

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

JAMES J. DAVIS, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
DIRECTOR OF THE
WOMEN'S BUREAU



FISCAL YEAR
ENDED JUNE 30

1924



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
WOMEN'S BUREAU,
Washington, September 3, 1924.

Sir: With the close of the fiscal year 1924, the Women's Bureau has completed its sixth year of activity and has continued to perform the function for which it was created—that is, the task of formulating standards and policies to promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment. In line with this policy the bureau has carried on during the year work of a varied and extensive nature. In general the program has consisted of activities that may be classified as follows: State investigations of conditions of employment for women in industry, special studies of problems particularly related to wage-earning women, cooperation with State and Federal officials on such matters, conferences for the exchange of ideas about women workers, and research and educational work.

In view of the more than eight and one-half million women employed in gainful occupations, the task of the bureau is tremendous. The variety of elements composing this vast army of working women adds greatly to the complexity of the problems confronting the bureau. In the ranks of the wage earners are found young girls; middle-aged and even elderly women; married, single, widowed, separated, and divorced women. There are women who support not only themselves but dependents as well, those who are home makers in addition to being wage earners. In short, the crux of the matter lies in the fact that working women, regardless of their status in other respects, are, generally speaking, producers not only of economic goods but of future citizens, actually or potentially.

The great variety of jobs in which women are now found complicates the situation. The general types of work done by women are listed by the United States Bureau of the Census as follows: Domestic and personal service; manufacturing and mechanical industries; clerical occupations; agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry; professional service; trade; transportation; public service; and extraction of minerals. Such are the broad classifications, each with many subdivisions and each with its own set of problems.

Moreover, in a consideration of the complicating factors connected with the employment of women in the United States, it is necessary to call attention to the many variations of labor legislation for women in the 48 States.

STATE INVESTIGATIONS

The very fact that there are 48 legislative bodies in the various States with the right of self-government, in conformity with the Constitution of the United States, makes an evident explanation of the great diversity of laws for women workers. The problems caused by this lack of uniformity are constantly confronting all who are concerned with trying to enact and enforce labor legislation in behalf of wage-earning women. Employers in one State can transplant industries from a locality where they think the regulations are too rigid to another State with more elastic labor laws. Or manufacturing interests objecting to proposed labor legislation for the betterment of industrial workers in one State can threaten to transfer their business activities to the adjoining State which may have less stringent laws than the ones proposed. Again, corporations which operate in several States may inform the legislators that they will concentrate all their capital and all their activities in the States where they will be least hampered and restricted by labor laws, thereby making it doubly difficult for those who are working for better standards for women in industry to make a great deal of progress.

An analysis of the situation shows the need for greater uniformity in the laws, and the best way to secure this is to have a Federal agency bring existing conditions and the most approved procedure tending to better them, to the attention of the public. The Women's Bureau, created as it was to work in conjunction with State departments of labor, to collect and disseminate facts and figures on questions vitally affecting wage-earning women, and to formulate practical standards for wage-earning women in industry in each of the 48 States has made State investigations an important part of its work. During the past year activities of this type have comprised the completion of a report on the hours and wages of women in New Jersey industries; and the field work of a study of hours and working conditions of women in Illinois, and of hours, wages, and working conditions of women in Oklahoma. In the Illinois survey were included 48,497 women employed in 429 establishments—factories, stores, restaurants, hotels, and laundries. The field work of the Oklahoma study has been completed and has included in round numbers 4,300 women employed in 170 establishments, comprising factories, mills, stores, telephone exchanges, restaurants, hotels, and laundries.

COOPERATION WITH STATE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR

The State surveys are one way in which the Women's Bureau has cooperated with State departments of labor. The investigation in Oklahoma was undertaken at the direct request of the State labor officials, and in Illinois, although the survey was not initiated by the State department of labor, the State officials cooperated whenever possible with the bureau agents. Cooperation in the State studies between the Women's Bureau and the State departments has proved of especial value and benefit to both. The work done by the Federal bureau under these circumstances has been in no way a duplication or usurpation of the work of a State department. The primary

function of the State department of labor is law enforcement, and this must be its first and most important task. It has rarely the funds, personnel, or equipment for intensive investigations. The Women's Bureau, accordingly, renders a valuable service to the State when it makes a survey in the State, collecting detailed information on the hours, wages, and working conditions of women workers and putting such data in available form. On the other hand, the State department facilitates the work of the Women's Bureau in such a survey by giving it an insight into the general industrial and legal situation in the State.

In other ways, during the past year, the bureau has aided State departments of labor, supplying on request special information concerning various aspects of wage-earning women, and sending charts, maps, and other exhibit material to be used in the States.

A definitely organized means by which the bureau has been functioning as a clearing house of information regarding the activities affecting working women in this country and in others is the Newsletter, issued monthly. This publication was started in 1921 at the request of the Association of Governmental Labor Officials. Its contents for the past year will be discussed in more detail in another section of this report.

SPECIAL STUDIES

Although the investigations in particular States are somewhat local in their appeal, they present data representative of the employment of women in the various industries of the country. No less important and of a much wider appeal are the special studies conducted by the bureau on subjects peculiarly related to wage-earning women. The great increase in the number of women in the industrial world, their occupational progress, their need to carry, in so many instances, the double burden of wage earner and home maker, and their weaker economic position have given rise to definite problems connected with their employment that have challenged the attention of all who are interested in the welfare of the Nation. Because of the need and the demand for enlightenment on the foregoing and other subjects, the Women's Bureau has continued or completed a number of special studies inaugurated the preceding year and has initiated several new ones.

Family status of breadwinning women in four selected cities.

A recently completed study is one presenting the social problems and economic status of women breadwinners in four representative communities: Passaic, N. J.; Wilkes-Barre and Hanover Township, Pa.; Butte, Mont.; and Jacksonville, Fla. The material was compiled from unpublished census data taken in 1920, the purpose being to draw as complete a picture of the family status and responsibilities of all gainfully employed women in the cities chosen as the data afforded. To achieve this purpose, family responsibilities of the women breadwinners outlined in the census schedules have been correlated with their occupation and industry, age, country of birth, and marital and domicile status. The cities chosen for study were selected because they were located in different parts of the country, because their industrial activities were representative, and because they were not so large as to make the handling of the material pro-

hibitive in cost. The study covers nearly 40,000 women and girls in gainful employment, these constituting over 38 per cent of the entire female population 14 years of age and over reported in the four communities.

Many important truths of broad social significance are stressed by the study, one of the most striking of which is the fact that marriage does not necessarily mean a release of women from breadwinning activities, but frequently greater economic responsibilities. Fifty-five per cent of the women included in the study were or had been married. Nearly two-thirds of these married women had wage-earning husbands, more than one-half of them were mothers, and two-fifths of the mothers had children under 5 years of age. Nor were women who assumed the burden of wage earning so engaged because they were boarding and thus relieved of the responsibility of homemaking, since almost four-fifths of the women breadwinners who were or had been married were maintaining homes. The report further points out the menace to the health of women and to the happiness of the home because of the need for women to bear the double burden of economic and family responsibilities. Moreover, since not far from two-fifths of the mothers were working outside the home, and over one-third of the mothers with children under 5 years of age were so employed, the injury done to the children in the way of casual and inadequate care is strikingly brought out by the study. It is apparent from the analysis of the conditions in each community studied, that these conditions are more or less representative of the country as a whole and that the disastrous effects resulting from the neglect of the urgent problems related to breadwinning women undermine each community where harmful conditions are allowed to exist, and in the final analysis weaken the strength and prosperity of the Nation.

Absenteeism among women in the textile mills.

The first part of the field work and statistical compilations and correlations connected with an extensive investigation to discover the amount and causes of absenteeism among women employed in textile mills has been completed. The survey covered 18 mills located in the following 14 important textile States: Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Texas, and Vermont. The records of 6,200 men and 4,338 women employed in these mills were inspected. Of the women, 2,215 were visited and interviewed in their homes by the bureau's agents, as to the causes of time lost from their industrial employment.

The time lost by men and women in each department of each mill during 1922 has been computed. A correlation has been made between lost time and the length of the working day, and also between lost time and the effort at stabilization. The proportion of the time lost by the women who were interviewed in their homes has been correlated with the various causes of absence and with such personal information as the present age of the women and age at beginning work, length of textile service and actual time in present mill, conjugal condition, the extent of household duties performed by the women, and the number of workers in the family.

The tabulation of the data reveals the causes of lost time to have been numerous and varied, comprising such personal reasons as illness of self or others, marriage, pregnancy, death, home duties, business, vacation, rest, recreation, education, or religion, as well as the causes for which the establishment rather than the worker was responsible, such as no work or slackness of work, closing of the plant, or accident incurred on the job. The figures show that 23 per cent of all the women interviewed were absent because of personal illness, this reason surpassing all others as a cause of lost time. The performance of home duties was a close second as a contributor to lost time, 20 per cent of the women interviewed reporting this as the cause of their absence from mills.

The findings also are interesting for the light they throw on the question of labor turnover. A study has been made of the total number of separations of workers from each mill during the year and the percentage of labor turnover computed for men and women separately. The reasons given by women in home interviews for leaving jobs have been tabulated. A comparison has been made between northern and southern mills in regard to absenteeism and labor turnover. Although there is in general a striking similarity between the mills of the two sections, the southern mills show a greater amount of lost time and a higher labor turnover. When final separations are considered, the labor turnover for women for all mills included was 143 per cent during 1922, but only 94 per cent for the northern mills as compared with 198 per cent for the southern ones.

Domestic workers and their employment relations.

Another study now completed which has taken the Women's Bureau into a new field of work where there is an undoubted need for research and outline of standards is a study of domestic workers. The study, made at the request of the Domestic Efficiency Association of Baltimore, Md., an organization formed for the purpose of putting domestic service on a better and more standardized basis, is founded on the records of this association. The report, however, includes a bird's-eye view of the so-called "servant question" at the present time and of some efforts that have been made, chiefly in other countries, at readjustments.

The records of the association presented certain facts about 2,293 women and 672 men. Over two-thirds of the applicants to the association were negroes, three-fourths of whom were women. Information was obtained concerning race, age, conjugal condition, and occupations of the domestic workers, preference as to living in or outside employer's home and as to living in city, suburbs, or country. For a number of employees references from former employers were available, giving the nature and length of services performed by the workers and a statement about their capability, character, disposition, appearance, regularity, punctuality, and in many instances the reason for leaving the position.

Although no definite or far-reaching recommendations can be made on the basis of so limited a study, the report points out some important difficulties which confront employers and employees in the field of domestic service. Certain conditions connected with this type of work serve as one and the same source of dissatisfac-

tion to employers and employees, causing, however, one set of disadvantages for the former and another set for the latter. The uneven balance between labor demand and supply, labor turnover, the lack of training and standardization, the system of references, the practice of long and indefinite hours are some of the high spots that are touched by the study. In general from the facts disclosed it appears that fewer efforts are being made in the United States than in some of the European countries to break down old traditions and prejudices and to bring about reform, and that there is, consequently, urgent need for the grave consideration of these problems by all concerned.

Industrial accidents among women.

Because of a realization of the need to consider the employment of women from the standpoints of hazards and injuries, a study of compensable work accidents to women wage earners in New Jersey, Ohio, and Wisconsin was inaugurated in the spring of 1923 and has been continued during the past year. The field work has been completed and the tabulation of the data secured is now going on. The object of the study has been to determine the causes of accidents to women in industry; to ascertain the nature and degree of the resulting disabilities; to estimate the time lost for which compensation was paid as well as further time lost on account of the injury; to investigate any assistance rendered, making for rehabilitation in economic or home activities through medical treatment, vocational training, or job performed; and to consider means for the prevention of accidents. It was the aim also to secure a complete industrial history of the women, in order to reveal the type of work performed and the wages earned before the accident, as compared with the subsequent occupations and earnings, and in addition any difficulties in securing and keeping jobs or in performing necessary work at home after the accident. The material was obtained partly from the accident records in the State compensation board files for the twelvemonth period between July 1, 1919, and July 1, 1920, and from interviews with those women who had received a permanent disability. Records of about 3,300 compensable cases were copied, a majority of which resulted in only temporary disability. In all, however, about 400 women who had been left with a permanent disability of some degree were located and interviewed. The causes of permanent and temporary disabilities were very much the same, machinery being by far the greatest cause of accidents, fall of persons or object and handling of tool or object being other frequent causes. The great majority of women permanently disabled returned to work, but some were forced to enter upon a different occupation, frequently earning less, and others were disabled for all available work. The final report on this study will furnish many interesting correlations.

Standard and scheduled hours of work for women in industry.

The long working day which accompanied the development of the modern industrial system has in recent years become recognized by forward-looking forces in the country as a menace to individual and national welfare. Accordingly, progress has gradually been made in reducing the hours of work. The shorter day for the

employment of women is even more important than for men, because of the need for conserving women's energies in the interest of the race and because of the home and the family responsibilities of women. In view of the importance of the subject, the Women's Bureau decided that it would be worth while to present in a single bulletin for a uniform date the material relating to the scheduled hours of the women employed in the industries of those States where such hour investigations had already been conducted by the bureau. In all, 13 States—Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia—and two cities outside these States, Philadelphia and Chicago, were intended. Except for Ohio and New Jersey, where surveys had been made in the fall of 1922, data were obtained for the other States, formerly surveyed, from questionnaires sent out in the spring of 1923 to firms with the request that the number of employees and the scheduled hours of the firm on September 15, 1922, be recorded. Reports were obtained from approximately 85 per cent of the firms to which questionnaires had been sent.

Information on scheduled hours was secured for 162,792 women employed in 1,709 plants. Almost one-fifth of the women had an 8-hour day or less, over one-third a 9-hour day, and nearly one-fourth more than 9 hours. In South Carolina, over four-fifths of the women and in Georgia over three-fifths had a daily schedule of 10 hours or more. As representative of a higher standard were Iowa with over one-third and Maryland with practically one-third of the women included, scheduled for a day of 8 hours or less. The other States fell between these extremes. A 50-hour week was the standard for the largest group of women, and over one-third had a week of 48 hours or less. In respect to the 48-hour week Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Maryland took the lead with approximately 68 per cent, 55 per cent, and 52 per cent, respectively, of the women reported in each, showing such a schedule. An overwhelming majority of the South Carolina women, on the other hand, regularly put in more than 54 hours a week, while in both Georgia and Alabama practically two-thirds of the women had a weekly schedule of more than 54 hours.

Striking differences were shown in the hour policies of two industries employing large numbers of women—the manufacture of textiles and clothing. While a day of between 8 and 9 hours was most common in the clothing industry, a 10-hour day was customary for the largest group of textile workers. Only 6 per cent of the textile workers had a week of 44 hours or less in contrast with one-third of the clothing workers showing such a schedule. Practically one-half of the women in the various textile industries had a week of 55 hours or more as compared with less than 3 per cent in the clothing industry.

The report also includes a discussion of experiments in the reduction of the work day in certain industries to conform with the 8-hour standard, and in addition an analysis of the legal standards in the various States surveyed. It has been shown in instances of a shortened working week, when comparable records have been kept of the output of the plant before and after the change, that ordinarily the business was able to stand the reduction in hours. In

certain types of industries where the attention of the worker is of greatest importance reductions of one or more hours a day have not decreased the output. Some recognition of the desirability of the shorter working day for women in industry is found in State laws establishing for these workers maximum hours of labor. Of the States included in the study, two—Missouri and Ohio—stand out as more progressive than the rest with a law limiting the day's work in most industries to 9 hours, while three—Alabama, Indiana, and Iowa—placing no limitation upon the hours of work in any industries, trail the list in the matter of satisfactory legal standards.

Conditions of employment in the canning and preserving industry in the State of Washington.

The Women's Bureau also has completed the tabulation and analysis of the material collected in a field survey made during the summer and fall of 1923, in conjunction with the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, of the conditions under which women and children are employed in the canning and preserving industry in the State of Washington.

The survey covers two distinct phases of work, first, the picking of fruit in the berry fields and in the apple, pear, and prune orchards, and, second, the preparing and packing of fruit and fish in the canneries and warehouses. This type of employment is complicated by the seasonal nature of the work, for which the harvest period and perishability of the products are responsible. Another factor making for an unusual situation and acute problems in the matter of living conditions is the more or less migratory character of the laborers.

Personal interviews held with 3,000 women at work in regard to working histories brought out the fact that they were in many instances casual and not regular workers and for the most part unskilled, many of them being housewives for the greater part of the year. In fact, two-thirds were women who were or had been married. About one-sixth of the women were foreign-born. Of all the women interviewed, although two-thirds reported themselves as residents of the section where they were at work, the other third belonged in the migratory class coming from 17 other States and from Canada. Part of the migrant labor in the orchards consisted of a number of family groups coming in automobiles from long distances and carrying their own camp equipment. Among the migrant berry pickers were fewer men than among the orchard workers but more women, who came from shorter distances and lived in wooden shacks provided by the ranchers.

Hour and wage data for women pickers were secured from interviews and from correspondence with employers and employees, whereas such data for the women employed in warehouses and canneries were obtained from pay rolls by agents of the bureau. The scheduled daily hours of the women in warehouses were 10 a day. In fruit canneries the hours were very irregular, ranging from 1 to 16 hours and depending upon the amount and perishability of the product handled in any one day. The hours in fish canneries were even more irregular. The median week's earnings of the women sorting apples and pears were \$18.45 and \$18.05, respectively, while the median week's earnings of the apple packers

were \$31.05 and of the pear packers \$25.85. The women picking in orchards were much better paid than the berry pickers, the average daily wage of those who picked and sorted the various kinds of orchards fruits ranging from \$2.97 to \$3.43, whereas the average daily wage of the berry pickers was only \$1.60.

RESEARCH WORK

The research division has served as a bureau of information in regard to the various aspects of the employment of women, compiling data necessary for the studies made by the bureau and also putting in available form many facts from the United States census, State laws, and other sources, for use throughout the country. In response to special requests from numerous organizations concerned with the problems of working women, the bureau has collected and sent out much valuable information. There are, however, certain outstanding achievements which call for some discussion.

The News-letter.

The News-letter already referred to has had nine issues during the past year. It has outlined the current activities in regard to the minimum wage laws already in existence; discussed efforts, successful and unsuccessful, in the various States to pass new legislation concerning wage-earning women; announced the appointment of persons to positions of importance connected with the interests of women workers; listed new publications on the subject of women in industry; presented digests of special and State reports on hours, wages, working conditions, industrial accidents, and law violations as related to women; and given notes on special topics of interest in the labor movement, such as important conferences, workers' education, and the "blanket amendment." In addition, activities in foreign countries concerning wage-earning women have been reported.

Minimum-wage laws.

The bureau has continued the research study of the history, operation, and administration of the various minimum wage laws in the United States, this study having been begun shortly after the United States Supreme Court handed down its decision declaring the District of Columbia minimum wage law unconstitutional. A careful analysis is being made of those laws that are now in operation, so that the experience of the various administrative bodies may be made available for those who are seeking to establish some method of enforcing wage standards for women. Copies of all forms and schedules and methods of using them have been secured from the States that have these laws. The study has so far been carried on in California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin, where the State Officials have given the fullest and most helpful cooperation to the representatives of the bureau.

Legislation for women in Oregon.

An interesting piece of research work, the result of which the bureau is planning to publish in the near future, deals with legisla-

tion for women in Oregon. The report contains an extensive history of the laws in the State bearing specifically on the civil and political rights of women. The section on civil rights goes into such matters as property rights, administration of estates, power to make wills, age of majority, personal rights, educational progress, status of women in marriage and divorce, but treats at greater length the subject of women in industry. Women's share in industrial activities in the pioneer days is discussed, followed by a detailed account of the enactment and administration of the laws on hours and minimum wage for women workers as well as those on seating and sanitary conditions in establishments employing women. The report also outlines the direct and indirect effects of the minimum wage law, showing that little if any loss of employment among Oregon women as a group can be related to the minimum-wage determinations, that the minimum-wage rates did not decrease the efficiency of the women, and that the minimum did not become the maximum. It is also pointed out that the law serves as a means of industrial conciliation, and tends to instil in the organized woman worker a sense of her place in the community, and to arouse in the public a realization of its responsibility in the adjustment and prevention of industrial hardships to women and minors.

State laws affecting working women.

Because of the many changes in labor legislation for women throughout the country in the last three years either on account of new laws passed in certain States or modification of old ones or different interpretations of such laws, Bulletin 16, entitled "State Laws Affecting Working Women," published by the Women's Bureau in 1921, has during the past year been revised.

Minimum wage bibliography.

Another valuable piece of research work that has been accomplished is a comprehensive minimum-wage bibliography, which has been put in bulletin form. In it are listed with details all books, pamphlets, and articles in periodicals dealing with the subject of minimum wage for women in the United States and Canada.

A graphic presentation of facts about women wage earners.

A special bulletin now in the course of preparation aims to present in graphic form facts concerning wage-earning women in the United States in regard to the numbers employed and their occupations, age, race, color, nativity, and marital status.

LABOR LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

The continued interest in labor legislation for women is evidenced by the efforts made during the past fiscal year in a number of State legislatures to enact laws to improve standards for the employment of women. The results, if measured in terms of laws actually passed, are not very impressive. One fact partly responsible for this was that a number of State legislatures held no session during the past year. By no means do the limited achievements indicate any lack of activity on the part of women's organizations, for their record is one of incessant and tireless effort to better conditions for the millions of wage-earning women, by amendment of existing laws and

by passage of new ones. Moreover, there has been in all legislative campaigns along these lines a decided educational value, the extent of which can not be definitely estimated.

The few legislative gains can be briefly told. In Rhode Island the persistent campaign for the shorter work day for women resulted in the passage of a law effective June 1, 1924, establishing a 9-hour day and a 48-hour week for women in factories, and in manufacturing, mercantile, and business establishments. A legislative attempt to amend the night work law for women in New Jersey—passed by the preceding legislature with a clause making it effective December 1, 1924—met with an overwhelming defeat. An effort in the New York legislature to undermine the night work law for women in that State was likewise thwarted. In Massachusetts during the past year efforts to repeal the 48-hour law and the minimum wage law and to remove the night-work restriction for women in the textile mills were again defeated. The new hour law in Wisconsin passed in 1923 to limit the day's work of women employees to 9 hours and the week's to 50 hours went into effect on September 1, 1923.

In addition to these few instances of definite achievement must be cited the unsuccessful efforts in other States to have labor laws for women passed. In five States—Alabama, Maine, Maryland, New York, and Virginia—a bill for an 8-hour day or a 48-hour week was introduced into the legislature. In New York the 48-hour bill was defeated as it has been for nine successive years. Again the senate passed it and again the assembly defeated it by a narrow margin of votes. Maine's legislature took no action on the question of the 48-hour week except to pass a resolution submitting it to a referendum vote. At the special election in October, 1923, the 48-hour week was defeated, and the legal maximum of hours of work in the State remain 9 daily and 54 weekly. In the Maryland legislature the 8-hour bill was defeated in the house. The Virginia 8-hour bill was indefinitely postponed.

Rhode Island was the only State in which an attempt was made to pass a law prohibiting night work for women. The bill, however, which would have prevented the employment of women from 10 p. m. to 6 a. m. was defeated.

New Jersey and New York were the only States where minimum wage legislation was attempted. In New Jersey the bill passed the house with just three negative votes, but failed of passage in the senate. In New York also the bill passed the house and was defeated in the senate.

Seven resolutions were introduced in Congress during the past session to amend the Federal Constitution granting to Congress the power to regulate the employment of women. These were all referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Activities concerning minimum wage laws.

In view of the decision of the United States Supreme Court, in the spring of 1923, declaring unconstitutional the minimum wage law for women in the District of Columbia, and the fear on the part of many that this decision might undermine other minimum wage laws in effect in several States in the country; it is significant to trace the activities during the past year concerned with legislation of this type.

Reference has already been made to unsuccessful efforts in New York and New Jersey to pass a minimum wage law and to the defeat of the attempt in the Massachusetts legislature to repeal the minimum wage law there. The constitutionality of the California law was questioned, the case being brought by a woman who sought employment as an apprentice in a candy factory at a rate below that permitted legally, and who alleged that the law was discriminatory because there was no minimum wage law for men. On September 22, however, a superior court of the State handed down a decision, ruling the law valid. It was stated that the case would be carried to the highest court. In another instance the attorney general sustained the California Industrial Welfare Commission in refusing to allow the money due the women cannery workers to be put in escrow, pending the final decision as to the validity of the California wage law. The minimum wage law in the State has been strictly enforced.

In Massachusetts a test case on the constitutionality of the minimum wage law was based on the refusal of the Boston Transcript to publish the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission's advertisement of a firm failing to comply with one of the minimum wage decrees. In the municipal court of the city of Boston and in the superior court the case was decided against the newspaper. An appeal was then made to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, which handed down the decision that newspapers can not be compelled to publish the names of employers failing to comply with the rulings of the minimum wage commission. However, the only limitation that the decision imposes is in connection with the newspaper publication, and it is now optional rather than mandatory for newspapers to carry such publications. Although some newspapers may decline to print advertisements of noncompliance, it is interesting to note that during the period that the case was before the court, such advertisements were published by the commission in 50 newspapers throughout the State. The assistant commissioner of the department of labor and industries advanced the belief that the commission is not likely to be seriously handicapped in the matter of advertisement. A new decree has been approved during the year, by the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Commission, providing a minimum wage of \$13.20 a week for women 18 years of age or over who have been employed a year in the manufacture of druggists' preparations, proprietary medicines, and chemical compounds. With the establishment of this decree, 17 occupations are now covered by minimum wage rates.

In Arizona an employer operating a candy factory, who had paid an apprentice less than the minimum wage, was granted an injunction by the State court to restrain the State officials from prosecuting him for noncompliance with the law. The State is appealing from this ruling, and the case has now been set for oral argument in the Supreme Court of the United States.

In Wisconsin a minimum wage questionnaire was sent to employers asking them to reply to four questions upon the operation of the minimum wage law as it affected their own business during the year. In all, 863 establishments complied. In answer to the question, Were any minors and (or) women discharged from work because of the present minimum wage law? only 37 firms replied in the affirmative

and 826 in the negative. To the question, Was it necessary to rearrange hours for minor and (or) women employees on account of the minimum wage law? 93 firms answered affirmatively and 770 negatively. The question, Has the minimum wage law caused any change in lines manufactured by you, or in the kind of business carried on by you? was answered affirmatively by 54 firms and negatively by 809. The replies to the last question, Proportional to your total working force are you now employing more or fewer minors than a year ago? show that 327 firms maintained about the same ratio as a year ago, and that 173 firms reduced and 197 increased the proportion of minors.

The Ohio Minimum Wage Investigation Commission, appointed by the last legislature, met in Columbus on February 6. There was a large representation of proponents and some opponents of minimum-wage legislation, and as a result of the hearing it was decided that the commission should go ahead with its investigation, in spite of the United States Supreme Court's decision in the District of Columbia case. The commission asked the proponents and opponents to submit briefs on the operation of the minimum wage law in California, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin, in order that the commission might check up by investigation those points upon which the two sides might fail to agree.

The "blanket amendment."

A group of women, active in the equal rights movement in American history and objecting to certain existing legal discriminations against women because of sex, have for the past three years been advocating a constitutional amendment to take the following form: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

On the other hand, another large group of women, consisting of almost every organization of working women and of women interested in improving industrial conditions in the United States, although deeply interested in the question of equal rights and recognizing the need to abolish unjust legal discriminations against women, have objected to the proposed amendment on the score that it is ambiguous and likely to jeopardize those labor laws for women enacted during the past 70 years in the various States and regulating to some extent conditions of employment for approximately four million women. The proponents of the amendment have argued that special labor laws for women curtail their opportunities, but the opponents have maintained that actual information concerning women in industry disproves such a theory and that in the interest of the race special legislation to control standards of women's employment is essential because they always have been in a weaker position economically than have men.

Representatives of more than a dozen of these organizations opposing the amendment appeared before a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee at a hearing called by the chairman of the subcommittee on February 7, 1924, for the opponents of the amendment to discuss the question.

In connection with the "blanket amendment," from time to time during the past year the Women's Bureau has been called upon

by women's organizations to furnish information concerning women in industry. A summary of the special labor laws for women in the United States was prepared and published in the Congressional Digest for March, 1924, showing that approximately four million working women, or nearly one-half of all the gainfully occupied women in the country, would be affected by this amendment through suspension or nullification of the labor laws that apply to women and not to men. Moreover, data have been compiled by the bureau which stand as evidence against the idea that special labor laws for women curtail their opportunities for employment.

EDUCATIONAL WORK

In addition to the statistical bulletins published by the bureau, other means have been employed for disseminating knowledge on the various aspects of women in gainful employment.

Radio talks on women in industry.

A bulletin entitled "Radio Talks on Women in Industry" and consisting of short talks that were broadcast by the bureau during 1922 and 1923 has been recently published. It is illustrated by clever pen-and-ink sketches and serves as a popular form of educating the public in the matters pertaining to women workers.

Outline of Women's Bureau activities.

A topical outline of the activities of the bureau during the last three years was prepared for educational purposes and has been mimeographed and distributed in various quarters.

Married women in industry.

A bulletin entitled "Married Women in Industry," which consists of an address made by a member of the Women's Bureau before the National Conference of Social Workers in Washington in May, 1923, has been published. This was done because of the unusual interest displayed in the subject of married women in industry and because of the many requests made to the bureau for copies of the address.

It touches on the economic needs of industry, the social needs of the family, and the human needs of the individual as related to married-women workers, and has served to point the necessity for a thorough investigation of this whole subject.

Exhibit material.

Another important part of the educational work of the bureau during the year has been the constant circulation of its exhibit material and the addition of some new features to its collection. In general it may be said that all the exhibit material of the bureau has been used continuously and extensively by schools, colleges, universities, churches, and industrial and labor organizations in all parts of the country. In October, 1923, a permanent exhibit was installed by the Women's Bureau as the Department of Labor's contribution to the health exhibit in the Smithsonian Institution of Washington. The exhibit is in the form of a miniature factory, showing men and women at work on various machines and illustrating the equipment and standards necessary for adequate health protection for women in industrial establishments. Smaller models of

this factory also have been made and sent about the country upon request.

Four large charts showing the occupational distribution and progress of women in gainful occupations in the United States, and the scheduled hours and median wages of women in the States surveyed by the bureau have been printed and are now being distributed to interested organizations. Other charts dealing with the various aspects of the employment of women have been made and furnished for special occasions. Among these were three charts on foreign-born, wage-earning women designed for the convention of the National Educational Association. Maps depicting labor legislation for women in the various States have been prepared throughout the year, some having been given and others loaned to organizations requesting them for permanent or temporary use. Arrangements have been made for the revision of the motion picture, "When Women Work," which has been in circulation for almost four years, and which needs in some respects to be brought up to date.

Conferences.

During the past year the Women's Bureau has, upon request, conferred with, advised, and otherwise assisted organizations of a varied nature, including women's associations and clubs, labor unions, industrial councils, Government and statistical bureaus, and organizations concerned especially with education, health, and social and economic matters. The bureau's participation in such consultations has constituted an important feature of its activities.

Publications.

During the year the following bulletins have been published:

- No. 32. Women in South Carolina industries.
- No. 33. Proceedings of the Women's Industrial Conference.
- No. 34. Women in Alabama industries.
- No. 36. Radio talks on women in industry.
- No. 37. Women in New Jersey industries.
- No. 38. Married women in industry.
- Home work laws in the United States. (Advance section of Bulletin No. 40.)

The following bulletins are in press:

- No. 35. Women in Missouri industries.
- No. 39. Domestic workers and their employment relations.
- No. 40. State laws affecting working women. (Revision of Bulletin 16.)
- No. 41. Family status of breadwinning women in four selected cities.
- No. 42. Minimum wage for women in the United States and Canada—A list of references.
- No. 43. Standard and scheduled hours of work for women in industry.

THE COMING YEAR

For the coming year the bureau has plans not only for a continuation of its regular routine activities and for a completion of studies and reports which have been begun during the past year but also for the initiation of new studies of considerable magnitude. The work planned, however, is somewhat handicapped by the fact that the appropriation of \$107,380, although showing a slight increase in actual figures over the \$105,000 appropriation of the preceding year, means in reality a slight decrease in the amount available for the

bureau's activities on account of the salary changes resulting from the classification act approved March 4, 1923.

Reports.

Reports on the following subjects, which are now in preparation, will be completed:

- Women in Ohio industries.
- Absenteeism of women in textile mills.
- Women in the canning and preserving industry in the State of Washington.
- Industrial accidents among women.
- Legislation for women in Oregon.
- Minimum wage laws.
- Women in Illinois industries.
- Women in Oklahoma industries.
- A graphic presentation of facts about women wage earners.

A report on night work for women is planned. This will consist of a compilation and welding together of material on the subject which has already been collected by the bureau during its State investigations, together with a discussion of the laws in the United States prohibiting and regulating night work for women.

State surveys.

Arrangements have been made for a State-wide investigation and study of the hours, wages, and working conditions of women in Delaware industries, the field survey to be begun the latter part of August. A request from Mississippi for a similar survey there has been received, and the bureau plans to include such a study in its program for the coming year.

Continuation of study of absenteeism in textile mills.

As a supplement to the study on absenteeism of women in textile mills, the bureau expects to carry on additional field work for the purpose of securing technical information on the spare-hand system which is practiced so extensively in the textile industry and is so closely allied with the whole subject of absenteeism.

Study of women's employment.

Plans and arrangements also have been made and some preliminary steps taken by the bureau for a study of employment records in certain States where adequate statistics are available with a view to determining whether or not the employment problem among women presents any unusual aspects which should make it a subject to be considered separately from that of men. The bureau had hoped during the past year to undertake this study but limitation of appropriation and personnel made it impossible to do more than a little preliminary work on the subject.

Educational work.

The bureau plans as part of its yearly program a continuation and extension of the various phases of its educational work, especially in the increase of magazine and newspaper articles, presenting in popular form the available information of the bureau, emphasizing the human-interest aspects of its work, and reaching in this way certain groups of the public not interested in technical and statistical reports. In line with such needs the bureau expects to publish a textbook containing vital social and economic truths about women in industry.

Each year there is a demand and need for new exhibit material in addition to that already available in the bureau. Many groups and organizations interested in educating the public by graphic means about matters pertaining to wage-earning women are constantly seeking new and impressive ways of doing this, and are largely dependent upon the Women's Bureau for aid in this respect.

In order to meet more adequately the many requests for motion pictures dealing with the question of women in industry, a new two-reel film will be circulated for the first time this fall. The picture gives a survey of the changed conditions of women's service connected with the development of industries, such as the production of food, clothing, and other articles, from home activities into factory processes. This is followed by an explanation of the peculiar strains which the necessary adaptations have put on women, together with the health factors involved. The picture shows, moreover, the manner in which these strains are compensated for successfully in certain factories, emphasizing the possibilities of getting all the values from extreme specialization and high-speed machinery without wrecking physiques or reducing individual efficiency. Finally the film points out the need of public understanding of such factors and of the need for public insistence on their universal application in the interest of better children, of better personal lives for the women, and of greater powers of service on the part of the women workers.

Another type of exhibit material planned by the bureau is a three-dimensional piece, practical for shipping, setting forth graphically the effect of factory standards and conditions of work for women upon their standards of living, and the influence of all such standards upon community and national welfare.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each year the volume of work which looms up as an essential part of the program of the Women's Bureau increases. State departments of labor, associations of employers and workers, research bureaus, churches, schools, colleges, universities, and women's organizations (State, National, and international), as well as the public in general, repeatedly turn to the Women's Bureau for information and data pertaining to women in industry. These requests and demands have grown to such an extent that it is possible for the bureau to meet only a small part of them.

Some of the outstanding problems connected with wage-earning women now challenging the attention of all interested in the welfare of the Nation may be outlined as follows:

1. Although the employment of married women has for some years been the theme of much discussion, it has now become, a subject of paramount importance to this country, on account of the almost two million married women in gainful employment, and of the 53.7 per cent increase in the number of married women in manufacturing and mechanical industries, trade, and transportation during the decade from 1910 to 1920. Therefore, it is essential to collect and present definite and comprehensive information on the subject. The problem of the employed married woman and especially of the employed mother, linked so closely as it is with the welfare of the home and the family, is naturally one of the most vital as well as one of the

most complex problems before the country to-day. The Women's Bureau which is looked to by the country at large to throw light on this matter, realizes the necessity for a study which will require considerable field work in order to collect at first hand reliable information on the subject. Though the many complicating social and economic factors make this whole matter a difficult one to settle entirely, nevertheless a scientific study of the question would make for a reduction of existing problems.

2. The bureau has received a number of requests from various sources for information concerning foreign-born women workers in regard to race, numbers, proportions in various localities, and occupational distribution. The bureau realizes the importance of the subject, in view of the more than a million foreign-born white women in gainful employment in the United States, and deems it necessary to make a survey along this line in the near future. The study should cover the economic effects of foreign-born wage-earning women upon the industrial situation in the country as well as the effect of industries upon such women. Significant problems in this connection calling for scientific investigation are the family relations and economic responsibilities of women of foreign birth, their handicaps and opportunities for employment, and their effect upon industrial standards. Such information would prove of value to those concerned with the development of a policy for the education of foreign-born women conducive to their most satisfactory adjustment in this country.

3. A request was made by the president of the telephone operators' union some time ago for a study of health conditions among telephone operators. Although this bureau fully appreciates the great need for such a study it is not equipped to undertake it at the present time. In an investigation of this kind the Public Health Service could be of immeasurable assistance, and the Director of the Women's Bureau has discussed with that service the possibility of undertaking such a cooperative study during the next year.

4. The whole theory of special legislation and protection for women has been challenged to such an extent that it seems unwise to longer delay a special study of this question. Authentic information on the subject is constantly being requested.

5. The present time is a critical period for women in industry, because of the recent United States Supreme Court decision declaring unconstitutional the minimum wage law for women in the District of Columbia, which has thrown open the gates to a host of queries as to the desirability and need for regulation of women's wages. Typical questions that are constantly being asked in this connection are: What effect do minimum wage laws have upon women's opportunities for employment and do these laws cause the minimum wage to become the maximum? It is important that the basic and current facts as to women's earnings and the social and economic significance of such earnings should be made available as soon as possible by an unbiased agency, so that general policies may be established.

6. Other matters calling for attention are:
- (a) Critical compilation of existing material relating to women in industry.
 - (b) Codification of laws regulating conditions for women in industry.
 - (c) The effect upon women in industry of certain conditions, such as the piecework system, posture at work, the lifting of weights, and industrial poisons.
 - (d) A study to ascertain the number of women in the country employed on an 8-hour schedule and the number with a longer work day.
 - (e) A comparison of the proportions of men and women working on an 8-hour schedule.

In general, it is believed that the Women's Bureau in the past has rendered the best possible service with the limited amount of money placed at its disposal. It is true, however, that the bureau has been crippled since its creation because of inadequate appropriations and has been unable to carry on many studies that are urgent. An increased appropriation, therefore, would greatly facilitate the work of the bureau, by permitting much needed additions to the staff of workers and considerable expansion of activities.

MARY ANDERSON,
Director.

HON. JAMES J. DAVIS,
Secretary of Labor.

