

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
JAMES J. DAVIS, Secretary  
WOMEN'S BUREAU

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



FISCAL YEAR  
ENDED JUNE 30

1926



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
WOMEN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, August 15, 1926.*

HON. JAMES J. DAVIS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

SIR: The Women's Bureau, charged with the function of looking after the interests of the more than eight and one-half million wage-earning women in the country, has continued its busy and varied program during the past year. In general it may be said that the subject of women in industry has become one of great interest throughout the country. This fact is traceable to several important causes. In the first place, census figures show that the number of wage-earning women is constantly increasing and that the employment of women outside the home in industrial enterprises is a permanent measure. Investigations have revealed that many women are not transients in industrial work, leaving their jobs when they marry—as was formerly believed by a large part of the public—but that a great number of women are as permanent in industry as are men, that some of them never marry, and that of those who do many are forced to continue in, or later to return to, industrial jobs, to supplement the family income. The growing realization, therefore, that women are indispensable to industry in its need for a large number of workers and that industry is indispensable to women in their economic struggles has led to a greater interest on the part of the public in women who are in gainful employment.

It is now also realized that there is greater need for recommendations in regard to standards of women's employment, due to the fact that women have been in a weaker position economically than have men. Therefore, it is necessary to give opportunity for the upbuilding of safeguards to conserve alike an industrial efficiency and the health of women, and to make it impossible for selfish interests to exploit them as unwilling competitors in lowering those standards of wages, hours, working conditions, and industrial relations which are for the best interests of the workers, the industries, and society as a whole.

The public is gradually coming to realize that not only is it important to consider the problems of women in industry because they are producers of economic goods, but it is important to safeguard them in the interest of the race, since as mothers or potential mothers they are producers of future citizens. If industrial forces

are permitted to draw too heavily upon the time and energies of women employees, then industry becomes a menace not only to them as individuals but to their children.

The Women's Bureau, by means of its various activities, has been largely responsible for riveting the attention of many forces upon the problems of women workers. Its program during the past year has embraced the following general activities: A large industrial conference; investigations of conditions of employment for women; special studies of problems particularly related to wage-earning women; the inauguration of an extensive survey of the effects of special labor legislation on the employment of women; research work along many lines connected with wage-earning women; educational work involving the preparation and circulation of bulletins, special data, popular and technical articles, and exhibit material; and the planning and preparation of special exhibits for the Sesqui-centennial Exposition.

### WOMEN'S INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE

One of the most important activities during the past year was the Women's Industrial Conference, which was called by the bureau for a three-day session, from January 18 to 21, inclusive.

The object of the conference—the second of the kind held by the bureau—was to bring together the women of the country concerned with the industrial and economic problems as related to women workers and to give an opportunity for the presentation of facts about women in industry by experts and for a discussion of such problems by the delegates; to make possible an interchange of experiences and ideas among employers, workers, and the general public; to develop policies for broader opportunity and more profitable employment of women under modern industrial conditions; and in this way to secure the best results for both industry and society. The conference was of particular value because of the need to face and analyze certain new problems arising from the increased employment of women along various lines, from the speeding up of modern industry, and from the tremendous increase among married women in industry.

Industrial problems as they affect women, from the point of view of the employer, the trade-union, the economist, the doctor, the consumer, the church, the woman worker, the general public, and the Government constituted the varied and extensive program of the conference. The following topics and speakers comprised the program: Women workers and the American home, Hon. James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor; What Massachusetts has done for women workers, Mrs. John Jacob Rogers, Member of Congress from Massachusetts; State standards for women in California, Mrs. Julius Kahn, Member of Congress from California; The significance of the development of industry to the employer, Mr. John E. Edgerton, president of the National Association of Manufacturers; The significance of the development of industry to the worker, Mr. William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor; The significance of the development of industry to society, Miss Mary Van Kleeck, director department of industrial studies Russell Sage

Foundation and the first Director of the Women's Bureau; The philosophy of industrial relations, Mr. William Leiserson, professor of labor economics, Toledo University; Experiments in reducing hours without decrease in production, Miss Frances Perkins, member of State Industrial Commission of New York; Working out the adjustments over the conference table, Miss Agnes Nestor, president of the Chicago Women's Trade-Union League; An experiment in a mill village, Mr. Henry P. Kendall, president of the Kendall Mills (Inc.); The right of the worker to citizenship, Miss Rose Schneiderman, representing the Cloth, Hat, Cap, and Millinery Workers' International Union; The right of the worker to education, Miss Mollie Ray Carroll, professor of economics, Goucher College; The right of the worker to recreation, Mrs. Robert Speer, president of the National Board, Young Women's Christian Association, New York; Industrial hygiene, Dr. Alice Hamilton, professor of industrial medicine, Harvard Medical College; Public health, Dr. Hugh S. Cumming, Surgeon General, United States Public Health Service; A symposium on the woman wage earner and the conditions under which she works and lives from six different points of view—The woman wage earner, Miss Mary Koken, silk weaver; The consumer, the late Mrs. Percy Jackson, president of the Consumers' League of New York; Business, Mrs. Marguerite B. Benson, director of the Women's Bureau of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association; The church, Rev. Worth M. Tippy, executive secretary of the Commission on Churches and Social Service, New York, and Dr. John M. Cooper, associate professor of sociology, Catholic University, Washington, D. C.; The State government, Miss Nelle Swartz, director of the bureau of women in industry in the department of labor, New York, and Miss Charlotte Carr, director of the bureau of women and children in the department of labor and industry, Pennsylvania; and The National Government, Mrs. Maude Wood Park, councilor on legislation, National League of Women Voters; Miss Mary E. McDowell, commissioner of public welfare, Chicago; Mrs. Bessie Parker Bruggeman, chairman, United States Employees' Compensation Commission; Miss Jessie Dell, member of the United States Civil Service Commission; Dr. Louise Stanley, Director of the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

All national women's organizations and all national organizations having a large proportion of women members were asked to send delegates. Employers, personnel workers connected with industrial establishments, and business organizations also were invited to take part. In all, 291 delegates were present, representing 107 national organizations and 41 States, the District of Columbia, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands.

At the opening session of the conference a special message from the President of the United States was read to the delegates, followed by the address of the Secretary of Labor. The meetings were then formally open for the discussion of the various problems for which the conference was called.

### STATE STUDIES

Investigations of conditions surrounding the employment of women in the various States have always occupied an important place in the work of the Women's Bureau. Such surveys are always under-

taken at the request of some interested organization in the State. The figures obtained from such studies are of interest not only to the localities where the studies are actually made but also to the country at large, since they are representative of conditions under which women are employed at the present time and since they furnish more or less comparable data for the different sections of the United States.

During the past year no new studies of this type have been undertaken, but work has continued on the reports or surveys made in five States. Two of these bulletins—*Women in Illinois Industries* and *Women in Oklahoma Industries*—have been published, one is in press—*Women in Mississippi Industries*—and the other two are nearing completion—*Women in Tennessee Industries* and *Women in Delaware Industries*.

#### **Mississippi.**

The survey was made of the hours, wages, and working conditions of the women employed in Mississippi industries, the investigation having been conducted during January and February, 1925. Eighty-one establishments—factories, stores, laundries—employing 2,853 women were visited. In general, the hour standards in Mississippi, both those established by law and by practice, showed the need of improvement. The limitations of working hours of women which are set by law, and which apply to the majority of occupations in which women are engaged other than domestic service, permit a 10-hour day and a 60-hour week. Over one-third of the women reported upon, however, had a daily schedule of more than 10 hours, while only four establishments, employing 3.1 per cent of the women, had a day of 8 hours or less. The wage standards of the community also were low, since the median of the week's earnings of the white women included was \$8.60, and the median for the negro women, \$5.75. In a considerable proportion of the establishments visited sanitation was inadequate, and the service facilities were far below the standards advocated by the Women's Bureau. Common towels or no washing facilities, common cups or a complete lack of cups, and markedly inadequate toilet facilities were the conditions reported for quite a number of the plants inspected.

#### **Delaware.**

The Delaware survey, which took place in the summer of 1924, covered 4,176 women employed in 146 establishments—factories, stores, laundries, canneries, hotels, and restaurants.

Since the State law permits a 10-hour day and a 55-hour week for women employed in factories, stores, and laundries, it is not surprising to find that only 15.3 per cent of the women included were scheduled for an 8-hour day or less, and that only 21.5 per cent had a weekly schedule of 48 hours or less. The majority of the women (58 per cent) had a day of more than 9 hours; 9.5 per cent had a 55-hour week. Canneries, which did not come under the State law, had longer and more irregular hours than did the other establishments included. Of the 34 canneries inspected, only 3 had a definite schedule. Of the white and negro women in the canneries for whom data on hours worked during the week were secured, one-fifth had worked at least 60 hours. In the canning industry the possibility



of a short week for many workers, due to irregularity of crops and harvest, also is a serious situation to be reckoned with. In fact, many women workers in the canneries included in the survey failed to secure a full week's work. Effort was made by the bureau's agents to obtain information for a representative week. Almost one-half of the women had worked less than 40 hours, and one-fifth less than 30 hours in the week reported upon. Because of the irregularity in restaurant hours, the schedule for each day in the week studied was secured for each of the 84 women in the 15 hotels and restaurants included. The scheduled hours of duty on 51 per cent of the work-days were 8 or less.

Data on earnings of the women workers in Delaware factories, stores, and laundries, all of whom were white women, revealed the median of \$11.05 for the week reported upon. The earnings for women in canneries were low, with a median of \$9.40 for white women and \$5.55 for negro women. The median of the week's earnings of 64 white women in the hotels and restaurants was \$10.15, and the median for 21 negro women was \$10.75.

The investigation of conditions under which women were working in factories, stores, and laundries disclosed only a limited number of places that were flagrantly bad, yet there was evidence that many employers did not fully appreciate the significance of good conditions of employment and of the State laws applying to the employers of women. Conditions in canneries varied greatly with size, resources, and progressiveness of the organization and management. In many plants arrangements, methods, and sanitation were all that the most fastidious could desire, but in others confusion and messiness prevailed.

#### Tennessee.

The survey of hours, wages, and working conditions of women in Tennessee industries was made in the spring of 1925 and included 216 factories, stores, and laundries, employing 16,596 women. The State law permits long industrial hours for women—a 10½-hour day and a 57-hour week. The scheduled hours of the firms visited also were long, on the whole, since 45.6 per cent of the women included had a daily schedule of 10 hours or longer and 49.5 per cent of the women had a weekly schedule of 55 hours or more. The median of week's earnings of the white women was \$11.10 and the median of the earnings of the negro women was considerably lower, \$6.95. Although in some plants the working conditions were entirely satisfactory, in others they fell far below standard. Especially was this true in regard to drinking, washing, and toilet facilities for women workers, since 48 of the establishments visited had provided only common cups and 51 other plants had neither cups of any sort nor bubble fountains in the way of drinking facilities; 11 establishments had no washing facilities; 63 had common towels, and 109 no towels; moreover, in two-fifths of the toilet rooms the equipment was inadequate.

#### SPECIAL STUDIES

During the past year the Women's Bureau has conducted a number of studies of problems particularly related to wage-earning women. Three important studies which were carried over from the preceding

year and the reports of which are still in the process of preparation are as follows:

Minimum wage laws—a research study of the history, operation, and administration of the various minimum wage laws of the United States.

Industrial accidents among women—a study of compensable work accidents to women wage earners in New Jersey, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Trend of employment—an analysis of the employment statistics for men and women, collected by the State of Ohio during a period of 11 years, 1914–1924, inclusive, but not published by that State since 1915.

### **Night work for women.**

A study of night work for women, which was practically completed during the past year, will be revised to some extent and published by the bureau during the coming year in connection with other reports on the effects of special legislation for women workers. This report is based largely on research of laws and publications already in existence on the subject and consists of the history of night-work legislation in foreign countries as well as in this country, an analysis of such legislation in this country, and a general discussion of the physiological and psychological effects of night work upon women and of the economic and social consequences of such form of employment. The study also includes the compilation and welding together of material on the subject which has already been collected by the bureau during its State investigations.

### **Changing jobs.**

A considerable amount of research on the rate of labor turnover has been conducted by various groups interested in the subject. Employers have come to regard its reduction as one of the major opportunities for eliminating waste and reducing costs. Less is known regarding the significance of the reported change of jobs by the individual worker. It is not possible to say of any one industry, without careful study, to what extent the terminations of employment are voluntary and to what extent they are forced upon the worker. Two factors sometimes operate to make a change of job a positive advantage to the worker. The first is psychological. The standardized job and the routine of the job may make a change of employment the only means of relieving the monotony which has become unendurable. The second is the economic incentive of a higher wage paid in another plant, industry, or locality because of a temporary shortage of labor. It may be well assumed that a better understanding of the whole social and economic field of the new rate of change and the shorter average employment is needed at the present time. Women, together with men, change jobs for reasons which have not been analyzed and with results which have not been measured.

On this account it occurred to the group of students at the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women in Industry in the summer of 1925 to make use of a unique opportunity to study this question as it was presented in the combined industrial experiences of the assembled students. Accordingly, the cooperation of the 97 students who

composed the school was enlisted, and they were interviewed concerning the circumstances of all the changes of jobs which they had ever made. The Women's Bureau revised and edited the report on this subject, which is now in press. The facts revealed in the report give some indication of the prevalence of the short jobs which are filled by many women workers. Of the 97 women, 28 reported jobs with average duration of less than one year, and 29 women reported an average duration of one but under two years. The largest group of women in any one industry were the 32 in the garment industry, the 16 in the textile industry constituting the next largest group. The garment workers were conspicuous as a group of short-job workers; only one of the 32 women included in this industry showed an average duration of as much as three years and 13 had an average of less than a year. It must be remembered, however, that the garment industry is rather seasonal in nature. The garment workers formed a contrast with the textile workers, of whom one-half had an average duration of three years or more. Of the total 599 reasons given by these 97 workers for leaving jobs, the largest number of changes due to any one cause was 146 due to wages and hours. Discharge and "lay off" requiring involuntary changes accounted for a quarter of the reasons for leaving jobs. Dislike of the job or of the management was responsible for 12 per cent of the changes. One important conclusion to be drawn from the report is that if frequent changes of employment are inevitable under modern industry, then different methods of employment management and industrial relations and tactics different from those now in vogue will have to be worked out.

#### **Lost time and labor turnover.**

The completion of a report on lost time and labor turnover during the year 1922 in 18 cotton mills—9 in the North and 9 in the South—has made available considerable data of interest to the industrial world. In all, records on lost time and labor turnover were secured for 4,338 women and 6,203 men. From the mill records it has been possible to ascertain the number and duration of each individual absence, the relation of lost time to possible working time, the amount of time lost by men and by women in the various mills and in different departments, and the number of separations taking place, according to the season of the year and according to occupation. Home visits were made to 2,354 women, who were interviewed by the bureau's agents in regard to the causes both of lost time and of change in job, and in regard to other matters of personal and family history. Information was secured on causes of lost time from 2,214 women and on reasons for leaving former jobs from 1,066 women.

In all the mills visited men and women together lost 18.6 per cent of their possible working time, women losing 21.9 per cent and men 16.2 per cent. In northern mills the men and women lost 13.2 per cent of their time as against 23.3 per cent of time lost by men and women in southern mills. In mills with scheduled weekly hours of less than 55, men and women combined lost 13.4 per cent of their time, women lost 16.3 per cent, and men 10.7 per cent; in mills with scheduled weekly hours of 55 or more, men and women

combined lost 22.3 per cent, women lost 27 per cent, and men 19.5 per cent.

Of the reasons given by 2,214 women for lost time, more than three-fourths were personal, the principal causes being illness of self, illness of others, home duties, rest, recreation, and another job; about one-fifth were mill causes such as shutdowns, no work, slack work, and accident in the mill. The most important personal cause was the illness of the women, which was responsible for almost one-fourth of all lost time, the average number of days lost by women workers on this account being 10.2. The proportion of women interviewed who had lost time from illness was 61.3 per cent. The average number of days lost on this account by the women who were ill was 16.6.

The turnover figures used in this study represent the number of separations which occurred during a year's period divided by the average number of full-time workers. According to this method the turnover rate for men and women combined in all mills was 142.3 per cent, the rate for women was 142.5 per cent, and the rate for men, 142.1 per cent. The turnover rate in northern mills for men and women combined was 94.9 per cent as against the rate of 189.5 per cent for women and men in southern mills. The turnover rate varied widely in the 10 mills, ranging from 41 per cent in one mill to 377.3 per cent in another, with a majority of the mills reporting between 125 and 300 per cent.

Of the causes given by 944 women for leaving jobs in cotton mills, 91 per cent were voluntary. Personal reasons were responsible for 70.7 per cent of all separations of women from mills, home duties and illness being the principal causes.

#### **The status of women in the Government service in 1925.**

The investigation of the status of women in the Government service in 1925 is a follow up of the report on this subject issued by the Women's Bureau in 1919. In the interval between 1919 and 1925 there has been a reclassification of positions in the Government service and therefore it is significant to ascertain the progress made by women. It is the purpose of this report, which is now in press, to show the positions held by women in the departmental service and the salary range in such positions. With the resources available it was not possible to include in the study all women employed in the Government service. It was the aim of the bureau, however, to emphasize the opportunities for women in Government work. Consequently the confines of the review were placed where those who had attained positions of responsibility or positions requiring special education and training would be included. Since the classification act of 1923 fixed the minimum salary for positions calling for professional, scientific, or technical training equivalent to that represented by graduation from a university of recognized standing, at \$1,860 per annum, and since all persons in administrative positions receive more than this sum, it was decided to review only records of women receiving salaries of \$1,860 and over. Positions paying salaries below \$1,860 were touched upon in this report only in connection with beginning salaries.

The report includes the service records of women employed in the District of Columbia and receiving salaries of \$1,860 and over

per annum on or prior to April, 1925, as well as the records of all men employed in similar positions in the following executive establishments:

Department of Agriculture.

Department of Commerce.

Department of the Interior (exclusive of Howard University and St. Elizabeths and Freedmen's Hospitals).

Department of Labor.

Post Office Department.

Department of State.

Treasury Department (only one-half of personnel records were included, such half being taken in strictly alphabetical order):

Bureau of Efficiency.

Civil Service Commission.

Employees' Compensation Commission.

Federal Board for Vocational Education.

Federal Trade Commission.

Tariff Commission.

Veterans' Bureau.

The Government establishments employing large numbers that were not included in the survey, because time would not permit, were the War and Navy Departments, the Department of Justice, the General Accounting Office, the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the Smithsonian Institution.

The executive establishments included employed 15,777 women and 15,966 men. Time did not permit going through all the records of the Treasury Department. The cards were taken alphabetically, so that the half from which records of persons receiving \$1,860 and over were taken may be considered representative of the 11,311 employees in that department.

Almost one-half of the employees in the departmental service in the seven independent establishments and six departments whose records were reviewed in their entirety were women. A little more than one-third of all employees in these services received salaries of \$1,860 and over; 79 per cent receiving such salaries were men and only 21 per cent were women. Of the 2,198 women receiving such salaries in these Government establishments, almost two-thirds were in clerical, typing, and stenographic positions, 8 per cent were engaged in accounting and auditing, and the remaining one-fourth were scheduled in administrative, professional, scientific, and special positions, in no one branch of which was there so large a proportion of the women as 5 per cent. About one-sixth of the women as against approximately one-half of the men reported upon received \$1,860 or more a year. Of the women included, only 35 received \$3,600 or more, and only 10 had a salary as high as \$5,200, 8 of these being in administrative work, 1 in cooperative extension work, and 1 in fact-collecting service. Although approximately 900 men were paid salaries of \$3,800 and over, only 34 women were paid such salaries. The highest salary received by a woman among those included in this report was \$6,500, the woman being the Civil Service Commissioner.

In all the positions paying \$1,860 and over in which women and men were employed, 45 per cent of the women employees received just \$1,860 a year as compared with approximately 15 per cent of

the men in like positions. Only 15 per cent of the women as against 61 per cent of the men in similar positions were paid \$2,400 or more per year. Of all the women and men in like positions who received \$1,860 and over, 21 per cent of the women and 39 per cent of the men received increases of 5 per cent or more in their salary rates as a result of the reclassification of positions in the departmental service.

#### Foreign-born women in industry.

The field work in connection with the investigation of foreign-born women in industry was begun in December, 1924, and was completed in October, 1925. The investigation was conducted with the idea of securing authentic information concerning foreign-born women workers in order to permit a better understanding of their problems and to make for the establishment of a more satisfactory policy for their education and adjustment in American industry.

The data were collected by interviews with the women workers in their homes; in all, 2,146 women living in Philadelphia and vicinity and the Lehigh Valley were visited. The topics discussed in the interviews covered personal data on age, residence in the United States, marital status, education, size of the family, number of wage earners in the family, as well as the industrial experience of the women in their native country and in the United States. For example, information was secured as to the number of jobs held, the kind of work, and the present wage, emphasis being laid on the women's efforts to secure work, their lack of employment, and their difficulties in industrial adjustment. Also data concerning the workers' economic responsibilities and their social opportunities were collected.

Southern Pennsylvania was selected as a proper section for this study because it contains a large city with conditions representative of the country as a whole in respect to the proportion of native and foreign born, and because it includes an important area devoted to special industries, with a fairly concentrated foreign group.

In the Philadelphia district the Polish constituted the largest single racial group included. Following, but very much smaller, was the Slavic group of Russian, Slovak, and Ukrainian; other races of importance were the Jewish, the Italian, the German (including the large group from Hungary), and the Magyar. There were a few French, Flemish, and Armenian. Of the 1,120 women who were scheduled here, the largest group, approximately one-third, was employed in the textile industry. The next most important group was that found in the clothing industry. About one-twentieth of the women were employed in the cigar and tobacco industry, and a similar proportion were engaged in the preparation of food products and in meat-packing, candy, and bakery establishments. A little more than a tenth of the women interviewed were in domestic and personal service. Quite characteristic of the Philadelphia district were the women working in their own homes upon factory products.

Of the 1,026 foreign-born women visited in their homes in the Lehigh Valley, only 5 were of English-speaking races. The largest group was the German, and the next largest the Magyar. Almost two-thirds of the women interviewed in this district were working in cigar factories.

Although few women are employed in the towns around Philadelphia compared to the Lehigh Valley district, these are important by way of contrast. In Norristown, for example, the Italian is the only foreign race found in large numbers, but across the river are important settlements of Poles and Slovaks. Of 164 women visited in these smaller towns, 82 were employed in the manufacture of yarn.

As the statistical work of the survey has not yet been completed, more figures can not be given at this time, but a great many interesting facts will be revealed on the subject of foreign-born women in industry when the statistical tables have been analyzed and the report written.

### **Women workers in Flint, Mich.**

The study of the women in industry in Flint, Mich., was made by the bureau during the past year at the request of local agencies. This survey of work opportunities and of the potential woman labor supply in a representative one-industry city will, however, be of general interest to the industrial world as a whole. The purpose of the investigation was to secure information concerning the economic status of wage-earning women, their training and experience, the occupations and industries in which they were employed, their hours, wages, general working conditions, seasonal employment, and underemployment. The data were secured in two ways: First, by visiting industrial establishments and securing records therefrom; and, second, by visiting women in their homes in a house-to-house canvass in a representative working-class neighborhood. One hundred and thirty-eight establishments, including factories, stores, laundries, hotels, and restaurants, with a total of 2,805 women employees, were visited. Hour and wage data were copied from the pay rolls, and information on working conditions was scheduled by the bureau's agents in their inspection of the plants. Visits were made to 3,648 homes, in which were found 4,844 adult women, about one-fifth of whom had worked during the year. During the interviews with the women the work history, data on personal matters, and information as to the economic status of the employed women were obtained.

### **Wage study.**

The compilation of the material already collected by the bureau on earnings of women workers in 13 States was started during the past year with the purpose of bringing together and publishing these wage data in one bulletin and of comparing, wherever feasible, available figures on wages in large woman-employing industries in the various localities.

### **Investigation of the effects of special legislation on the employment of women in industry.**

At the Women's Industrial Conference which was held under the auspices of the Women's Bureau in January, 1926, a resolution was passed asking the bureau to make "a comprehensive investigation of all the special laws regulating the employment of women to determine their effects." This resolution also requested that an advisory committee be formed with which the Director of the Women's Bureau would take counsel regarding the scope of the investigation, and that the membership of this committee have equal representation from each side of the controversy over special legislation for women.

In response to this request and in view of the fact that existing material on the subject has not hitherto been brought together as a unit, the Women's Bureau has undertaken the investigation and attempted to carry out the terms of the resolution.

Shortly after the conference was over an advisory committee was formed. The members appointed to the committee as advocates of special legislation for women were: Mrs. Sara Conboy, representing the American Federation of Labor; Miss Mabel Leslie, representing the National Women's Trade-Union League; and Mrs. Maud Wood Park, representing the Women's Committee Opposing the So-Called "Equal Rights" Amendment, which committee consists of representatives of 11 national women's organizations. The three members appointed to the committee as opponents of special legislation for women were Miss Alice Paul, Miss Doris Stevens, and Miss Maud Younger, representing the National Woman's Party.

For technical advice in planning and conducting the investigation, the Women's Bureau secured the assistance of a committee of industrial experts. This technical committee consists of Miss Mary Van Kleeck, director of the division of industrial studies, Russell Sage Foundation; Mrs. Frank B. Gilbreth, industrial engineer; Dr. Charles P. Neill, former Commissioner of Labor of the United States.

The advisory committee met four times between January 21 and March 31. In the course of these sessions, members of the committee submitted their recommendations. After considering these recommendations and consulting with the technical committee as to methods of obtaining the desired information, the Women's Bureau submitted its plan of investigation at a joint meeting of the advisory and technical committees on March 31.

*Object of investigation.*—The object of the investigation is to discover in what way legislation applying to women only has affected their employment in industry and how extensive any effect has been. Such laws regulating the employment of women in industry have been enacted in every State in the Union except Florida. In each State these laws differ in extent, in application, and in requirements.

*Methods of measurement.*—Possible methods of measurement of the effects of these laws, therefore, must be carefully analyzed. The method adopted for the present investigation is to study conditions of women's employment before and after the laws went into effect and to compare present conditions in States which are regulated by law with conditions in States which are not regulated by law. The data on which to base the comparisons are being secured (1) from industrial statistics collected and published by the States and by the Federal Government, and (2) from original investigations by the Women's Bureau in selected States, industries, and occupations.

*Comparable data to be secured.*—The plan is to secure information from two or more States for each industry or occupation studied, one State having considerable legislation for women in industry and the other State having little or no such legislation. In order to insure that the information gathered for the same industry in two States is comparable, a careful analysis will be made of the conditions in each establishment to show other factors which may have influenced



women's employment, such as methods of manufacturing, employment policies, labor supply, vocational training, organization, and public opinion. When the proper allowance has been made for such factors, it will be possible to define more clearly the changes brought about by the legal regulations applying to women in that industry in one State and not in the other.

*Selection of industries, occupations, and States.*—The selection of the States, industries, and occupations to be studied has been made on the following basis: (1) Industries have been selected which are typical of different conditions of women's employment in regard to numbers of women employed, proportion of women employed, extent of organization, amount of skill required, etc. (2) Industries and occupations in which the employment of women has conspicuously decreased have been selected for special study in order to discover whether legal regulations for women's employment have any bearing on the decrease in their employment. (3) Occupations which are prohibited for women in certain States have been selected for study in other States where such prohibition does not exist, in order to discover how extensively the prohibition has affected the actual employment of women. (4) States have been selected in different parts of the country which represent similar industrial conditions for one or more of the industries studied but which differ in legal regulation of women's employment.

*Present and past conditions to be studied.*—The greater part of the material collected will show present conditions. Wherever possible, however, records will be secured to show conditions and scope of women's employment immediately preceding and following the enactment of legislation affecting women. This material, which will necessarily be limited in amount because of the inadequacy of the records in most establishments, will be supplemented by general industrial statistics for the industries, occupations, and States studied; giving any available information for the years in question.

*Laws to be included.*—Wherever possible the effects of all laws will be studied, but attention will be focused on laws regulating hours—daily, weekly, and at night—and on laws prohibiting women's employment in certain occupations. In order to give an accurate background for the discussion of effects, a summary of the laws has been made, giving their extent, application, dates of enactment and amendment, a historical sketch of the efforts made to establish or oppose them, and an outline of the arguments advanced in their favor and against them.

*Other subjects to be included.*—As the effects of legislation must be considered in conjunction with other factors which influence women's employment, the investigation will include studies showing to what extent vocational training has fitted women to enter industry on an equal basis with men; to what extent actual industrial conditions already equal, or are in advance of, the standards set up by legislation affecting women; to what extent trade-unions have endorsed the movement for special legislation for men or women, and to what extent State laws or other regulations giving legal equality to men and women have resulted in an improvement of the occupational status of women in industry.

*Method.*—The method which is being used for the study consists of an investigation by the bureau's agents of the records of industrial establishments; compilation and interpretation of existing statistical material showing the development of the employment of women in industry in the United States and, specifically, in the States where detailed investigation is made; interviews with women workers, employers, and representatives of interested organizations; and examination of public and private records which are pertinent to the investigation.

The details of this outline include the laws, industries, and States suggested in their recommendations by both groups on the advisory committee, but the scope of the investigation as finally planned by the bureau is somewhat more inclusive than the outline suggested by the group in favor of special legislation and is very much more inclusive than that suggested by those opposing special legislation.

The investigation is now well under way and a considerable amount of material has already been collected. The advisory committee has been dissolved, following the withdrawal from it of the three members who were in favor of special legislation for women, representing the American Federation of Labor, the National Women's Trade Union League, and the Women's Committee Opposing the So-Called "Equal Rights" Amendment. The reason given for this action was that they felt they could no longer serve to good purpose with the other members of the committee. In spite of their withdrawals full cooperation has been offered the Women's Bureau in conducting this study by the individuals withdrawing and by the organizations they represent.

Unfortunately, similar cooperation has been refused by the organization which was represented by the other three members of the committee who were opposed to special legislation for women. The bureau's agents, however, in conducting the field investigations, are making every effort to get in touch with individuals and groups who are opposed to such legislation, so that the facts of their experience may be recorded and examined.

### LIBRARY RESEARCH WORK

Research activities have constituted an important part of the program during the past year. A considerable amount of library research work has been necessary in connection with the surveys made and with the reports written. For example, in conjunction with the study of the effects of special labor laws for women, a history of such legislation in regard to the extent, application, and dates of enactment and amendment of these laws has been prepared.

A number of the studies have been based almost entirely on information secured by research of laws, publications, and records, the chief ones of this type handled during the year being as follows:

- Minimum wage laws.

- Night work for women.

- The status of women in the Government service in 1925.

The research division also has served as a bureau of information, furnishing considerable data on the subject of wage-earning women to numerous organizations and individuals throughout the country.

The News-Letter, which was started in 1921 at the request of the Association of Governmental Labor Officials and which serves as a clearing house of information regarding the activities affecting working women in this country and others, was published during the first half of the year but had to be discontinued temporarily on account of the pressure of other duties in connection with the study on special legislation for women.

### EDUCATIONAL WORK

A considerable number of special articles and news releases on the work of the bureau and the problems of women workers have, as usual, been prepared from time to time. These articles, written chiefly upon request and appearing in encyclopedias, periodicals, and other publications, have comprised such subjects as the activities of the Women's Bureau, women in gainful employment, conditions of employment for women, women's wages, women's hours of work, the occupations and conditions of woman labor, married women in industry, the need of labor laws for women, human waste in industry, and making industry safe for women. Popular news releases on the Women's Industrial Conference, on the bulletins published by the Women's Bureau, and on the exhibit work of the bureau have been sent out at fairly frequent intervals during the year. More educational work of this type should and could be done if the bureau were not so limited in funds and personnel. Considerable information has been furnished to journalists and special feature writers to be used in articles for various publications.

An important and very essential piece of work inaugurated by the editorial division during the year was the indexing of the bureau's publications. The pressure of other duties interrupted this task and prevented its completion, but as soon as opportunity permits the work will be resumed.

#### Exhibits.

The handling of popular exhibits has involved even more activity than usual. A number of new exhibits have been planned and prepared for use throughout the country. For example, a special exhibit illustrating the effect of conditions of employment for women on standards of living and national welfare has been made. This exhibit consists of two parts—each showing a factory and home interior with a community as a background—which form a striking contrast. In the first part are depicted poor industrial conditions and poor living conditions in a home and community, whereas the second part illustrates good standards for women workers in a factory and satisfactory standards in the home and community life. The relation between community standards and national standards is also shown in a pictorial way.

A new panel exhibit composed of six hand-painted sketches, each 17 by 27 inches, mounted and framed, has been prepared. This depicts in graphic fashion industrial standards of hours, wages, seating, lighting, sanitation, and service facilities for women, and contrasts good and bad working conditions. One set of these panels has been mounted very effectively in an automatic book.

The new material and other exhibits already in use for some time, such as models, charts, posters, maps, and motion pictures, have

been extensively circulated, sent out at the request of schools, colleges, universities, churches, women's clubs, and industrial and labor organizations in all parts of the United States. In a few instances requests for the use of this material have come from foreign countries. A special and concise list and description of all available exhibit material, mimeographed copies of which were sent out to interested organizations, proved an excellent method of advertising these popular educational features.

Preparation of special exhibits for the National Sesquicentennial Exposition at Philadelphia has necessitated considerable work and effort, an appropriation having been granted the bureau for this purpose. The motion picture, "The Woman Worker, Past and Present," was cut and reduced for use in an automatic motion-picture projector to form a part of the Sesquicentennial Exposition exhibits. Two special scenarios designed for use in automatic stereopticon machines were prepared. The first one entitled "Women Who Toil and Spin Through the Ages" is a historical scenario showing the progress of women in industry and industrial changes affecting women. It has a popular appeal and contrasts the ways in which Miss 1776 was supplied with the needs of life by the industrial methods in vogue in colonial days with modern industrial methods of the present era which furnish Miss 1926 with the essentials and comforts of life; there are occasional references to other periods. The second scenario entitled "The Home Maker as Wage Earner" deals with the problems of women wage earners of to-day. In allegorical form it depicts the adventures of Any Girl compelled by family misfortunes to travel the path of the wage earners. Her difficulties first as a young worker in the forest of prejudices, next as a married woman and then as a widow with an industrial job added to home cares, and finally as a worn out old woman driven to the poorhouse by the lightning bolts of wrong industrial conditions, are contrasted with the easier and happier life of the woman who works in a plant with good industrial standards. Although these slide films were planned primarily for use at the Sesquicentennial Exposition, they can be circulated by the bureau for general exhibit purposes during the coming year.

The exhibits as finally prepared for the Sesquicentennial Exposition consist of four units. The first, which is historical, depicts by means of paintings and an automatic stereopticon machine the progress of women in industry and changes in industry affecting women. The screen on which the story is told is set in the back of a 5-foot book, which is flanked by two other large books revealing paintings of women spinning and weaving in 1776, 1826, and 1926. The second unit deals with the problems of women wage earners of to-day and consists of paneled paintings of the different types of women workers, with a more detailed story presented upon a screen by means of a stereopticon machine. A striking representation of the interior of a factory employing women workers under model conditions constitutes the third unit. The fourth consists of actual factory equipment, such as model seats, first-aid cabinets, and sanitary drinking, washing, and toilet facilities, lent to the bureau by various manufacturers, which should be of particular interest to employers.

A popular folder has been prepared for distribution at the Sesquicentennial Exposition and also for general use. This gives in

concise outline form important facts about the Women's Bureau, lists of its publications and exhibits, and striking statistics about women workers.

### PUBLICATIONS

During the year the following bulletins have been published:

- No. 47. Women in the Fruit-growing and Canning Industries in the State of Washington.
- No. 48. Women in Oklahoma Industries.
- No. 49. Women Workers and Family Support.
- No. 50. Effects of Applied Research upon the Employment Opportunities of American Women.
- No. 51. Women in Illinois Industries.

The following bulletins are in press:

- No. 52. Lost Time and Labor Turnover in Cotton Mills.
- No. 53. The Status of Women in the Government Service in 1925.
- No. 54. Changing Jobs.
- No. 55. Women in Mississippi Industries.

The following bulletins are almost completed and will be sent to press during the coming year:

- Women in Tennessee Industries.
- Women in Delaware Industries.
- Minimum Wage Laws.
- Industrial Accidents Among Women.
- Trend of Employment Among Women.
- Night Work for Women.
- Women Workers and Industrial Poisons.

Reports on the following subjects which are now in the process of preparation also will be completed:

- Foreign-born Women in Industry.
- Women in Industry in Flint, Mich.
- Wages of Women in 13 States.

### COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Women's Bureau has a stupendous task in view not only of the large numbers of women in gainful employment—more than eight and a half million—but because of the many elements which compose this wage-earning group, the great number of occupations in which they are engaged, the many variations in labor legislation for women in the different States, and the complexity and variety of problems related to women workers.

Each year the work of the bureau becomes better known, its effects more far-reaching, and the demands upon it more numerous. The bureau because of its limited appropriation is greatly handicapped. However, every effort is made to meet the many requests which come to it and to perform the activities pressing for attention, but despite the economy practiced in the attempt to make the funds produce the best results and despite the efficiency displayed by the members of the staff who aim to render service of utmost value, the bureau is able to achieve only a small part of the program with which it is faced each year.

Since "America will be as strong as her women," the need to safeguard the interests of wage-earning women is apparent. Women

are the mothers actually or potentially of the race. They are the homemakers and caretakers of the family. If industrial forces are permitted to prey too heavily upon the energies and strength of women, the forces of the Nation will be definitely weakened.

### **Married women in industry.**

In the United States at the present time there exists in many quarters a strong feeling against the married woman worker, a prejudice due largely to a lack of understanding of the problems surrounding this type of wage earner, to the belief that married-women workers take jobs from single women or from men, and also to the fear that the employment of married women will tend to break up the home. Consequently there is pressing need to present to the public authentic information on this subject and facts entirely divorced from prejudices.

Census figures show that there were almost 2,000,000 married women in gainful occupations in 1920, exclusive of the widowed, divorced, or deserted; and that there was a 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. While the census figures give the number of married women with husbands living at home, these figures fail to show the number of widowed or divorced mothers at work or the number of children affected by the employment of mothers. In a study of census schedules made by the Women's Bureau for four cities—selected because they were representative of different sections and conditions in the country and fairly typical of industrial and rural communities in general—facts were brought to light, showing that there were employed in these four cities approximately 40,000 female workers 14 years of age or over, or more than 38 per cent of the total female population. More than 21,000 of the women included were or had been married, and over 61 per cent of these were living with wage-earning husbands. Over one-half of the 21,000 who were or had been married were mothers, two-fifths of whom had children under the age of 5 years. Almost two-fifths of the mothers were employed outside the home.

Census figures show that over three-fourths of the married women were in manufacturing and mechanical industries, domestic and personal service, and agriculture—types of work in which women have almost no opportunity for a career. It would appear, therefore, that economic necessity and not the desire to earn "pin money" or to escape household drudgery is responsible for their gainful employment. Census figures serve only as a bare index of the situation, and there is need of many details to give the full picture of the employment of married women. The considerable information about the married women workers gathered by the Women's Bureau in its other investigations reveals that these women are at work to supplement the family income and to keep up a home, and that they perform their household tasks in addition to their remunerative jobs.

There is need for much additional information on married women workers since there has been such an increase in the number of gainfully occupied married women and since new problems concerning their employment are arising. In fact, the whole subject of married

women workers is extremely complex, linked so closely as it is with the welfare of the home and the family and related so definitely in the long run to the health of the race and the progress of the Nation. In order that injustices may not be worked in any direction, it is imperative to make a comprehensive study of this subject. There is need for definite data gathered at first hand giving current information about married women workers. Such a study would require considerable field work, and it would perforce be extensive in scope but would prove of infinite value to the country by presenting truths of much vital importance.

#### **The piecework system.**

The Women's Bureau has made a number of state-wide surveys of general conditions of employment for women. In such investigations, however, it has not been possible to make scientific and detailed studies of special problems connected with working conditions. One matter that should be carefully considered at the present time is the piecework system, by which wages are based on output rather than time at work. The question is so closely related to matters of health and efficiency and is of such paramount importance both to the worker and to the employer that a careful and scientific analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the system and a comparison of this method of work with that of time-work should be a valuable contribution to the industrial world.

#### **Posture at work.**

In recent years much emphasis has been laid on the question of posture at work, and effort has been made in some quarters to produce better seating arrangements for workers. A careful study of posture in connection with the job is needed and would be extremely helpful both to managers who are seeking to eliminate all obstacles to efficiency and to workers who require every possible means of preventing undue and unnecessary fatigue, since extreme fatigue acts as a poison to the system, undermining the health of workers and rendering them more susceptible to accident and disease.

#### **Industrial poisons.**

Another subject requiring much careful and scientific investigation at the present time is that of industrial poisons as related to women workers. A great many new and more or less unfamiliar industrial poisons have come into use since the war. This brings about a serious situation which demands immediate attention to prevent human beings who handle such poisons in trade processes from being experimented upon. That women are more susceptible to certain poisons than are men is generally admitted. Moreover, when pregnant women are exposed to such conditions there is the danger not only that the mothers will be poisoned but also that the offspring will suffer bad results. That the Women's Bureau is the national organization which should make investigations of this sort seems logical, but in order to make such a study it would need an increase in appropriation and also the addition to its force of experts trained to handle most efficiently this type of scientific investigation.

#### **Other causes of fatigue.**

Other causes of fatigue to women, such as dust, lint, excessive humidity, poor lighting, long hours of work, and the lifting of heavy

weights, also require careful and detailed investigation, especially as the opportunity of employment and occupational progress of women are so interwoven with such matters.

### **Occupational opportunities of women.**

There should be undertaken extensive studies covering the opportunities of women for occupational advancement in comparison with the opportunities for advancement offered to men in industry. The whole subject of vocational training for women would constitute an interesting and necessary part of such investigation.

### **Lost time and labor turnover.**

It has been possible for the bureau with its limited force and funds to undertake only one technical study of lost time and labor turnover, and this was in selected cotton mills. Now, since there has been such an increase in the number of married women and since a number of important problems connected with wage-earning women require special attention, it seems that similar studies on cause and extent of lost time and labor turnover in other industries should be made, and comparable material for men and women collected.

### **Wage study.**

The bureau receives constant requests for current information about women's wages and realizes its need to establish a service for the collection of wage data of women workers in a variety of industries and in various sections of the country for a uniform date from year to year. Such comparable wage material would constitute a valuable contribution, especially because of its continuity over a period of years.

Up to the present the bureau has been able to furnish data on women's earnings for only the States in which surveys have been conducted and for several industries in which special investigations have been made. Since these State studies have been made in different years, not more than two as a rule occurring in any one year, and since the industries are not just the same in the various States, the material does not lend itself readily for comparative purposes.

### **Needed additions to staff.**

The bureau has been handicapped in many ways by the small force with which it has been compelled to operate, and in order to function more satisfactorily needs several important additions to its staff. The personnel of the research division should be increased in order to expand activities in the following ways:

Thorough investigation of sources in order to answer current inquiries.

More comprehensive legal research of State laws in the field of working conditions, of foreign laws affecting wage-earning women, and of law-enforcing agencies.

Studies of documents, reports, and laws concerning industrial hygiene, occupations and industries prohibited to women, fatigue, and posture; of court cases affecting labor legislation for women.

More detailed research investigations in connection with field reports and legal, industrial, and economic matters.



More systematic examination of current publications on subjects of interest to the bureau.

Preparation of additional special bibliographies.

In the editorial division there should be an increased force to expedite the writing and editing of the reports as well as the preparation of reports for the press. It is imperative that bulletins on current matters be published as quickly as possible in order that they be of greatest value to interested forces, and some of the delays in connection with the preparation and publication of reports with which the bureau is compelled to put up at the present time, because of its limited personnel, should be eliminated.

Another type of activity in which there should be considerable expansion is the educational work, especially in the number of news releases about the activities and interests of the bureau and of the popular articles on all subjects pertaining to women workers. An increase in the exhibit material also is necessary, since by such popular educational methods a certain part of the public to whom technical material makes little appeal can be reached. The addition to the staff, therefore, of one or two specialists charged with the sole function of handling the current publicity and the exhibits would greatly facilitate the educational work of the bureau.

There are needed also several experts equipped by training and experience to make certain types of technical investigations, especially in regard to health problems, which the bureau should make from time to time if it is to fulfill its function in a manner conducive to the best results to individuals and to society at large.

MARY ANDERSON,  
*Director.*

