

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WOMAN IN INDUSTRY SERVICE

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
**Director of the  
Woman in Industry Service**

FOR

THE FISCAL YEAR  
ENDED JUNE 30  
**1919**



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# FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE WOMAN IN INDUSTRY SERVICE.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
WOMAN IN INDUSTRY SERVICE,  
*Washington, September 30, 1919.*

SIR: The first annual report of the Woman in Industry Service for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1919, is submitted herewith.

## INTRODUCTION.

The Woman in Industry Service was organized in July, 1918, a year and three months after the entrance of the United States into the war. It was confronted at once with the problems involved in a rapidly increasing reliance upon the work of women, as the sole reserve force of labor to be called upon to measure up to the demands of an augmented program of production for the war in the face of the withdrawal of men for military service at the rate of a quarter of a million a month. It was clear that for the sake of production and for the good of the Nation the Federal Government must provide not only for the recruiting of women workers but for the safeguarding of the health and efficiency of these women who were meeting in many instances the requirements of new and unaccustomed tasks. Because they were new for women—at least, in such large numbers—standards for their employment had not been established in the customs of industry.

It was this necessity for rapid increase in the employment of women which constituted the peculiar problem of the war. Fundamentally, however, the purpose of the Department of Labor in its relation to women in industry—to safeguard the interests of women workers and to make their service effective for the national good—is identical in peace or in war. That is to say, with all the changes brought by the war the organic act creating the department was still applicable.

The purpose of the Department of Labor shall be to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions, and to advance their opportunities for profitable employment.

The difference during the war was the wider public recognition of the necessity for "advancing the opportunities" of women "for profitable employment," couching it, however, in terms of recruiting women for a wider range of occupations in order to release men for military service.

Added to this difference in point of view was the fact that the urgent necessities of a nation at war would influence policy just to

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the extent that in time of war measures which in the long run are essential to the national good must frequently be modified for immediate military necessity. This is one of the evils of war.

Thus while the problems of women in industry during the war differed in form from similar problems in time of peace, and while the public attitude was also different under war conditions, nevertheless the fundamental tasks were so much alike that the experience gained in dealing with them during the war may be regarded as a basis for action in time of peace. A report of the activities and plans of the Woman in Industry Service in the four months which elapsed between its establishment and the signing of the armistice should, therefore, be not merely a history but an introduction to a program for the work of the Federal Government on behalf of women in industry in the period of readjustment and thereafter. But while the year's history has this fundamental unity, logically the record divides into two parts, the first describing the period of the war and the second setting forth the problems of the eight months after the armistice was signed.

## I. ACTIVITIES DURING THE WAR, JULY 16 TO NOVEMBER 11, 1918.

When the Secretary of Labor recommended to Congress an appropriation for a special service for women in industry, he outlined its purpose and functions as follows:

It is undoubtedly true that the Department of Labor exercises all of its powers with reference to wage earners of both sexes and of all ages. It is also true that the best administration requires that the various services of the department which are here outlined be conducted by including within the work of each service all questions regarding women as well as men.

But the great importance of the employment of women in most essential war work and the development of special matters of policy with respect to such employment make it important to establish a special service devoted to the subject of women in industry.

In view of the fact that the other services will, as above indicated, include within their sphere women as well as men, this special service of women in industry is not large, will be largely policy making and administrative in character rather than itself executive; but will maintain close contact with all the work of the department on this special subject and will also coordinate and control such work in all other departments.

Stated more specifically the purpose of this service is—

1. To consider all general policies with respect to women in industry and to advise the Secretary of Labor as to the policies which should be pursued.
2. To keep informed of the work of the several divisions of the department in so far as they relate to women in industry and to advise with the divisions on all such work.
3. To secure information on all matters relating to women in industry and to collate such information into useful form.
4. To establish useful connections with all governmental departments and divisions on this subject and with voluntary agencies and societies.

In announcing on July 9, 1918, the appointment of the director and assistant director, the Secretary further stated the purposes of the Woman in Industry Service as follows:

In recognition of the great importance to the Nation of the work of women in industry, and the urgent necessity for a national policy in determining the conditions of their employment, I have urged and Congress has now granted the necessary authority to establish a Women's Division in the Department of Labor. Its immediate task will be to develop in the industries of the country policies and methods which will result in the most effective use of women's services in production for the war, while at the same time preventing their employment under injurious conditions. Its large and very necessary aim will be to focus attention on the national importance of the conditions of women's work as influencing industrial standards and as affecting the welfare of the entire Nation.

The Women's Division will be charged primarily with determining policies rather than carrying on detailed administration. Because of this policy-making function of the Women's Division, its director will serve as a member of the War Labor Policies Board. It will coordinate work for women in other divisions of the Department of Labor and in industrial service sections of other departments of the Federal Government. It will cooperate with State departments of labor, working with and through them, in order to bring about united action by the States in national problems of women's work. The Women's Division will concern itself primarily with war conditions but will be mindful of the need for observing and interpreting the tendencies in women's employment which are likely to have permanent social effects.

The Women's Division has been established in response to needs widely felt by all, men as well as women, who are conscious of the increasing share women must have in the industrial activities of the war. The problems of women in industry are so manifold and complex that a clearing house of thought and leadership is needed in the National Government. The Women's Division has been established to give this leadership.

#### COUNCIL ON WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

To accomplish the task of coordinating the efforts of all Federal agencies concerned in women's work the Woman in Industry Service was authorized by the Secretary of Labor to organize the Council on Women in Industry, composed of women representing every division of the Department of Labor and other Federal departments having organized work related to problems of women in industry. Its membership included the Women's Branch of the Ordnance Department, the Women's Section of the Railroad Administration, the Federal Board for Vocational Education, the Committee on Women in Industry of the Advisory Commission, and the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, and from the Department of Labor representatives of the services concerned with investigation and inspection, training and dilution, information and education, and working conditions, the United States Employment Service, the Immigration Bureau, the Children's Bureau, the Bureau of Naturalization, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the United States Housing Corporation, the War Labor Board, and the War Labor Policies Board. The council did not assume any executive or administrative functions, nor did it have any authority over the programs of its members. It was a forum for discussion of the important questions coming before the Woman in Industry Service and the other groups cooperating with it. Among the subjects for discussion have been the safeguards to be established in new occupations, the enforcement of State labor laws, the regulation of night work under war conditions, the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work, and the recruiting and training of women workers. The cooperation, which will be described in the succeeding report of activities of the Woman in Industry Service, was materially furthered by the weekly meetings of the council.

#### RECRUITING WOMEN FOR NEW OCCUPATIONS.

It has already been indicated that the outstanding question concerning women in industry which grew daily more important during the war was the necessity for greatly increasing the proportions of women in the essential industries of the country in order to meet the demands of production and at the same time to release men for military service. The danger of hysterical campaigns which would stimulate the recruiting of women without seeing to it that their services should become effective for production or that proper safeguards for women workers should be established was increasingly great. It was difficult for those unfamiliar with the difficulties of introducing a new and untrained personnel into industry to appreciate the care which must be taken to avoid actual decrease in production by rapid and careless methods of filling positions. Nor could those who had not been familiar with the efforts through many years to build up

standards of protection for the health of the workers appreciate how fundamentally important were the maintenance and extension of those standards during the war. The situation was made more critical by the fact that those companies whose policy to their men workers had never won their confidence and cooperation were likely to arouse the suspicion that the war emergency would be used as an excuse for employing women at lower rates of pay and under conditions which would weaken any control gained by the workers through collective bargaining.

The following program was proposed by the Woman in Industry Service:

1. Standards governing the employment of women in industry should be authoritatively issued after adoption by the War Labor Policies Board, with the two-fold purpose of controlling conditions especially in new occupations for women and also serving as a guide in the selection of occupations in which the employment of women might be increased. That is to say, instead of offering a list of occupations in which women should be substituted for men, the Federal Government would promulgate standards together with the statement that in any occupation in which these standards were upheld, the extension of the employment of women would be desirable, at the same time calling attention to the necessity for greatly increasing the employment of women under these conditions.

2. Certain broad statements could be made about occupations in which it would be desirable to employ women but these must always be in the nature of information rather than authoritative rulings, since local conditions would make a recommendation for the employment of women unwise in one locality and wise in another where both the nature of the process and the conditions surrounding it were different.

3. Certain occupations which had been proved to be more injurious to women than to men should be listed as a group from which women should be excluded.

4. Instead of attempting to formulate a detailed program for the country as a whole, the War Industries Board and the United States Employment Service would be asked to name those localities in which the shortage of labor was most acute. The various Federal agencies concerned with investigation, training, placement, health, and working conditions, would then be asked to concentrate their efforts in those localities in order to solve the problems there and also to give a foundation for experience for an increasingly adequate program of labor distribution throughout the country.

5. Inquiries into certain typical occupations should be pushed forward rapidly by the Woman in Industry Service with a view to making definite recommendation regarding changes in the process and the establishment of conditions which had been proved most effective in the experience of establishments employing women.

6. Meanwhile plans should be formulated for exhibits of women's work and other forms of educational presentation of facts which should result in enlisting the services of women in the war industries, while winning also the cooperation of industry in establishing the conditions which should make for the largest production over a long period.

It is possible to record progress in each section of this program, although the signing of the armistice made it unnecessary to introduce women in such large numbers in this country as in Great Britain or France, and the program as a whole was therefore not carried out. The action taken will be shown in the following sections of this report.

#### **STANDARDS GOVERNING THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.**

A tentative draft of standards which should govern the employment of women in industry was presented to the Secretary of Labor and the War Labor Policies Board on October 10, 1918, adopted by

the board on October 18, and modified on October 25, in the light of the probability that an armistice would soon be signed. Before it was recommended to the Secretary of Labor and the board it had been submitted for criticism and suggestions to every State department of labor, to representative employers, and to working women representing national and international trade-unions having women members. In formulating the standards consideration was given to experience in industry during the war, to regulations already established in State labor laws, and to such statements by Federal agencies during the war as General Orders, No. 13, issued by the Chief of Ordnance and simultaneously by the Quartermaster General as recommendations to arsenal commanders and to manufacturers working on contract for the War Department. The report of the National War Labor Conference Board, which constituted the principles to guide industrial relations during the war, was also used as a basis.

It was decided by the production departments of the Government represented in the War Labor Policies Board to insert in the contracts the most important provisions of these standards, especially those relating to daily and weekly hours of labor and the principle of equal pay for equal work. With the signing of the armistice and the consequent curtailment of contracts this plan was not carried out. After some revision to meet peace conditions, consisting chiefly of the elimination of certain clauses permitting a working day as long as 10 hours when the necessities of war might require it, the standards were finally issued on December 12, 1918, as the basis for a program of reconstruction.<sup>1</sup>

They were widely distributed through State departments of labor and through organizations working to improve conditions of employment for women. The Employment Service brought them forcibly to the attention of all the local offices through publication in the bulletin of the service. The interest which they aroused showed how widespread was the need for a statement of common purposes toward the attainment of which energies could be directed with assurance of support through united action.

#### HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS.

Shortage of labor was felt first in those occupations in which working conditions were hazardous or disagreeable and there was grave danger, therefore, that women would be introduced first into occupations involving hazards to their health. To meet this problem a series of inquiries was planned which were designed to determine the occupations in which women might be employed safely and the detailed and practical measures needed to remove all hazards not inherent in the essential nature of the process. To direct this work the Woman in Industry Service organized the Committee on Hazardous Occupations, composed of representatives of the Surgeon General's Office, the Ordnance Department, and the Chemical Warfare Service of the War Department, the Navy, the United States Public Health Service, the National Research Council, the Bureau of Standards of the Department of Commerce, the War Industries Board, the Working Conditions Service, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Woman in Industry Service of the Department of Labor.

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the standards will be found at the end of this report.

The first place selected for a survey was Niagara Falls, where the chemical industries were of great importance as basic in the war industries.

Two representatives of the Industrial Commission of New York State were added to the committee for this survey, to insure cooperation in putting into effect the detailed recommendations for dust removal, sanitation and safety, and other precautions against occupational hazards. These recommendations were worked out in practical detail by physicians, engineers, and women investigators acting for the committee.

Certain general principles emerged from this survey. The first was that in some communities war conditions were merely accentuating labor shortage, due not merely to the withdrawal of men for military service but to conditions of employment which were an obstacle in production before the war, less clearly recognized when labor was less free to choose.

The second fundamental principle was that unhealthful conditions were generally bad not only for women but for men also. This, however, could not be held as an excuse for failure to correct these conditions before women should be introduced. For the sake of the productive efficiency of the industry employers should be discouraged from employing women, as the easiest way out of their difficulties, until they are willing to apply the measures long known to be necessary as safeguards for health in the hazardous occupations.

Although many industrial poisons are equally dangerous for women and men, lead poisoning, which is the most prevalent of them all, has for women and the race more disastrous consequences than for men. This is because lead is a race poison. The woman who has suffered from it is likely to be sterile, or to have miscarriages, or to lose her babies in the first year of their life. These facts were emphasized by the investigation at Niagara Falls, which showed that a plant there manufacturing storage batteries had already employed women and might increase their numbers. In this occupation, and in this alone, did the Woman in Industry Service urge that no woman be employed anywhere or under any conditions in a process in which she would be exposed to lead poisoning. In all other forms of employment the Woman in Industry Service recommended not the exclusion of women but such changes in conditions as would make the occupation healthful for them. If practical difficulties stood in the way of these changes, it was held that the employment of women should be postponed as long as possible, under such conditions, for example, as exposure to dust or extremes of temperature, or the necessity for lifting or carrying heavy weights. In the industries of Niagara Falls so many changes would have been necessary that, in view of the signing of the armistice before the report was completed and the consequent removal of the immediate pressure for the introduction of women, it was urged that women should not be employed in the chemical industries there until they should be made safe.†

The general policy emerging from this local situation, however, was a recognition of the practicability of greatly decreasing the burdens of hand labor for men or women by using mechanical devices, and of affording safeguards against the risks of poisoning by removing fumes and dusts at their source and by strengthening the

individual's power of resistance through medical supervision and through hours of work short enough to protect health.

#### THE PROBLEM OF NIGHT WORK.

The immediate reason for the investigation of the chemical industries in Niagara Falls was the request of the employers' association there, addressed to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, asking that the Federal Government should make it possible for the employers in war industries in Niagara Falls to disregard the New York State law which prohibits the employment of women in factories at night. This was but one of many similar requests which came with increasing frequency during the summer and early autumn of 1918. Following the organization of the Woman in Industry Service, all such appeals which reached the office of the Secretary of War were referred to the service for review. The Woman in Industry Service in turn worked on these cases in cooperation with the various industrial service sections of the other Federal departments, especially the Women's Branch of the Ordnance Department, which made the initial investigation in the majority of plants making this request.

In the complicated problems which these instances illustrated there was presented the necessity for working out a program which should protect the health of the women at work and reenforce standards already set in the labor laws of the States, while at the same time speeding up production in the most critical period of the war. No problem which the Woman in Industry Service was called upon to solve was more difficult or more far-reaching in its significance than this. Before a wise program could be developed it was necessary to study in the concrete case the importance of women's work in the production of the plant, to know the needs of the Government for that particular product, and to consult those organizations, especially those of the workers themselves, which had been responsible for legislation to protect women against night work in some of the most important manufacturing States.

Twelve States—Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Utah, and Wisconsin—had laws which prohibited the employment of women or girls, or both, in factories during the night hours. In two of these—Massachusetts by legislation creating a special board for the period of the war and in Wisconsin through the regular powers of the industrial commission—it was possible to grant permits making possible night work for limited periods. These laws applied to the munitions plants. They had been enacted in time of peace, and they expressed the opinion of the public in those States that night work for women was harmful because of its effect upon the health of the women and their children and because of its influence on family life. Moreover, experience had shown that night work was uneconomical for production, with less individual efficiency and greater cost for wages and supervision than by day. These considerations had led the representatives of 13 European nations meeting in 1913 in Berne to agree to eliminate night work for women in their manufacturing industries. During the war, however, this standard had been generally abandoned abroad. In England, for example, where the employment of women

at night work had long since been done away with, the increasing reliance upon the work of women in the manufacture of munitions had led to the general breaking down of this measure of protection.

At the very beginning of our participation in the war the Federal Government, through the Council of National Defense, had declared its policy not to permit the war to be the occasion for lowering standards of employment, especially those which had been established to protect the health of women and children. As these protective measures were for the most part contained in State legislation and were not national in scope, this declaration of policy took the form of an appeal to the States not to abandon or weaken the laws enacted for the protection of the workers unless the Federal Government itself should find that the national need in the emergency of the war demanded their modification. This, however, would be a condition which only the Federal Government could determine with authority.

In applying this policy to the problem of night work for women it was necessary to recognize that the differences between different States gave rise to great inconsistencies. Thirty-six States had no legislation prohibiting night work for women, and these included such important manufacturing States as New Jersey, Illinois, and Ohio, in all of which large quantities of munitions were manufactured on contract for the Federal Government. If the Federal Government recognized its responsibility for the conditions affecting the health of the women in munitions plants, as it did by establishing such agencies as the Woman in Industry Service and by formulating the policy just outlined, it could not ignore the fact that the employment of women at night in a factory in Illinois, where no law prevented, was as injurious as it would have been in a plant in New York, where night work had been eliminated by act of the legislature.

During the summer of 1918 the extension of the employment of women was greatly accelerated, as the new draft resulted in the rapid withdrawal of men from the industries of the country. As a result of this increase in the proportions of women in the munitions industries their employment on night shifts appeared to be becoming more general in those States where no legislation prevented it, while in those States having laws prohibiting night work the appeals of manufacturers, often indorsed vigorously by officers of the Ordnance Department, for modification of the enforcement of the law became more and more insistent. For the most part these were not requests from employers who were making the war an excuse to evade legislation enacted in the interest of the workers. Close study of them showed that they were evidence of the staggering load carried by the Ordnance Department in the necessity for greatly speeding up an already astounding program of production. The anxiety of Ordnance officers to eliminate every condition which seemed to them to hamper production in the slightest degree grew more and more tense. It looked very much as though the situation was developing to the point where the immediate need for increased production in the most critical period of the war would undermine the standards established in time of peace to protect the health of working women.

To aid in developing a plan which would give due weight to all the apparently conflicting interests, the Woman in Industry Service called into conference representatives of those groups and organiza-

tions most vitally interested in standards of working conditions established for the protection of working women, including the Woman's Committee, the Committee on Women in Industry, the National Consumers' League, the National Women's Trade-Union League, the American Association for Labor Legislation, the trade-unions through their international organizations and through committees of the American Federation of Labor, and State industrial commissions and departments of labor. The whole plan, finally worked out after these conferences, was also thoroughly discussed and voted upon at the meeting of representatives of State labor departments called in Washington by the War Labor Policies Board in October, and soon afterwards the conference of trade-union women called by the Woman in Industry Service also took action regarding the program proposed. Advice was also sought from the Labor Division and the Priorities Division of the War Industries Board. Representatives of employers were consulted in connection with the review of requests on this subject made to the office of the Secretary of War.

At these conferences typical requests for permission to employ women at night were described. In one plant, for instance, which was probably more vital to the success of the ordnance program than any other single establishment, the chief reason for wishing to employ women on the night shift was a shortage of houses which would not be remedied in less than three months, so that no large numbers of men could be added to the population of the town, but in the families of the men already living in the community were daughters, sisters, and wives who would be available to increase the working force. These could not all be used on the day shift because many of the processes involved too heavy work for women, and it was necessary, therefore, to employ men and women together with a division of tasks between them. In some plants the problem was further complicated by the practice of rotating shifts, whereby every man in the force took his turn at night. To change this practice when women were introduced would cause discontent among the men who would then be obliged to work steadily, or at least more frequently, at night if the women in the force worked only by day.

No two instances were exactly alike. The one fact common to them all was that the proposal to employ women at night could not be disconnected from the whole production and employment policy of the plant. In some cases the shortage of men for night work was due not to an actual shortage of labor in the community but to low rates of pay, or too long hours on the night shift, or the absence of an efficient organization for employment management in the plant. Under such conditions it was not merely for the sake of the women workers that the employment of women at night was to be discouraged by the Woman in Industry Service, but it was quite as necessary to discourage it for the sake of production, since in such a situation production could not be made satisfactory merely by a night shift of women. Satisfactory production required a thorough overhauling of the employment policy of the company which would result in a more effective use of the working force already available. An investigation of a proposal to employ women at night led invariably to a consideration of many other conditions having a direct influence upon the productive capacity of a plant, and it became clear, therefore, that any pro-

gram adopted must, in the interest of production, provide for this kind of careful inquiry in each instance rather than giving any general permission to the munitions industries to employ women on night shifts.

The conferences held to consider this subject revealed a very strong opinion that standards, in general, should not be lowered, and that, in particular, the practice of employing women at night should be vigorously discouraged. It was not only in the Federal departments, however, that the necessity for action had become clear. Overwhelming evidence from State departments of labor showed that the pressure from certain interests against legislation prohibiting night work was becoming great, and that laws on this subject would be attacked at the coming sessions of State legislatures. It was feared that the attacks would be difficult to withstand because they would be made on the ground of national necessity. Although there was diversity of opinion as to what should be done it was generally agreed that it was only the National Government which could declare with authority whether or not the emergency was serious enough to require modification of standards which had commended themselves to the people of several States as necessary to protect the health of women at work.

The problem, in brief, then, was to meet the immediate necessity for increased production through the more extensive employment of women and through continuous and complete use of available machinery and equipment, while preventing the permanent repeal of laws prohibiting night work and at the same time protecting women workers against the dangers of night work in plants working on war materials for the Federal Government in those States having no laws against night work.

The plan finally proposed was that the Federal Government should regulate and control night work for women in all plants working on war contracts for the Federal Government, through a provision in the contracts which would prohibit night work unless a special war emergency permit were granted. This plan provided that if it were demonstrated by the War Department or the Navy that it was necessary in a specified instance, in order to maintain adequate production, to employ women between the hours of 10 p. m. and 6 a. m., the Secretary of War or the Secretary of the Navy, under conditions of employment approved by the Secretary of Labor acting through the Woman in Industry Service, would send to the State agency charged with enforcement of labor laws a declaration that a national emergency existed in this particular instance and would call upon it to grant to a particular, specified plant for a specified, limited period a temporary war certificate allowing the employment of women at night. It was the opinion of legal advisers in the War Department and the Navy that in those States in which night work was prohibited by law these certificates would be valid under the war powers of the Federal Government. In those States having no laws against night work the power of the Federal Government through its contracts was clear.

In connection with the administration of the proposed plan it was provided that thorough investigation should be made in each instance to determine the necessity for night work, and that each establishment to which a certificate might be granted should be under the

continued supervision of a designated Federal department, under conditions satisfactory to the Department of Labor. Certificates were to be issued only for night shifts of eight hours or less, and full compliance would be required with the standards set by agencies of the Federal Government and in State labor laws. As showing the necessity for thorough investigation in advance it was pointed out that night work of women could often be avoided by the employment of men over the draft age and those not qualified for military service, by the transfer of men from nonessential industries, by the extension of plants, by the introduction of an industry into new areas, by a careful distribution of contracts with due regard to the local labor supply, or by the more effective use of the labor force of the plant through improved employment management. Certificates would not be granted unless it was clear that these methods had not sufficed to increase production to the point demanded for the prosecution of the war.

The plan in general was indorsed by the War Labor Policies Board and referred to the Secretary of Labor for action by the Council of National Defense. While this action was pending a conference of representatives of State departments of labor called by the War Labor Policies Board was held in Washington. Following a thorough discussion of the subject of night work, a resolution was adopted substantially as follows:

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this meeting that we are opposed to the weakening of labor laws or labor standards, and if any temporary modification or suspension of such laws is necessary it should be made only on declaration of the Federal authority of competent jurisdiction.

The discussion showed that it was the intent of this resolution to approve the plan for the control of night work on the ground that it recognized authority in the Federal Government alone, thus tending to discourage State or local action to weaken State laws.

A few days later a conference of women representing national and international trade-unions, called together by the Woman in Industry Service to give expression to the views of working women regarding labor problems of the war, adopted the following resolutions:

Whereas the abnormal condition arising as a result of the war may necessitate the temporary suspension of standards and conditions governing the employment of women: Therefore be it

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of this conference of representative trade-union women that the standards and conditions regulating the employment of women at night shall not be lowered, this in keeping with the proclamation of the Council of National Defense in April, 1917, unless as an urgent war measure and then only after a careful investigation has been made of the industry or plant requesting such privilege: And be it further

*Resolved*, That this investigation be of the most rigid character and be made by the representatives designated by the Council of National Defense, the Secretary of Labor, and the Woman in Industry Service in cooperation with the American Federation of Labor, upon whose report and findings shall be determined whether permission shall be granted for the temporary suspension of standards and conditions.

This resolution fairly represents the attitude of all the groups most actively interested in the maintenance of standards—willingness to meet a genuine emergency, but grave concern that the emergency should be real and not an excuse for relaxing labor laws.

A little more than a month later the signing of the armistice made final action by the Council of National Defense unnecessary, and,

therefore, the plan was never put into effect. The whole problem and the consideration given to it are recounted here because during the war period the Woman in Industry Service devoted a great deal of attention to it, and because, too, it had significance in revealing how complex is the relation between production and any phase of the conditions of employment and how necessary it is to insist that conditions affecting the health of the workers shall not be rendered adverse in the supposed interest of production, when in the long run efficiency of management can make industry both productive and healthful for the workers. Experience all points to the fact that production is made satisfactory through the delicate adjustment of many factors, in which high standards in conditions of labor are fundamental. The whole experience in dealing with the problem of night work revealed also the strength of public opinion against the employment of women at night. No State repealed a law against night work during the war. Two States, Kansas and Wisconsin, prohibited it in special occupations by rulings of the State industrial commissions, and one State, New York, enlarged the scope of its previous law after the entry of the United States into the war.

#### STATE LABOR LAWS DURING THE WAR.

While the subject of night work for women absorbed so much attention, especially in the last few months of the war, this was but one phase of the whole question of the enforcement of State labor laws in plants working on war contracts for the Federal Government and the necessity for cooperation between Federal and State agencies concerned in conditions of labor.

In several instances the jurisdiction of State officials was challenged in munitions plants on the ground that the State did not have authority over Federal property. A decision of the Judge Advocate General of the Army on this subject caused some confusion in seeming to uphold this view, at least for certain types of contracts. To clear up the confusion the War Labor Policies Board arranged to have inserted in all contracts a clause requiring full compliance with the labor laws of the State in which the goods were manufactured. Thus the observance of State labor legislation became a contract obligation of the manufacturer to the Federal Government, regardless of the jurisdiction of the State authorities in his plant.

Because of the great importance of State labor laws as measures of protection for women, the Woman in Industry Service gave a great deal of attention to this subject. Its director, acting as chairman of a special committee of the War Labor Policies Board, assisted in formulating a plan of administration which should render this clause of the contracts enforceable. Federal machinery for this purpose did not exist, and, moreover, even if it had been available the advantages of inspection and enforcement by State agencies seemed clear. It was more economical to use an administrative agency already equipped through past experience. It avoided the duplication which would have been probable if both State and Federal agencies had undertaken the task separately, and from the point of view of the long future it left unimpaired the authority of the State officials for the work of enforcement which would become

their sole responsibility when the war should end and when the field of jurisdiction of the Federal Government through its contracts should become relatively insignificant.

The clause in the contracts requiring full compliance with State labor laws might have been interpreted as carrying with it authority for the enforcing officials, but to make assurance doubly sure the War Labor Policies Board recommended that the head of each Federal department responsible for war production, namely, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, the Director of the United States Housing Corporation, and the Director of the Shipping Board, should designate a State official, preferably the commissioner of labor or the chairman of the industrial commission, as his deputy in enforcing this provision of the contract.

To work out the details of administration and in other ways to insure effective cooperation between State and Federal agencies the War Labor Policies Board called a conference of representatives of State departments of labor, and a whole session was devoted to the problems of women in industry, with the Director of the Woman in Industry Service presiding.

The result of the conference was to make much more feasible the kind of teamwork which was necessary. Holding that the cooperation of a Federal agency like the Woman in Industry Service with State departments of labor should be continuous, the service assigned a member of its staff, with experience in a State department, to give special attention to the methods of making this cooperation real.

When such special investigations as that of the chemical industries of Niagara Falls were undertaken the State industrial commission was represented in the directing committee. Every request for permission to employ women at night coming to the service for review was reported to the commissioner of labor in the State in which the plant was located, and in several instances a State inspector joined the Federal investigator in the necessary inspection. The Pennsylvania Industrial Board invited the director of the service to participate in several conferences for the discussion of standards for women's employment to be adopted as rulings of the board. When the Woman in Industry Service undertook the formulation of standards for the employment of women in industry, a tentative draft was submitted in advance to all State labor departments, and from many of them came valuable suggestions which were embodied in the final statement. Especially helpful to the service were the directors of the women's bureaus which had been developed recently in several important State labor departments.

#### WAGES AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS.

The introduction of women into new occupations gave the question of their wages a new significance. If their employment in work hitherto done by men were made the occasion for reducing the rates previously paid for the same work, the men employed would naturally oppose the extension of women's employment as a menace to the wage standards attained by the men, and the morale of industry would be affected by the resulting discontent. It was a realization of this danger which led to the first official indorsement by the Federal Government of the principle of "equal pay for equal work."

In General Orders, No. 13, the Chief of Ordnance included it in his recommendations to arsenal commanders and manufacturers, and the Quartermaster General concurred when he issued the same recommendations simultaneously. Later the principle was made more imperative through its inclusion in the statement of principles to govern industrial relations which was formulated by the National War Labor Conference Board, representing officially the organized workers and employers.

It soon became evident, however, that the idea expressed in the usual phrase, "equal pay for equal work," was not comprehensive or fundamental enough to secure substantial justice for working women or to prevent the lowering of standards through the extension of their employment.

The principle was inadequate, first, because it was not held to apply to those occupations in which the introduction of women required some change in process so that the work was considered unequal in the sense that it was not identical, and, second, the principle was insufficient because it failed to remedy fundamental defects in the usual basis for determining women's wages.

For example, the men in certain occupations had set up their own machines in addition to operating them. When women took their places the necessity for maintaining production prevented giving time to training them in a thorough knowledge of the machinery which they handled, and hence, in some instances, a man was employed to set up the machines for a group of women. The work of the women was regarded, therefore, as not equal to that of the men. The rates would then be set according to the prevailing standards of women's wages. A thorough application of the principle of equal pay for equal work would seem to have required that wages should have been based on output and that they should have been set only after careful study of the actual effect of the new arrangement of work on the output of the group as a whole, rather than an arbitrary reduction to levels customarily regarded as the standard for women. It was by no means impossible to find instances where these new methods of doing the job had resulted in an increase in output when women did the work, and in these instances the injustice of a reduction in earnings was more clearly emphasized.

In formulating standards for the employment of women the Woman in Industry Service, therefore, made the following recommendation:

Women doing the same work as men shall receive the same wages, with such proportionate increases as the men are receiving in the same industry. Slight changes made in the process or in the arrangement of work should not be regarded as justifying a lower wage for a woman than for a man unless statistics of production show that the output for the job in question is less when women are employed than when men are employed. If a difference in output is demonstrated, the difference in the wage rate should be based upon the difference in production for the job as a whole, and not determined arbitrarily.

But this statement, also, was not fundamental. The tendency to set women's rates on jobs in which women took men's places clearly raised the question of why there should be a wage level designated as women's rates. In one plant, for example, the women who took men's places, doing the work exactly as the men had done it, actually

produced more, but the employer objected to paying them the rates which the men had received because, he said, women in the adjoining department doing work customarily considered a woman's occupation were receiving "women's wages" for work no less difficult than this new occupation into which women had so recently been introduced. Justice compelled him, he believed, to establish women's wages for all work done by women in his shop. He was being guided, of course, by the practice and opinion concerning women workers which have prevailed in industry for many years.

The war proved the capacity of women for many more tasks than those previously open to them.

This extension of opportunity illuminated the whole problem of wages. The previous practice was possible without confusion only in a state of industry in which the work of women was sharply differentiated from that of men. It assumed, also, that the cost of living and the home responsibilities of women were less than those of men.

The Woman in Industry Service held that the experience of the war was forcing a fresh examination of the basis for determining women's wages. If the principle of equal pay for equal work be accepted, as it has been officially, with the sanction of public opinion, it is impossible in logic or in justice not to push its application further and to accept the more fundamental conclusion that the wage value of a job is as great when a woman does it as when a man does it, and that the wage should be determined for the occupation and not for the sex of the worker. The Woman in Industry Service, therefore, formulated the following statement of the basis for determining wages:

Wages should be established on the basis of occupation and not on the basis of sex. The minimum wage rate should cover the cost of living for dependents, and not merely for the individual.

That the experience of the war in England was forcing thoughtful observers to a similar searching for a fairer relation between men's and women's wages is shown in the Report of the War Cabinet on Women in Industry, published in the spring of 1919. The main report follows traditional lines, but the minority report, submitted by Mrs. Sidney Webb, declares "that the essential principle which should govern all systems of remuneration \* \* \* is that of the clearly defined occupational or standard rates \* \* \*. There is no more reason for such occupational or standard rates being made to differ according to the workers' sex than according to their race, creed, height, or weight."<sup>1</sup>

In the United States the formulation of these principles with reference to women's wages and the official indorsement of the policy of equal pay for equal work, limited and vague as it is, undoubtedly had a wholesome influence on public opinion, but unfortunately the authority and the machinery to enforce these principles were lacking. Moreover, scant attention was given to the representation of women in the administrative machinery which was established by the Federal Government to deal with wage problems during the war. Neither the War Labor Board nor any of the special wage adjustment boards had any women members. Although the Woman in Industry Service had no power to do more than formulate policies

<sup>1</sup> Report of the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry, p. 254. London, 1919.

its staff gave constant attention to the whole subject and especially urged on every appropriate occasion that women be represented on boards whose jurisdiction extended over the wages of women. As the results of a conference between representatives of the service and one of the chairmen of the War Labor Board, the board did appoint a woman to give special attention to the enforcement of the board's awards on the wages of women, and to assist in assuring representation of women in the shop committees, whose organization was encouraged by the board.

From time to time the War Department and the Navy called on the Woman in Industry Service for advice on wage problems for women employed in Government plants or in private establishments producing war materials. State minimum wage commissions also sought advice from the service and wage disputes affecting women were from time to time brought to its attention. The assistant director of the service was assigned to give special attention to the subject of wages and industrial relations. It proved to be a field fruitful in thought but exceedingly limited in the possibility of effective action, especially as the majority of the women in the war industries were unorganized and hence without means of making their needs articulate. Undoubtedly in the future, as the whole question of the wage basis in industry will demand searching inquiry, the relation between women's wages and men's wages must be thoroughly analyzed.

#### TRAINING.

Closely related to wages is the necessity for giving women the same opportunity for technical and vocational training that men receive. The Woman in Industry Service was not charged with any special responsibility for a program of training for women workers. This subject is the permanent responsibility of the Federal Board for Vocational Education. Moreover, for the temporary war needs of both men and women, the Training and Dilution Service was organized in the Department of Labor. From time to time, however, the advice of the Woman in Industry Service was sought by employers, and conferences on this subject were held by representatives of the service with officers of the International Association of Machinists. The director of the service served as a member of the committee on the relation of military and industrial man power appointed by the War Labor Policies Board during the period when the committee was giving special attention to coordinating in a single program the efforts of the various Federal agencies directly interested in training workers.

#### RELATIONS WITH EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS.

To assist in furthering the development of wiser policies in industry itself in dealing with women workers by furnishing training for employment managers, the director of the service served as a member of the employment management committee of the War Industries Board. The service has also responded to requests from employers for advice by sending information or by making plant inspections. The tentative draft of the standards to be recommended by the service was submitted for comment to the executive officer of the

National Industrial Conference Board and to an informal conference of representatives of employers and workers in the metal trades.

Reference has already been made to the conference of women representing national trade-unions which was called in Washington by the Woman in Industry Service to formulate a platform in the interest of women workers. This conference voted to become a permanent advisory council of working women. Through this council the service has been able to keep continuously in touch with the needs of the women employed in the largest industries, and to have their advices in its plans and policies.

#### **PUBLIC INTEREST IN WOMEN'S WORK.**

Before the armistice was signed the service planned an educational campaign, chiefly through a traveling exhibit and lantern slides, which had the twofold purpose of recruiting the women needed to release men for military service and at the same time showing the standards of employment necessary to make their work effective. It was hoped in this way to draw together various agencies, including women's clubs and other organizations which had planned recruiting campaigns. The director was in frequent consultation on this subject with the department of women in industry of the Woman's Committee, which was actively in touch with all the important organizations of women in the country. The signing of the armistice changed the immediate purpose of the exhibit, and it was finally developed with a change in emphasis to meet the changed conditions of the postwar period.

#### **LACK OF STATISTICS CONCERNING WOMEN IN THE WAR INDUSTRIES.**

So many questions have been addressed to the Woman in Industry Service regarding the numbers of women in the war industries and the detailed statistics concerning them that it becomes necessary to point out that the appropriation of \$40,000 granted to the service would not have sufficed for so large a statistical inquiry even if it had been the intention to spend it all for that purpose. The service was not intended to be a statistical agency, however, and its activities in this matter were necessarily limited to making recommendations to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the War Labor Policies Board as to the type of information which seemed important to be collected at regular intervals. Through the War Labor Policies Board, with the cooperation of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the War Industries Board, a schedule of facts about labor conditions, including the employment of women, was prepared for use by the community labor boards organized by the United States Employment Service. Like so many other plans, the signing of the armistice found it uncompleted, and as a result we are without any comprehensive statistics of the part taken by women in industry during the war.

## II. ACTIVITIES AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE ARMISTICE.

On November 11 the Woman in Industry Service submitted to the chairman of the War Labor Policies Board a memorandum dealing with problems likely to arise for women in industry during the period of readjustment. Obviously the immediate task was the same on behalf of either men or women workers—to accomplish the change from a war to a peace basis with the least possible unemployment and with the reinstatement of the largest possible number in normal occupations for which they were best adapted. The memorandum assumed that the fundamental aspects of the program as affecting both men and women were being worked out by the War Labor Policies Board, especially, a policy with reference to cancellation of contracts and demobilization of the Army which would take into consideration the effect on labor conditions. For women, however, this was not the whole problem, for the armistice marked a decided change in public opinion. The withdrawal of women from their work was advocated as a means of providing employment for returning soldiers, and it was necessary for the Woman in Industry Service to point out that women, like men, were working to earn a living and that their continued employment was vital for them and for those dependent upon them.

The Woman in Industry Service urged that the permanent status of working women be recognized; that the Federal Government recommended definite standards for their employment in private industry, and that these standards be adopted in Government-owned plants; that a program of public education be pushed forward to secure the adoption of these standards as designed to promote the welfare of wage-earning women; and that as the power of the Federal Government to control working conditions through provisions in contracts would now be lessened with the curtailment of contracts, the Federal agencies should endeavor to stimulate those instrumentalities through which conditions would be determined, namely, State labor legislation, voluntary action of employers, action by working women themselves, and the continuing influence of public opinion. It was along these lines that the program for work in the period following the signing of the armistice was planned by the Woman in Industry Service.

### LABOR LEGISLATION.

For active cooperation between State and Federal departments of labor the experience during the war afforded a precedent, and the Woman in Industry Service welcomed every opportunity to work

with State departments or to assist local groups in their efforts to strengthen the labor laws in their State. In Indiana a survey was made at the request of the governor and the industrial board, the results of which were published in January. This was followed by a State-wide campaign organized by local committees, in which members of the staff of the service assisted. In connection with this campaign a conference of neighboring States was held which brought together in Indianapolis representatives of interested groups from Ohio, Kentucky, and Illinois.

Assistance was also given by the service in efforts to strengthen labor laws in Minnesota, Connecticut, Iowa, New York, Rhode Island, and Kansas, and the service was represented at the convention of the Association of Governmental Labor Officials in Madison, Wis., where the representative of the service presided at the session on women in industry.

#### WAGES AFTER THE WAR.

It was the prevailing opinion that wages during the war had been so high that all workers were receiving enough to support themselves. This impression was based on statements of high wages paid in the munitions plants. It seemed important to verify this impression, and for this reason the Woman in Industry Service responded to the request of private organizations in Philadelphia to investigate the wages paid to women in the candy trade there. Investigations before the war had indicated that a large number of the workers in the candy trade were receiving less than a living wage. It seemed more important to make a first-hand study of a trade which had been considered low paid than to investigate wages in the higher-paid occupations, since it is among the low-paid workers that the problem of maintaining a healthful standard of living is most serious. The inquiry was made in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, so that the data might form part of the bureau's nation-wide survey of wages and hours.

The investigation covered factories employing two-thirds of the workers in the candy industry in Philadelphia. It was found that wage rates had increased considerably since before the war, but the rapid increase in cost of living had resulted in largely nullifying the effect of these increased rates, so that a considerable proportion of the workers were receiving less than the amount considered necessary for the cost of living. A significant fact brought out in the investigation was that continuity of employment is as important as a fair rate of wages. Frequent loss of time, whether due to lack of work or to personal causes which make the attendance of employees irregular, necessarily decreases production for the industry and curtails the earning power of employees.

The service has cooperated with the Minimum Wage Commission of the District of Columbia, especially in its work of determining minimum rates for employees in mercantile establishments in the District, and in connection with Government-owned plants considerable attention was given to the subject of wages. The staff of the service was not sufficient to permit more extensive statistical studies along this line.

## THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS AN EMPLOYER OF WOMEN.

Although, as has been pointed out, the power of the Federal Government to control conditions through its contracts decreased rapidly when war production no longer was necessary, it remained true that in its own plants and through its departments employing women the Government could set standards which would have an important influence on private industry.

At the request of the Secretary of the Navy the Woman in Industry Service undertook to serve as an adviser to the Navy Department in matters affecting women employed in navy yards. Inspections were made and reports and recommendations submitted to the Secretary of the Navy in the following yards: The Brooklyn Navy Yard, the Brooklyn Clothing and Provisions Department, the Philadelphia Navy Yard, the Navy Aircraft Factory, the Charleston (S. C.) Navy Yard, the Mare Island Navy Yard, and the Bremerton Navy Yard. Recommendations covered such subjects as readjustment of wage rates, better working conditions, organization of lunch rooms, and improved methods of employment management. Because the curtailment of work in the navy yards necessitated laying off numbers of workers special attention was given to recommendations designed to prevent hardship by giving due notice before dismissal.

The service was also asked to cooperate with the Ordnance Department in matters relating to the employment of women in Government arsenals, and inspections similar to those made in the navy yards were in progress at the close of the period covered by this report.

The service also gave attention to questions affecting Government employees in Washington, especially in cooperation asked for by the Commission on Reclassification.

## NEGRO WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

By November the service found it opportune to consider the economic problems of Negro women. Accordingly an industrial agent was appointed and was sent out to survey several centers where typical conditions were known to prevail. Within seven months the agent has investigated conditions among more than 16,000 Negro women employed in 156 plants located in the Middle West and in border-line States of the South, in a line of highly diversified industries. These industries may be grouped under five broad headings, viz, factory, hotel, department store, stockyard, and Government work. General standards for this class of workers were found to be somewhat lower than the average, and their industrial opportunities were found to be decidedly more restricted than those of other women workers. Remedial suggestions have been formulated and submitted to several agencies interested in the improvement of existing conditions—progressive employers, cooperating welfare organizations, and Government investigators.

Largely because of the abnormal situation obtaining under the war emergency, both conclusions and recommendations are necessarily tentative; but a survey involving reconstruction conditions is in progress.

**DISPLACEMENT OF WOMEN WORKERS.**

A change in public opinion following the signing of the armistice has been indicated. A most significant illustration of difficulties faced by women workers was the situation in connection with the employment of women as conductors on the Cleveland street cars. The men objected to the employment of women and after the signing of the armistice asked for their dismissal. It is unnecessary to review the details of the involved case, which came before the War Labor Board. Although the board finally recommended that the women be retained, they were not reemployed.

The Woman in Industry Service never had any official relation to this case, but because of its significance the director and assistant director, as individuals, filed a statement with the War Labor Board pointing out the desirability of freedom of choice of occupation for women in industry. In a somewhat similar case on the street railways of Detroit, facts showing the home responsibilities of women workers were compiled by the service and filed by the attorney for the women at the hearing before the War Labor Board.

The dismissal of women from the street railways in Brooklyn was assumed to be due to the enactment of a law by the New York State Legislature prohibiting night work. The Woman in Industry Service offered its assistance to the Industrial Commission of New York State, and while the commission through its bureau of women in industry was making an investigation of the facts in Brooklyn, the Woman in Industry Service sent representatives to Chicago, Kansas City, Detroit, Boston, and Baltimore to get the facts about hours and working conditions for women employed on the street railways in those cities. This investigation is in progress, and the report has not yet been prepared.

Allied to the whole subject of curtailment of opportunities for women workers was a brief survey of the status of women in the metal trades in Michigan. This inquiry showed that considerable numbers of women had been laid off from Michigan plants, and that in some instances opportunities gained during the war were not likely to be permanent. The report of this initial survey is now in preparation.

**HOME WORK IN BRIDGEPORT.**

At the request of local groups an investigation of home work in the corset trade in Bridgeport was undertaken. It was found that a considerable amount of work was given out in the manufacture of garters, which is an industry allied to that of corset making, and that the work was carried on often in crowded, insanitary surroundings, and sometimes during the illness of members of the family suffering from infectious or contagious diseases; that a lower wage rate apparently was given than would be paid for similar work in a factory; that because of the absence of supervision production was likely to be unsatisfactory and earnings very low; and that child labor was utilized to the detriment of the welfare of children. Recommendations were made to the employers that the practice of giving out home work should be discontinued as soon as possible, and that in order to make this change with the least possible hardship for the

workers, detailed plans be worked out at a conference representing employers, workers, and social organizations in the community.

#### **STATISTICS OF THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN.**

As was the case during the war, the small appropriation of the Woman in Industry Service made it impossible to carry on any extensive statistical inquiry, although the data would have been vital in appraising the status of women workers during this period. Because of the importance of such an inquiry the service welcomed the decision of the war work council of the Young Women's Christian Association to undertake a statistical inquiry into the present status of women employed in the war industries and the probability of continued opportunities for them in a wider range of occupations following the war. The director of the service was asked to assume an advisory relationship to this inquiry.

#### **THE RELATION OF WOMEN TO THE PEACE CONFERENCE.**

The Assistant Director of the Woman in Industry Service was granted leave of absence to go to France as a representative of the National Women's Trade-Union League to urge consideration of the interests of women workers in connection with the labor platform of the Peace Conference. This trip resulted in the calling of the First International Congress of Working Women, to be held in Washington in October.

#### **PUBLIC INTEREST.**

Early in November the Woman in Industry Service invited employers to submit photographs illustrating working conditions for women, and as a result of their generous response a collection of several hundred photographs are on file in the offices of the Woman in Industry Service. These photographs and other material have been made the basis of a series of panels illustrating the standards recommended for the employment of women. Stereopticon slides have also been prepared with notes for a lecture. The material has been widely circulated among State departments, schools, colleges, labor organizations, and other groups interested in improving conditions.

The results of investigations made by the service have been printed in pamphlet form, and, in addition, representatives of the service have taken part in conferences and assisted local groups in arousing public interest in the conditions of women's employment.

#### **PERMANENT STATUS URGED FOR WOMEN'S BUREAU.**

Women in industry in 1910 constituted more than 21 per cent of the total number of persons gainfully employed in the United States. It is not only their importance in numbers, but the special problems of their employment affecting industry on the one hand and family life and child welfare on the other which necessitates special provision by the Federal Government for a clearing house of policies

and facts relating to their position in industry. The wisdom of Congress in designating such an agency as primarily policy making rather than itself executive seems to have been demonstrated in the actual experience of the Woman in Industry Service in securing cooperation and stimulating the activities of other agencies.

The problems of women following the war are likely to be more crucial than at any time during the past. The Woman in Industry Service has been continued by Congress through an appropriation enabling the Secretary of Labor to carry forward the investigations of women in industry during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1920. Because of the fundamental importance of the position of women in industry it is hoped that the Women's Bureau will be permanently established by legislation as a part of the Department of Labor, and that its resources will be enlarged in order to make possible more comprehensive work.

Respectfully submitted.

MARY VAN KLEECK,  
*Director, Woman in Industry Service.*

Hon. W. B. WILSON,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

## APPENDIX.

### STANDARDS GOVERNING EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

In peace or in war women's work is essential to the Nation. During the war the experience of all countries has shown that women were ready and able to take the places of men withdrawn for military service. So important did their work become that in Great Britain it was actually the war department which declared that "untiring efforts must be devoted to amplify and extend the scope of women's usefulness, by which alone our country can hope to emerge victorious from a struggle without parallel in her long and glorious history."

The experience to which the war has drawn public attention was true before the war and will be equally true when peace is restored. Before the war the number of women gainfully employed increased in the decade before 1910 from 5,000,000 to 8,000,000, of whom 2,500,000 were in manufacturing, trade, transportation, and public service. Since then the indications are that in numbers and proportions women have become increasingly important in industry.

The greater necessity for control of the standards of women's employment is due to the fact that women have been in a weaker position economically than men. Reconstruction will give an opportunity for a new upbuilding of safeguards to conserve alike the industrial efficiency and the health of women, and to make it impossible for selfish interests to exploit them as unwilling competitors in lowering standards of wages, hours, working conditions, and industrial relations, which are for the best interests of the workers, the industries, and the citizenship of the country.

During the war, by vote of the War Labor Policies Board, all contracts of the Federal departments have contained a clause requiring full compliance with State labor laws, and in each State an official of the State labor department has been deputized by the heads of the contracting departments of the Federal Government to cooperate with Federal agencies in enforcing these provisions of the contracts. This affords a basis and a precedent for continued relations between State and Federal agencies in the upbuilding of standards for women's labor. As the number of contracts grows fewer with the coming of peace, the responsibility of the States increases. But the recognition of the national and international importance of standards of labor conditions will still be paramount, since in peace no less than in war the Nation will depend for its prosperity upon the productive efficiency of its workers. No other foundation for commercial success will be so sure as the conservation of those practices in industry which make for the free and effective cooperation of the workers. Protection of the health of women workers is vital as an economic as well as a social measure of reconstruction.

Therefore at this time, in recognition of the national importance of women's work and its conditions, the Federal Government calls upon the industries of the country to cooperate with State and Federal agencies in maintaining the standards herein set forth as a vital part of the reconstruction program of the Nation. These standards have been indorsed by the War Labor Policies Board.

#### STANDARDS RECOMMENDED.

[In the following outline the italic type in the text indicates those provisions which are held to be of the most vital importance.]

##### I. HOURS OF LABOR.

1. *Daily hours.*—*No woman shall be employed or permitted to work more than eight hours in any one day or forty-eight hours in any one week. The time when the work of women employees shall begin and end and the time*

*allowed for meals shall be posted in a conspicuous place in each workroom, and a record shall be kept of the overtime of each woman worker.*

2. **Half holiday on Saturday.**—Observance of the half holiday should be the custom.

3. **One day of rest in seven.**—*Every woman worker shall have one day of rest in every seven days.*

4. **Time for meals.**—*At least three-quarters of an hour shall be allowed for a meal.*

5. **Rest period.**—A rest period of 10 minutes should be allowed in the middle of each working period without thereby increasing the length of the working day.

6. **Night work.**—*No woman shall be employed between the hours of 10 p. m. and 6 a. m.*

## II. WAGES.

1. **Equality with men's wages.**—*Women doing the same work as men shall receive the same wages, with such proportionate increases as the men are receiving in the same industry.* Slight changes made in the process or in the arrangement of work should not be regarded as justifying a lower wage for a woman than for a man unless statistics of production show that the output for the job in question is less when women are employed than when men are employed. If a difference in output is demonstrated the difference in the wage rate should be based upon the difference in production for the job as a whole and not determined arbitrarily.

2. **The basis of determination of wages.**—*Wages should be established on the basis of occupation and not on the basis of sex. The minimum wage rate should cover the cost of living for dependents and not merely for the individual.*

## III. WORKING CONDITIONS.

1. **Comfort and sanitation.**—State labor laws and industrial codes should be consulted with reference to provisions for comfort and sanitation. Washing facilities, with hot and cold water, soap, and individual towels, should be provided in sufficient number and in accessible locations to make washing before meals and at the close of the work day convenient.

Toilets should be separate for men and women, clean and accessible. Their numbers should have a standard ratio to the number of workers employed. Workroom floors should be kept clean. Dressing rooms should be provided adjacent to washing facilities, making possible change of clothing outside the workrooms. Rest rooms should be provided. Lighting should be so arranged that direct rays do not shine into the worker's eyes. Ventilation should be adequate and heat sufficient. Drinking water should be cool and accessible, with individual drinking cups or bubble fountain provided. Provision should be made for the workers to secure a hot and nourishing meal, eaten outside the workroom, and if no lunch rooms are accessible near the plant a lunch room should be maintained in the establishment.

2. **Posture at work.**—Continuous standing and continuous sitting are both injurious. A seat should be provided for every woman employed and its use encouraged. It is possible and desirable to adjust the height of the chairs in relation to the height of machines or work tables, so that the worker may with equal convenience and efficiency stand or sit at her work. The seats should have backs. If the chair is high, a foot rest should be provided.

3. **Safety.**—Risks from machinery, danger from fire, and exposure to dust, fumes, or other occupational hazards should be scrupulously guarded against by observance of standards in State and Federal codes. First-aid equipment should be provided. Fire drills and other forms of education of the workers in the observance of safety regulations should be instituted.

4. **Conditions needing correction.**—Work is more efficiently performed by either men or women if healthful conditions are established. It is usually possible to make changes which will remove such hazards to health as the following:

- (a) Constant standing or other posture causing physical strain.
- (b) Repeated lifting of heavy weights, or other abnormally fatiguing motions.
- (c) Operation of mechanical devices requiring undue strength.
- (d) Exposure to excessive heat or excessive cold.
- (e) Exposure to dust, fumes, or other occupational poisons, without adequate safeguards against disease.

5. **Prohibited occupations.**—*Women must not be employed in occupations involving the use of poisons which are proved to be more injurious to women than to men, such as certain processes in the lead industries.* (Subsequent rulings on the dangerous trades will be issued.

6. **Uniforms.**—Uniforms with caps and comfortable shoes are desirable for health and safety in occupations for which machines are used or in which the processes are dusty.

#### IV. HOME WORK.

*No work shall be given out to be done in rooms used for living or sleeping purposes or in rooms directly connected with living or sleeping rooms in any dwelling or tenement.*

#### V. EMPLOYMENT MANAGEMENT.

1. **Hiring, separations, and determination of conditions.**—In establishing satisfactory relations between a company and its employees a personnel department is important, charged with responsibility for selection, assignment, transfer, or withdrawal of workers, and the establishment of proper working conditions.

2. **Women in supervisory positions.**—Where women are employed, a competent woman should be appointed as employment executive with responsibility for conditions affecting women. Women should also be appointed in supervisory positions in the departments employing women.

3. **Choice of occupation.**—The opportunity for a worker to choose an occupation for which she is best adapted is important in insuring success in the work to be done.

#### VI. COOPERATION OF WORKERS IN ENFORCEMENT OF STANDARDS.

*The responsibility should not rest upon the management alone to determine wisely and effectively the conditions which should be established. The genuine cooperation essential to production can be secured only if definite channels of communication between employers and groups of their workers are established. The need of creating methods of joint negotiation between employers and groups of employees is especially great in the light of the critical points of controversy which may arise in a time like the present. Existing channels should be preserved and new ones opened if required to provide easier access for discussion between employer and employees.*

#### VII. COOPERATION WITH OFFICIAL AGENCIES.

The United States Government and State and local communities have established agencies to deal with conditions of labor, including standards of working conditions, wages, hours, employment, and training. These should be called upon for assistance, especially in the difficult problems of adjustment in the period of reconstruction following the war.

Inquiries regarding the employment of women may be addressed to the Women's Bureau, Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., and these will be dealt with directly or referred to the Federal or State agency best equipped to give the assistance needed in each instance.

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