55-
MAIL CONTROL

Noted
Nov 16 1918

ML 1230.44/58

November 7, 1918

From: Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Industrial Service
Section, Womens Branch, Mrs. C.M. Tead, Director.
To: Miss Suzanne A. Wunder, Bridgeport District Ordnance
Office, 945, Main St., Bridgeport, Ct.

Subject:

AMERICAN BRASS COMPANY

1. Attached herewith is memorandum on American Brass Company, also letter from Major F. W. Tully in regard to same.
2. Will you please have a copy of the complete memorandum made for your reference at Bridgeport, and return this copy to the Washington office as soon as possible.

(Signed) Clara M. Tead

CLARA M. TEAD, DIRECTOR,
WOMENS BRANCH,
INDUSTRIAL SERVICE SECTION,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ORDNANCE

1 Enc

WAR DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON.

November 4, 1918.

From: War Department, Major F. W. Tully.
To: Ordnance Department, Industrial Service Section.
Subject: Request of American Brass Company to employ women
longer than fifty-five hours a week or on Saturday
afternoons.

I am referring to you application for variation in
the State law respecting employment of women in Connecticut,
so that pending the approval of the policy generally by the
Council of National Defense your Section, if desired, might
make the investigation suggested by the Woman in Industry
Service, copy of whose letter is attached hereto.

(Signed) F W Tully.

F. W. Tully
Major, Ord. U.S.A.
Detailed to Office of Secretary of War.

W I 230.44/52

October 19, 1918.

MEMORANDUM

FOR: Major Tully, War Department

FROM: Miss Van Kleeck, Director, Woman in Industry Service.

SUBJECT: Request of American Brass Company to employ women longer than fifty-five hours a week or on Saturday afternoons.

The attached copy of a letter from the American Brass Company with a letter from the Governor of Connecticut to the company and a notice issued by the company to its officers and employees were received by this office yesterday from the Secretary of Labor, to whom they have been referred by Mr. Hugh Frayne, Chairman of the Labor Division of the War Industries Board.

You will note that according to the Connecticut law the Governor may modify the state labor laws on request of the Council of National Defense. The Governor's statement in the attached letter that he wishes such requests to be broad enough to apply to all producers of war materials in the state would seem, by the way, to be very unfortunate, and to indicate the necessity for action in particular cases in Connecticut according to the procedure proposed in the War Department.

It therefore seems to me the more important that this case should be handled according to the usual process and we are therefore referring it direct to your office without acting on it ourselves.

As the matter is urgent, and the application has been considerably delayed through reference from one government department to another, it is suggested that an immediate investigation be made by the Women's Branch of the Ordnance Department. In our telephone conversation today I suggested the possibility of sending a representative of the Woman in Industry Service, but I did not then realize that this matter had been so long pending in the War Industries Board, and as it would be impossible for us to send a representative before Wednesday, action by the local office of the Women's Branch in that district is suggested as insuring more prompt action.

W L 2 30.44/32 Enc.

It should be said in advance that in accordance with the standards adopted on Friday last by the War Labor Policies Board it is mandatory not to lengthen the working day beyond the period set by the state law, and in view of the fact that a week of fifty-four hours is permitted in Connecticut and in view of the fact that fatigue appears to predispose to influenza, it will undoubtedly be contrary to wise regulation to permit the lengthening of the hours according to the request of this company. It is of course desirable, however, that a representative of the government should confer with the company about their methods of meeting this problem.

HVK:IMP

Mary Van Kleeck, Director
Woman in Industry Service.

WAR INDUSTRIES BOARD

WASHINGTON

October 10, 1918.

Oct 18 AM

Mr. Hugh L. Kerwin, Director
Labor Adjustments,
Department of Labor,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Kerwin:

I am herewith enclosing copy of letter from Mr. Charles F. Brocker, President, The American Brass Company of Waterbury, Connecticut, and notice issued by them to the employees, all of which you will find self-explanatory.

May I suggest that you have this matter carefully investigated by the proper departments at the earliest possible moment. It is possible that this situation may be remedied by a little readjustment without having to resort to the necessity of changing existing labor laws.

I shall appreciate your giving this matter immediate attention because of its importance.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Hugh Frayne
Chairman Labor Division,
War Industries Board.

Referred to Women's Bureau

WBW Oct 17-18

W I 230.44/52 Enc 2

COPY

THE AMERICAN BRASS COMPANY

Ansonia Branch
Ansonia, Conn.
Benedict & Burnham Branch
Waterbury, Conn.

Buffalo Branch
Buffalo, N.Y.
Coe Brass Branch
Torrington, Conn.

Kenosha Branch
Kenosha, Wis.
Waterbury Brass Branch
Waterbury, Conn.

Office of the
PRESIDENT.

Waterbury, Conn.

October 4, 1918

Hon. Everett Morss,
Chief, Brass Section,
War Industries Board,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Morss:

Our inability to get sufficient common labor is interfering more and more with our production, and with the grip epidemic which is now prevalent, we are suffering in our endeavors more than we have heretofore. As an illustration, I found last night that 527 of our employees at Ansonia were out with the grip or influenza. The case is becoming serious, and we have felt it necessary to serve the enclosed notice on our employees in the endeavor to get four hours per week out of our employees in addition to what we have been getting.

There is a statute in this State which prevents the employment of women and minors more than 55 hours per week. We have consulted the labor Commissioner of this State, and the Governor of the State, and I have received the enclosed letter from Governor Holcomb on the subject. Have endeavored to get hold of Mr. Elton in Washington today to have him appeal to the National Council of Defense to make such a request upon Governor Holcomb. As you will see, he recognizes the necessity of it, and is quite willing to make the proclamation necessary under our Statutes.

As you are so much interested in this, will you undertake to put the matter before the National Council of Defense, and request them, in the interest of manufacturers generally in Connecticut, to ask Governor Holcomb to avail himself of the privileges he has under our Statutes to have the law referred to suspended during the continuance of the War.

Mr. Ward, of the Marlin Arms Co., New Haven, has circulated a petition to this effect which I have signed for our Company.

M I 330.44/52 Enc 3

COPY

Marcus H. Holcomb

Governor.

(SEAL)

John Buckley

Executive Secretary.

Frank D. Rood

Executive Clerk.

State of Connecticut
Executive Chambers
Hartford

October 2, 1918

Dear Mr. Brooker:

Your letter of 27th of September received. I have been away from the capitol considerably since Thursday addressing Liberty Loan rallies, etc. which has been delayed replying to your letter, regarding the Saturday half holiday. The control which I might have over that is confined in Chapter 326 Public Acts of 1917, of which the following is a copy:

Sec.1. The Governor is authorized to modify or suspend, by proclamation, the laws of this state relating to labor, for definite periods, during the present war between the United States and the German Empire. He shall specify in such proclamation the law or laws to be modified or suspended and the period during which such modification or suspension shall be in force, and may continue the same for a further definite period or periods: provided, he shall exercise such power only upon request of the Council of National Defense, when essential to national defense. No such modification or suspension shall continue beyond the close of the war.

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect from its passage."

You will note the provision-"provided he shall exercise such power only upon request of the Council of National Defense."

Manifestly the products of your Company are vitally essential to national defense, and you could easily get a request to the Governor from the Council of National Defense. I think such request should be broad enough to apply to all producers of war materials in the State.

I will act at once when I receive the request of the Council of National Defense and prepare the proclamation indicated by the Statute.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) M. H. HOLCOMB

Mr. Charles F. Brooker,
Pres., American Brass Co.,
Waterbury, Conn.

W. L. 230.44/32

Enc 4

I would send a petition direct to Washington, if I knew to whom to send it, but there have been so many changes in the Councils, Boards, etc., that I really am at a loss to know how to address it. Therefore I am appealing to you.

Very truly yours,
(Signed) CHAS. F. BROOKER,
President.

M X 230.44/32

Enc 3

COPY

To the Officers and Employees
of
The American Brass Company

The necessities of the Government and their demands upon our Company for material are becoming greater each day. Owing to our inability to obtain a sufficient number of men and women to operate our mills to their full efficiency, we are unable to do what the Government might otherwise reasonably expect of our Company. The situation is serious, and we should all feel like exerting ourselves to the utmost to supplement the heroic efforts of our boys in France on the firing line by contributing in every way to insure a supply of necessary munitions for them. Nothing that we can do here will begin to equal their hardships and devotion to the cause, and their loss of all home comforts, even the supreme sacrifice which they may be called upon to make.

Further than all this, neglect of duty, indifference about work, lack of interest, absence for any cause other than serious illness should be avoided, in fact such tendencies will be made the subject of investigation by the Government.

In order to increase our production we must increase the hours in which our mills are operated and should discontinue the present practice of losing four hours every Saturday afternoon. Relying upon the patriotism of all to cheerfully adopt the change, we propose to begin Saturday, October 5th to run the Mills and keep our offices open for business from one o'clock P.M. until five o'clock.

Our mills are now working almost altogether on Government orders directly and indirectly, and this contribution of effort we hope will be loyally and cheerfully made by all

CHARLES F. BROOKER, President.

24 F 230.44/32
Enc 5-

21

October 19, 1918.

MEMORANDUM

FOR: Major Tully, War Department

FROM: Miss Van Kleeck, Director, Woman in Industry Service.

SUBJECT: Request of American Brass Company to employ women longer than fifty-five hours a week or on Saturday afternoons.

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MVK:IMP

Mary Van Kleeck, Director
Woman in Industry Service.

WAR INDUSTRIES BOARD.

Washington.

October 10, 1918.

Mr. Hugh L. Kerwin, Director,
Labor Adjustments,
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CHARLES F. BROOKER, President.

THE AMERICAN BRASS COMPANY.

Office of the President.

Waterbury, Conn.
October 4, 1918.

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War Industries Board,
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Very truly yours,
(Signed) CHAS. F. BROOKER,
President.

(Seal)

October 2, 1918.

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Very truly yours,

(Signed) M. H. Holcomb.

Mr. Charles F. Brooker,
Prest. American Brass Co.,
Waterbury, Conn.