EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK IN

DEPARTMENT STORES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Maurice J. Tobin, Secretary

BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
Ewan Clague, Commissioner

In cooperation with VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK SERIES

Bulletin No. 1020

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Letter of Transmittal

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS,
Washington, D. C., March 15, 1951.

The SECRETARY OF LABOR:

I have the honor to transmit herewith a report on the employment outlook in department stores. This is one of a series of occupational studies conducted in the Bureau's Occupational Outlook Branch for use in vocational counseling of veterans, young people in schools, and others interested in choosing a field of work. The study was financed largely by the Veterans Administration, and the report was originally published as a Veterans Administration pamphlet for use in vocational rehabilitation and education activities.

The study was prepared by Raymond D. Larson with the assistance of James J. Treires. The Bureau wishes to acknowledge the generous assistance received from the unions, trade associations, department stores, and government agencies.

EWAN CLAGUE, *Commissioner.*

Hon. MAURICE J. TOBIN,
Secretary of Labor.

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Summary

About 2,600 department stores with 750,000 workers are located in cities throughout the Nation. The largest stores and a large proportion of the workers are concentrated in metropolitan areas. Some department stores have as few as 25 employees; the largest have thousands of workers.

Running a department store calls for a wide assortment of workers, ranging from porters to store executives. Selling employees account for almost half the workers. For many jobs, employers prefer applicants with training in business methods, but most of the beginning jobs can be filled by workers with no previous retail experience. Higher-level positions, on the other hand, frequently call for store experience in addition to specialized training. About two out of three employees are women.

The employment trend in department stores has been upward over the years and is likely to continue in this direction. Increasing population and income, and the establishment of new suburban outlets will be the chief causes of rising employment. Although a number of additional workers will be needed to run new stores and to enlarge the staffs of some established stores, few jobs will result from growth in the industry compared with the number of openings resulting from turn-over.

Increased business activity caused by defense expenditures will have little effect on total employment, but will temporarily increase the rate of turn-over. By the same token, any small dips in business will decrease employment very little, if at all. In any event, department stores offer employees more security than many other industries.

Earnings among nonsupervisory employees vary greatly. In general, sales clerks earn more than nonselling employees, and men earn more than women. Pay checks of more than $100 a week are not uncommon among men sales clerks in big cities. In some large cities, on the other hand, many women sales clerks earn less than $30 a week. A large and increasing number of department store employees work on a 5-day-week schedule of 40 hours. Most department stores give their workers vacations and holidays with pay, and allow them discounts on items purchased in the store.

The Department Store Industry

More than 830,000 workers were employed in 2,590 department stores in November 1948. (See table 1.) Census of Business figures show that these stores had about 12 percent of all the workers in retail trade and sold 10.6 billion dollars' worth of merchandise, representing over 8 percent of the dollar volume for all retail trade. Department stores were defined as departmentalized retail establishments with 25 or more employees selling a broad line of merchandise including a variety of apparel and home furnishings. Mail order houses selling a wide variety of merchandise were included in the data for department stores.

A growing proportion of department stores are members of chain organizations. Some department store chains cover only a local area and have as few as four stores. Others are Nation-wide organizations with hundreds of stores and many thousands of employees. The biggest department store chain had about 600 stores with 66,000 employees in 1945. Many of the units in this chain, however, are small stores not considered department stores. For chain stores, the buying, personnel, credit, and other operation policies are determined by a home office or home store. As a result, there are fewer workers at the managerial level,

and their duties are limited to a much greater extent than in independent stores. For example, buyers in independent stores frequently have the responsibility of deciding not only what merchandise to buy but how much and where; in chain organizations the central offices do most of the buying.

TABLE 1.—*Number of establishments and employees in retail trade, 1948*

Retail trade group	Establishments	Paid employees, workweek ended nearest Nov. 15 [1]
Total	1,769,993	6,927,891
General merchandise group	74,140	1,378,672
Department stores	2,590	833,173
Other general merchandise stores	71,550	545,499
Food group	504,480	1,012,934
Eating and drinking places	346,555	1,345,338
Apparel group	115,333	580,919
Furniture, furnishings, appliance group	85,548	374,812
Automotive group	86,196	634,654
Gasoline service station	188,305	287,896
Lumber, building, hardware group	98,797	479,888
Drug and proprietory stores	55,851	282,390
Liquor stores	33,628	52,613
Second-hand stores	16,964	20,787
Other retail stores	164,196	476,988

[1] Includes employees paid for less than full workweek. Excludes members of proprietors' families who work without pay.

Source: Preliminary 1948 Census of Business data.

Closely related to chains are "ownership groups." These are department stores under common ownership, but they do not have centralized buying—a major characteristic of chain organizations. For the most part, the stores in these ownership groups operate as independent stores under their original names. They generally do most of their own buying, have their own credit policies, and frequently appeal to different income groups. The degree of control, however, varies considerably from one group to another.

Most department stores are located in heavily populated districts—in cities and their suburbs. Employment is therefore greatest in the States with the biggest urban populations. Five States—New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, California, and Ohio—had 44 percent of the department store employees in 1948. (See table 2.) The following cities, in the order named, had the greatest number of department store employees: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Washington, D. C., St. Louis, and Boston.

TABLE 2.—*Department store workers by State, mid-March 1948*

State	Number of employees in mid-March 1948	State	Number of employees in mid-March 1948
New York	88,193	Oklahoma	8,442
Pennsylvania	73,206	Alabama	8,211
Illinois	66,846	Colorado	7,601
California	65,522	Kentucky	7,468
Ohio	64,821	Nebraska	6,985
Total, five States	358,588	West Virginia	6,511
		Kansas	6,392
Michigan	36,562	South Carolina	4,735
Texas	33,593	Utah	4,678
Massachusetts	28,185	Arkansas	4,498
Missouri	25,021		
Indiana	23,154	Rhode Island	3,865
		Mississippi	3,485
New Jersey	22,511	Idaho	2,828
Wisconsin	21,748	Maine	2,666
Minnesota	18,830	Montana	2,440
District of Columbia	15,872		
Washington	15,376	Arizona	2,388
		South Dakota	2,212
Maryland	15,213	North Dakota	2,115
North Carolina	14,099	New Mexico	1,627
Georgia	13,998	Hawaii	1,468
Virginia	13,996		
Iowa	13,844	New Hampshire	1,062
		Nevada	849
Florida	11,785	Delaware	829
Tennessee	11,755	Wyoming	819
Oregon	10,933	Vermont	774
Connecticut	9,962		
Louisiana	9,167	Total, United States	819,140

Source: County Business Patterns, U. S. Department of Commerce from data supplied by the U. S. Bureau of Old Age and Survivor's Insurance.

Employment Outlook

1950–60 Decade

Department stores will hire thousands of workers each year during the 1950–60 decade. Most of them will be taken on for beginning jobs. Workers will be needed to replace department store employees who die, retire, or leave their jobs for other reasons; to fill positions in new stores; and to enlarge the staffs of existing stores when business increases or when hours of work are shortened. Although department store employment will tend to rise slowly in the future, the number of openings created by growth in the industry will be very small in comparison with the openings which will result from turn-over. Because a high proportion of the employees are women who often leave their jobs to get married or to have children and young workers who tend to move from job to

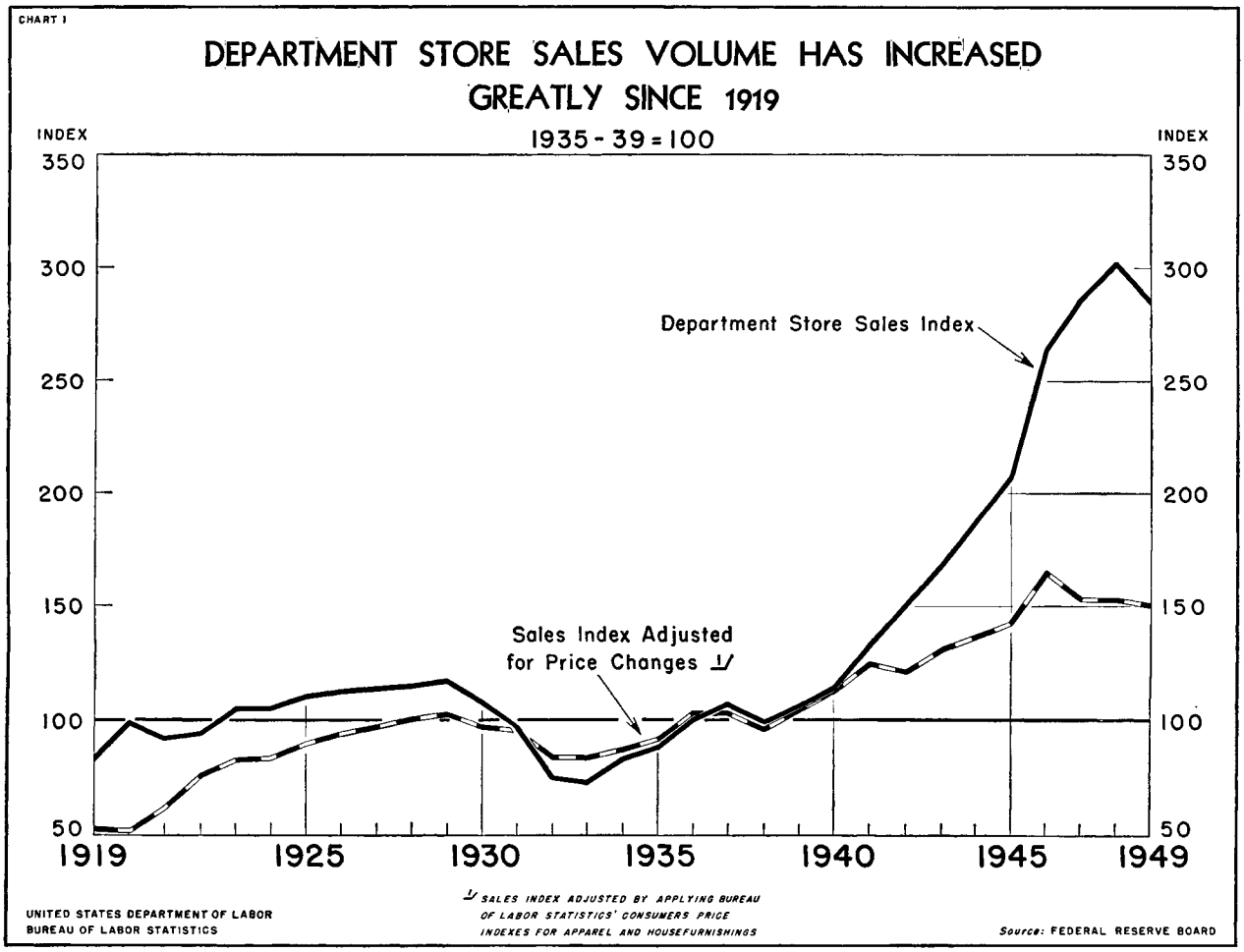
job, turn-over is high. For persons who plan department store careers, however, it is important to know that they will be in an expanding industry. To them, growth in department store employment means that there will be greater job security and a better chance to reach top-level positions.

International developments in 1950 have led to increased defense expenditures and a consequent heightening of economic activity generally. The effect of this on the total number of department store jobs will be very slight. In boom periods, department stores have more sales, but these are handled for the most part by the regular staff. As a result of expansion after World War II, the number of stores and employees is now adequate to handle any reasonable increase in sales. Nevertheless, it will be much easier for new people to enter this field during the next few years. Turn-over in department stores will be exceptionally high, particularly in the lower-paid jobs. The demand for workers in defense industries and the higher wages offered will induce many people to leave their department store jobs, creating openings for new workers.

Long-Run Trends

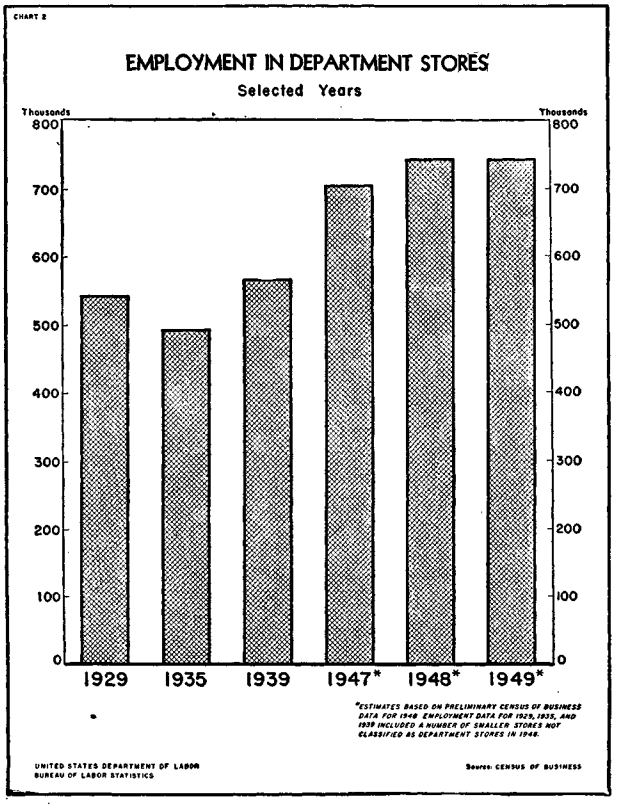
We can expect a long-run upward trend in department store employment as the population grows and as per capita income continues to rise. Under these conditions, department store business and employment are likely to increase even if the share of retail trade going to department stores should decrease slightly.

Department stores had a smaller proportion of total trade in 1948 than in 1939, yet their sales increased tremendously. This rise in sales was a continuation of the trend after 1919, when data on dollar sales were first collected. The volume of goods sold has not increased as much as dollar



volume, however, because of changes in the purchasing power of the dollar. Chart 1 shows the index of sales and the same series adjusted by roughly allowing for price changes in the major lines of goods handled by department stores. This upward trend in volume is likely to continue.

Employment in department stores, like sales, has had an upward trend. Chart 2 shows the average employment in department stores for selected years since 1929. The number of workers



dropped during the depression, but by 1939 rose above the 1929 figure, and continued to rise slowly until 1945. Employment began to climb rapidly in 1946, reached a peak in 1948, and declined slightly in 1949. For the next several years, employment probably will remain near the 1949 level. Because of this, most job openings will arise from turn-over, which tends to be high.

In department stores employment is more closely related to the volume of business than it is in industries which can more easily make use of labor-saving devices. Many manufacturing industries, for example, can expand production considerably through technological improvements without increasing their work forces. To be sure, department stores have also made progress in reducing labor requirements. They have mechanized warehouses, introduced office machines to eliminate clerical work, and used various self-selling techniques to reduce the number of sales clerks needed. The buildings themselves are being designed scientifically to keep the cost of handling goods and of maintenance at a minimum.

Frequently, however, reductions in staff brought about by these means are offset by adding to the services offered by the stores or by shortening the hours of work. Chart 3 shows the year-to-year variations in the number of transactions per man-hour for 13 big stores between 1940 and 1948. Except for the rise during the war years, transactions per man-hour did not change significantly from 1940 through 1948. The amount of the average transaction rose, however, from $2.45 to $4.70. Efforts to reduce labor requirements can be expected to continue, but, because of the nature of department store operations, it is unlikely that there will be any substantial decrease in the number of workers needed to handle a given volume of merchandise. As volume increases over the long run, therefore, employment in department stores probably will continue to grow.

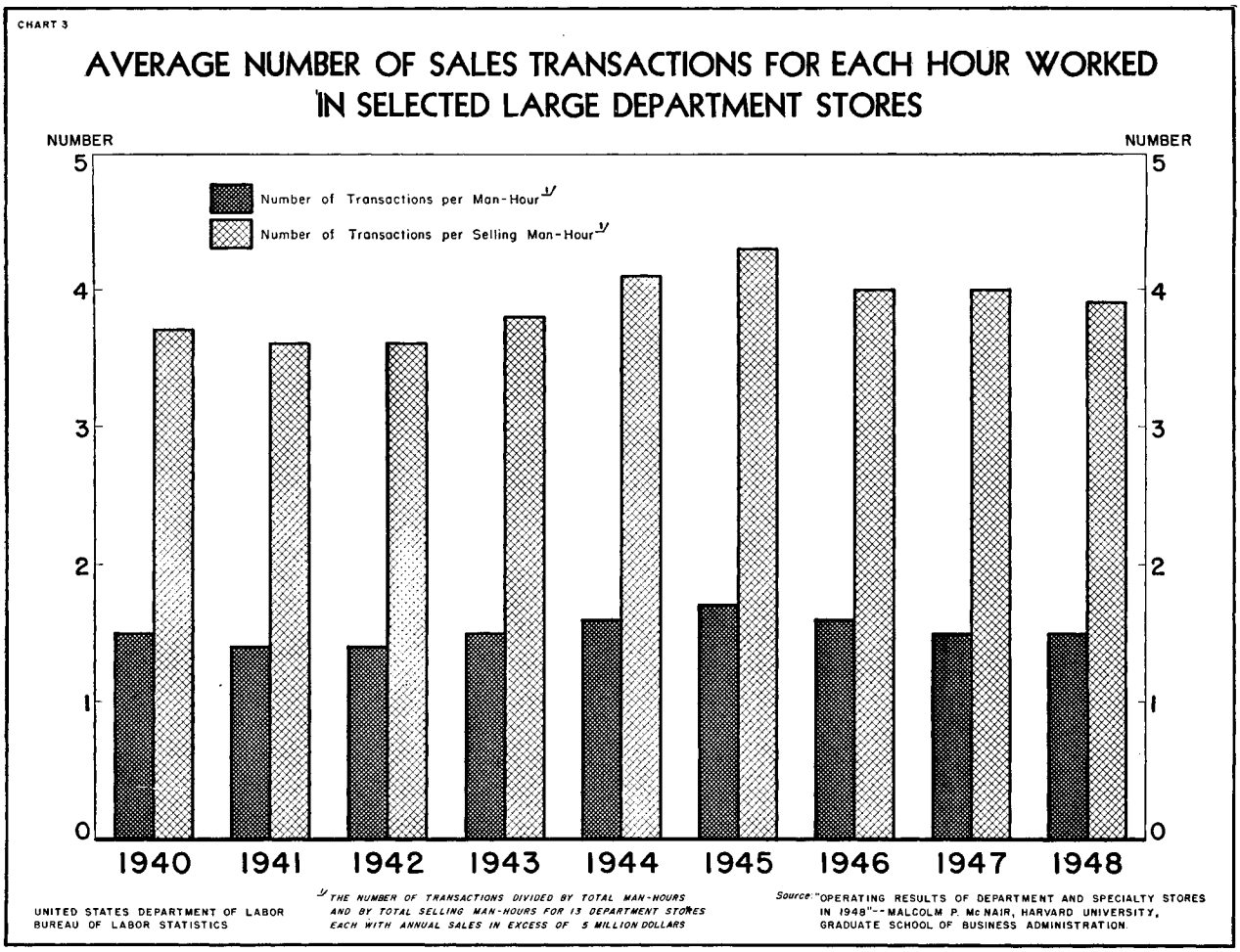
The experience of department stores in the depression of the thirties gives some indication of how employment would be affected by a dip in business activity. From 1929 to 1939, their business fell off just as it did almost everywhere, but not as much as that of their direct competitors. (See table 3.) In 1929, department stores had 9 percent of the total retail trade volume, and in 1939, 9.5 percent. Of the combined volume of business done by them and the businesses with which they compete most directly, department stores had

TABLE 3.—*Department stores' share of combined sales of department stores and nine related kinds of business, 1929, 1935, 1939, 1948*

Kind of business	Percent of sales			
	1929	1935	1939	1948
Department stores	29.5	39.6	39.3	[1] 34.2
9 related kinds of business	70.5	60.4	60.7	65.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

[1] Lower percentage for department stores in 1948 compared with 1939 partly a result of Census of Business change in definition for department stores.

Source: Census of Business.



29.5 percent in 1929 and 39.5 percent in 1939. Largely because of these relative gains, employment did not drop as much as it did in many other branches of retail trade.

For several reasons, jobs are not likely to be affected by small dips in economic activity. When times are hard people continue to buy many of the types of goods sold by department stores, and, although the volume of trade may drop, department stores probably will continue to provide full-scale services and keep most of their staffs in order to meet customer demand. Moreover, when employment must be cut, stores can lay off workers from the sizable crews of part-time employees.

The Census of Business for 1948 shows that department stores had a smaller share of retail trade in that year than in 1939. This was partly because the 1948 definition of department stores excluded many stores that were counted in 1939 (table 1), and partly because in 1948 customers were spending a larger proportion of their money on goods such as automobiles, furniture, rugs, major appliances, lumber, and hardware, which department stores either do not handle or which do not comprise a major proportion of their total sales. In the long run, the spending pattern is expected to be similar to that of 1939, and the relative position of department stores is likely to improve.

Movement to Suburban Areas

The trend toward establishing branch and chain department stores in outlying residential areas is likely to continue for many years as an increasing number of people move to the suburbs. This does not mean that the big stores in downtown business sections are likely to be abandoned, but that there

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will be a greater number of smaller department stores in outlying sections. These stores will account for most of the gains in employment in the future.

Most of the new suburban department stores will be owned and operated by firms already in the industry. Many of the new stores will be units in large national chains. Others will be branches of local stores already established in downtown business sections. The new stores will need experienced workers who in many cases will be chosen from other stores in the organization. Those who are successful in the branch stores will be eligible for more responsible jobs in the main store or bigger stores in the organization.

Although additional jobs will be created by the establishment of suburban stores, opportunities in certain lines of work will not grow correspondingly. Units in a chain organization and in branch stores need few workers in operations which are handled mostly at the home office or in the main store. Advertising, many personnel matters, financial control, buying, and delivery are largely taken care of by the central offices; and, of course, chain units do not have staffs of top executives. As a result, chain and branch stores have smaller proportions of higher level personnel, and offer fewer opportunities in some departments than independent stores. The over-all occupational pattern in the industry, however, is not likely to change significantly for several years at least.

Hiring, Qualifications, and Training

Hiring Workers

Department stores recruit workers in several different ways. They take applications from persons who come into their employment offices, advertise in newspapers, contact State, high school, and college placement officers, and get recommendations from employees. To an increasing extent, department store employees are coming from the ranks of persons trained under the distributive education cooperative program (described on p. 7). All applicants are interviewed and given tests to determine their qualifications.

Checkers unpack merchandise and check it for quantity and condition.

Qualifications

Applicants hired have a wide variety of personal characteristics, educational backgrounds, and skills. Most new workers start at the bottom in the departments to which they are assigned. Because the types of jobs are so different, applicants who fail to qualify for one job may be entirely suitable for another. Even for the jobs which persons without a great deal of experience can fill, there is considerable variation in the personal qualifications demanded. For example, for sales work, only applicants who are presentable and who speak distinctly are considered. These qualifications are not nearly as necessary for persons who are placed in beginning jobs which do not require meeting the public. Among the latter type jobs are those in the office; in stock, warehouse, and receiving work; and on the maintenance and cleaning crews.

Sales clerks are an extremely important group not only because they are in the key role of selling merchandise but also because they are in continuous contact with the store's customers. A store's reputation for courtesy, good service, and fair dealing depends largely on how its sales clerks perform. For this reason, they are carefully selected.

To get a sales job in a department store, one should, first of all, have a high school education. There are exceptions, but this is now almost a standard qualification. A pleasing personality and appearance, a good voice, normal hearing and eyesight, and general all-round good health so as to be able to stand all day are other important requirements.

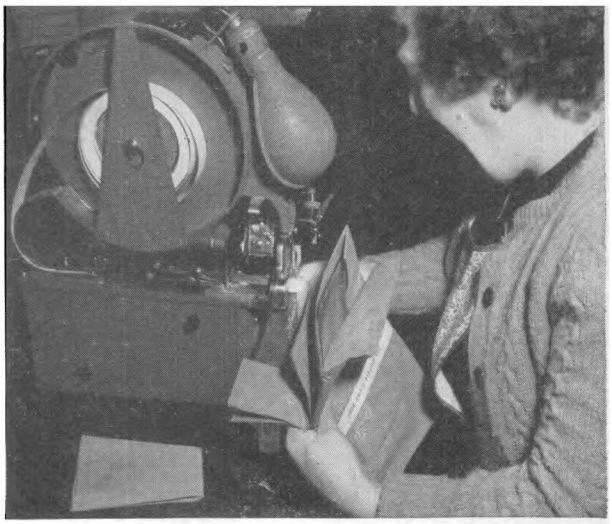
About two out of three department store employees are women. They are hired mostly for clerical, selling, and office jobs, but many of them are promoted to supervisory positions such as section manager and buyer. Men predominate in warehouse operations, maintenance, receiving, and protection work and have most of the jobs in certain selling departments—major home appliances, floor coverings, and furniture. Most of the store executives are men, but more and more women are reaching high-level positions. Large chain organizations, as a rule, use men in managerial positions, and women are confined to lower-level jobs.

Some applicants are hired to work a few hours every working day or 2 or 3 days a week, rather than full time. Many of these workers are married women who do not want full-time jobs. During the rush seasons, for the Christmas trade particularly, large numbers of workers are taken on for temporary full-time jobs. The seasonal ups-and-downs in department-store employment are shown in chart 4.

Training

In School

A person who wants to work in a department store can readily get special training. Most high schools give courses designed to fit young men and women for general business work. Subjects such as business English, business mathematics, economics, and salesmanship give the student a general background for any business position. To provide specialized training in retailing, high schools have established courses in merchandising, principles of retailing, and retail selling. This movement has been encouraged by the George-Deen Act of 1936 which provides for Federal aid to States which set up "distributive education" programs. Part of the Federal funds are used to help pay the salaries of teachers, who, to qualify for this work, must have had retailing experience.



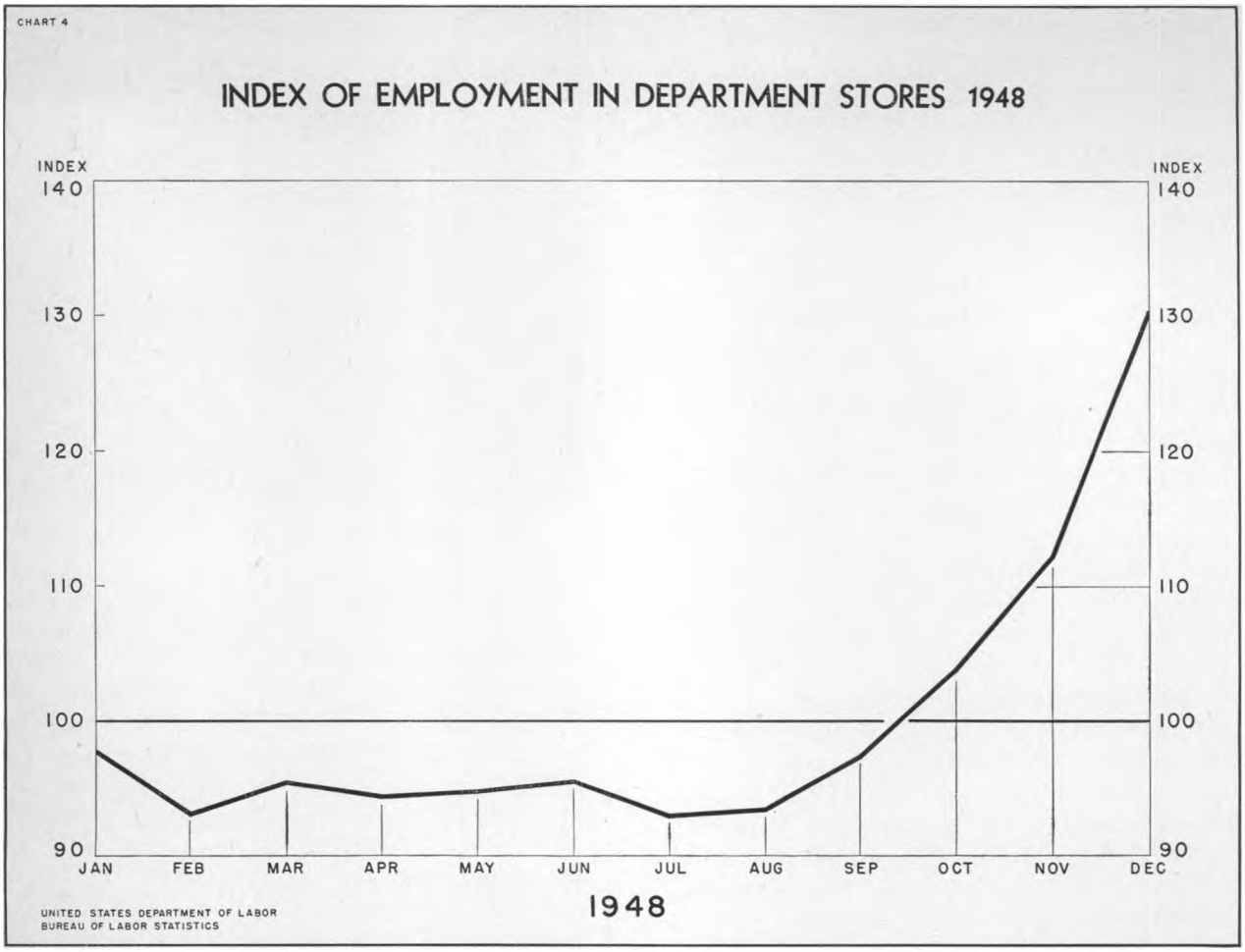
Marker attaches price tag to hosiery with marking machine.

Two main types of programs have been set up under this act. One provides night school training and training in the store to persons already working full time in distributive businesses. The other provides for cooperative part-time training, whereby students spend certain hours in school classes in distributive education and work part time in local stores. Department stores have been especially willing to cooperate with the schools in training students. The 286,000 trainees enrolled in adult extension classes and the 26,000 students enrolled in cooperative part-time classes in 1949 represented a considerable gain over previous years. More and more schools are including this type of education in their programs.

Colleges also offer courses which are helpful preparation for work in department stores. Many courses prepare students for the general business field, and a growing number prepare specifically for retailing. A few colleges offer highly specialized courses which lead to a bachelor's degree in retailing; others offer graduate work. These programs usually include cooperative part-time work in stores in addition to specialized courses in retailing.

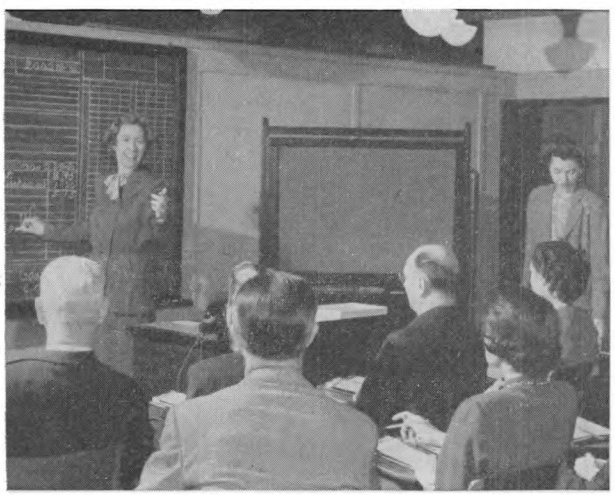
In the Store

Every worker hired by a department store gets some training in the store before he takes over a job. Most stores try to give all new employees at least a brief picture of systems and methods, and of store organization, rules, and policies, in



addition to training for a particular job. For some types of jobs, employees can be taught what to do in a day or two; for others fairly long training periods are necessary. Porters, markers, wrappers, and elevator operators, for example, require only short training periods, whereas sales clerks, cashiers, receiving clerks, and some office workers need longer training periods.

Selling employees attend a training class.



Some stores have well-organized training programs; others do a minimum of training, usually by having an employee instruct the newcomer. The large stores generally have organized training programs, and the small stores informal systems.

A number of stores have a special training program for promising young employees who are considered potential supervisors. This training is designed to acquaint the employee with the overall operations of the store so that he may better understand how his particular department should operate to serve the best interests of the store. Classroom instruction is given in all phases of department store operations.

In addition, some stores have a squad of college graduates and selected young employees whom they train for junior executive jobs. These trainees work at lower level jobs on a schedule which requires them to spend a certain number of weeks or months working in each of the main divisions of the store. The employees who do well in this program have good prospects for promotion. It must be emphasized, however, that only the best-qualified employees are chosen for promotional training and that selection for training is no guarantee of a speedy rise up the ladder.

Opportunities for Advancement

Sales clerks have two regular avenues of promotion. They can be appointed to such positions as head of stock, assistant buyer, and section manager, or they can be transferred to selling in other departments where average earnings are higher. Successful clerks in some of the departments where earnings are high frequently earn more money than they would if they were promoted to supervisory positions.

Supervisory and lower-grade executive positions are nearly always filled by persons with retail store experience, usually by promoting workers in the store. The number of outsiders hired for these positions depends on store policy and on the availability of qualified people working at lower-level jobs; increasingly, however, department stores are following the policy of promoting their own workers rather than hiring outsiders.

Usually only persons with a great deal of successful retail experience and demonstrated administrative ability are considered for top executive positions. Store policies in choosing executives vary considerably. Some stores and chain organizations rarely select outsiders for executive positions. Others have a less rigid promotion-from-within policy and sometimes hire buyers, controllers, store superintendents, personnel officers, and other executives from outside the organization.

College graduates frequently enter jobs at the same level as nongraduates, since store experience is needed before the principles learned in school can be applied. However, those who have already worked in department stores under cooperative programs and those who have had specialized training in such fields as personnel, advertising, and accounting sometimes start at a higher level than nongraduates. Even with the advantage of a degree and specialized training, the college graduate has no guarantee of rapid promotion. He is competing with all the employees at his level, and unless he can demonstrate superiority, he will progress no faster than the nongraduate.

Many of the persons selected for executive training in department stores are chosen directly from colleges and universities; others are selected from the store's regular staff. College graduates are not, however, the only ones groomed for responsible positions. Generally, employers feel that college graduation alone does not set a person apart as executive material. Some employees who have gone directly from high school into department stores are superior to the average college graduate in the basic qualities needed for supervisory and executive positions and have the additional advantage of 4 years of store experience. This experience is very valuable and is given a good deal of weight in selecting potential executives.

Employer attitudes toward the value of college specialization in such courses as business, marketing, and retailing vary widely. Some feel that such specialization is helpful, particularly the training given in certain recognized schools. Others feel that good fundamental training, broad background in college subjects, and basic aptitude for work are the important considerations, and that potential executives can get their specialized training on the job.

A young person starting a career in a department store should try to weigh his chances for reaching supervisory and executive positions. To measure his prospects he should compare his own capabilities with those of the other employees at his level. Does he have an edge in personality, intelligence, and capacity for hard work? Another factor which has much to do with an individual's chances for promotion is the number of supervisory and executive positions compared with the number of lower-level jobs. About 8 out of 100 department store employees are supervisors

departments? Staffing patterns vary widely from one store to another. The largest stores have many employees not found in smaller stores, such as comparison shoppers and workers in testing laboratories. A number of employees in large stores specialize in advertising and display; in smaller stores this type of work is often combined with other duties. Even among stores of the same size there are wide differences in the proportion of workers in different occupations. Some stores have large numbers of workers in repair shops and restaurants, for example, but other stores have much of the repair work done by outside concerns and have limited eating facilities. Many stores do not have their own delivery service. Department stores frequently lease sections of the store to outside organizations to operate beauty parlors, photographic shops, food stores, and other specialized departments. These organizations have their own employees. Policies on other customer services, such as merchandise returns, mail and telephone orders, and credit transactions, vary widely among stores, and particularly between local department stores and units in Nationwide chains. These differences are reflected in the proportion of workers employed in certain occupations.

The various duties in the over-all operations of a department store are described in the following sections of this report. Because there are about 900 different department store jobs, only those occupations are mentioned which occur in fairly large numbers or are important for other reasons. The occupations are divided into broad groups as shown in chart 5.

Merchandising

Selling Jobs

Selling is the main function of a store. Naturally we would expect to find that a large proportion of a store's personnel are *sales clerks*. In some departments in large stores, duties of sales clerks are confined to selling goods to customers. In other departments and in smaller stores, in addition to selling, sales clerks often wrap goods and take payment, and sometimes handle stock. The proportion of sales clerks ranges roughly from 40 percent in large stores to 60 percent in smaller stores.

The degree of skill and experience needed to sell goods in different departments varies widely. For example, many items, such as men's socks, neckties, and underwear, are sold on a self-service basis. In selling self-selected merchandise, the sales clerk merely writes up the transaction and takes payment. Stores can use employees with little experience and knowledge of salesmanship for this type of work. Selling major appliances or furniture, on the other hand, calls for more salesmanship. The clerks must be able to determine what the customers want, be familiar with the stock, and know the characteristics of each piece of merchandise. Experienced employees with a flair for salesmanship are therefore likely to be found working in the furniture and major appliances departments. They may be found also in several other departments, including those selling floor coverings, women's shoes, and the more expensive items of clothing. The differences in the skill required for selling various kinds of merchandise are reflected in the earnings data shown in table 5, page 19.

Many department stores use what is known as the sponsor system for training sales employees. Under this system, after new clerks have been

Salesgirl helps customer select a coat.

given preliminary instruction by the training section, they are put under the guidance of experienced employees called sponsors until they learn how to carry on the job alone. Sponsors receive additional pay for this type of work.

The work of *stockmen*, *cashiers*, and *wrappers* is closely related to that of sales clerks. These jobs are found in large stores, where many sales clerks are mainly responsible for making the sale; other workers receive payment, wrap the packages, and take care of the stock. Stockmen bring merchandise from stockrooms or warehouses to the selling floor and place it on counters or racks according to size, color, and other specifications. They also inspect the merchandise as it comes in and keep inventory records.

In large stores, mail and telephone orders are not usually handled on the selling floor. *Telephone order clerks* answer customers' questions about goods and make out orders, on special forms, from the customers' descriptions and their own knowledge of the stock. *Mail order clerks* open letters from customers and handle the orders in the same way. Mail and telephone selling are becoming increasingly popular, especially for standard brand goods.

Sales clerks and other workers in selling departments are supervised by *section managers*, by buyers, and, in many cases, by both section managers and buyers, depending on how the store is organized. The *supervisors* keep records of time worked, arrange work and lunch schedules, and see that the sections of the store for which they are responsible work smoothly and are kept clean and orderly. In addition, they see that customers are satisfied, adjust some types of complaints, and are generally responsible for the carrying out of store policies.

Buying Jobs

The buying and merchandising operations of a store are handled by *buyers* and their assistants in each selling department, by *division merchandise managers* who are responsible for several related departments, and, at the top, by the *general merchandise manager* who reports to the general manager.

Buyers are expected to anticipate the quantity and the kinds of goods to be sold in their departments. Their decisions on the quantity and types of merchandise to buy are based on such factors as (1) past sales, (2) studies of trends in customer preference and in the merchandise being manufactured, and (3) estimates of the amounts customers will spend. Suppose, for example, that an appliance buyer is trying to figure out how many and what types of washing machines he should order. His starting point is the record of the previous year's sales. Then, he must decide whether he is likely to sell more or fewer washers and what types will be in demand. To do this, he needs to answer questions such as: Will his customers be less prosperous than during the previous year? Will they want automatic, semiautomatic, or wringer-type washers? What makes of washer will they prefer? What will the store's competitors be doing? In making his decisions, the buyer must consider these and many other factors and, at the same time, stay within the limits of his merchandise budget. Deciding how much money each buyer can spend is one of the main duties of the division merchandise manager and the general merchandise manager, who work closely with the general manager and controller in making these decisions. Once a buyer knows what merchandise he is likely to need, he must visit those markets in which it is sold. Often this requires traveling to distant cities and foreign countries.

Responsibilities and duties of buyers vary widely from store to store. In some stores, buyers play a big part in determining the kinds and amounts of merchandise to be purchased. In others, they are much more limited and must have their suggestions for purchases reviewed by their supervisors. Buyers in some stores have direct authority over the sales clerks and stockmen and actually manage their departments, whereas in other stores the sales clerks report to the section managers.

A buyer must have a thorough knowledge of merchandise, markets, prices, and consumers' desires. He must be shrewd at bargaining and in making calculations. If he manages his department in addition to buying its goods, he must also be skilled in selling, dealing with the public, and carrying on the details of administration.

Member stores in chain organizations usually do not have buyers. Department managers, under the guidance of the store managers, order from

the central organization. They can select only the merchandise listed by the home office and seldom deal directly with suppliers.

Buyers are helped in the proper pricing of goods by *comparison shoppers*. These workers visit other department stores to price and to buy merchandise similar to that sold by their employers. This work is secret in nature and it requires a good memory and some acting ability. Many stores rotate this job among saleswomen so that other stores will not discover the identity of the comparison shopper. Once a shopper is known to people in the other stores, it is hard for her to get information.

Receiving clerk and his assistants check information printed on incoming cartons.

Receiving

The receiving department takes the merchandise from shippers' cars and trucks. This department then unpacks, checks, and marks the merchandise and sends it to the stockrooms or the selling floor. It is supervised by the *traffic manager* who is also responsible for routing incoming goods over the most practical and economical carrier. The receiving department performs four distinct operations, some of which are combined in smaller stores but are further broken down in large stores.

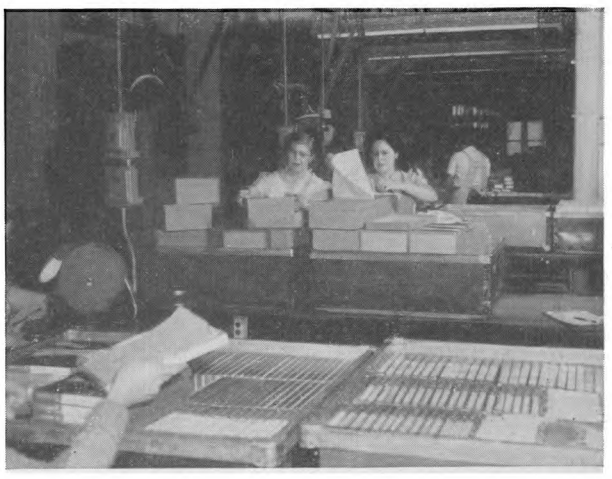
The first operation is physically receiving the merchandise into the store. *Porters* and *receiving clerk assistants* unload the goods from cars and trucks and place them on tables, racks, bins, or the floor. *Receiving clerks* compare the shippers' invoices with the merchandise packages to see that the quantities are correct and that there has been no damage. In smaller stores, receiving clerks often do all the receiving, unpacking, checking, and marking.

Checking is the next operation. *Merchandise checkers* unpack the goods and check each item for quantity, price, color, and damage. The buyer or his assistant checks the quality of incoming goods and sets the prices at which they are to be marked. When the unloading, unpacking, and checking have been completed, the goods are ready for the third operation—marking.

Markers attach the retail price to each item by using crayons, rubber stamps, or price tickets. Price tickets may be marked by hand or machine. Large stores use special machines that mark the ticket and attach it to the merchandise in one motion. When the prices of goods already on the selling floor are changed, the goods are usually sent back to the marking department for remarking.

After the merchandise has been received, unpacked, checked, and marked, it is turned over to the selling departments. This is the final operation in the receiving department. Porters and stockmen move the goods to the reserve stockrooms and the selling floor. Furniture and other large items are usually received at the warehouse and are delivered direct to customers who have made their selections from floor samples in the store.

Markers work at one of the many lines of moving merchandise.



Customer Service

Wrapping and Packing

When a customer wishes to have his purchase delivered, it must be packaged. The salesperson gives the article to a *wrapper*, who wraps it neatly and carefully and places it on the shipping belt or in a hamper from which it is taken to the delivery department. Fragile goods and bulky merchandise are handled by special groups of workers. *Packers* pack fragile goods which require strong, carefully made-up packages to protect the contents, and large items which cannot be handled by wrappers.

Delivery

One of the most important extra services provided by department stores is free delivery. Although many stores have their own delivery departments, some hire outside organizations to deliver their packages, or, through an arrangement with other stores, run a cooperative delivery service.

The delivery department receives the packaged merchandise, sorts it by route, loads it on trucks, delivers it to the customer, and collects c. o. d. charges. The *package router* reads the addresses to which the packages are to be sent, marks the proper delivery route numbers on them, and places them on the conveyor belt. *Package sorters* read the route numbers on the packages, take them from the belt, and place them in the proper route bins.

Before the goods can be taken from the bins and loaded on the trucks, a record must be made of their being sent out. Some stores use *sheet writers*, who go from bin to bin recording on a special form the essential information about each parcel. Other stores use a system in which each parcel has a stub attached with the information printed on it. A *stubber* goes from bin to bin removing the stubs, which he then files. This job is often combined with that of the router or sorter.

The *delivery-truck driver* loads the goods onto the truck in the order that will make delivery easiest. In rush seasons when he has a helper, the driver has the more responsible duty of driving the truck and collecting c. o. d. charges, and he joins his helper in loading and unloading. The driver also sets up furniture in customers' homes, brings returned goods back to the store, and keeps delivery records. Money received from c. o. d. orders is given to the *delivery cashier*, who keeps records of c. o. d. operations.

Trucks are maintained by *garage mechanics* under the supervision of *automobile repair shop foremen*. In large garages, *a gas and oil man* is responsible for keeping trucks supplied with gas and oil and for keeping records of the amounts of these supplies on hand.

Fitter marks gown for alterations.

Alterations and Repairs

Many of the items sold by department stores have to be altered to suit the customer, other items are made to order by the store, and, frequently, merchandise is returned for repairs. These jobs are handled in the various workrooms.

Clothing is naturally one of the lines which require alterations to give customers the proper fit. Men's ready-to-wear garments are fitted by a *men's fitter* who makes marks on the nearest standard size in stock where alterations will have to be made to get the best fit. The garment is then taken to a *tailor*, who makes the alterations. He is aided by a *sewing machine operator*, who does the easier machine sewing, and by a *machine presser*, who presses the altered garment. Women's ready-to-wear clothing is altered in a similar manner. When a customer wants a made-to-order garment,

the *custom tailor* helps him choose the material, takes measurements, designs the garment, and instructs assistants in making it. Alteration of millinery is another important merchandise service.

Drapery and upholstery often require alterations to suit individual customers. A *drapery cutter* lays out and cuts drapery material to the size ordered by the customer. These pieces are sewed together by a *drapery seamstress.* Repairs and adjustments to upholstery are made by a *furniture upholsterer.* A *slip-cover cutter* cuts material to fit a customer's furniture, and a *slip-cover seamstress* sews the pieces together.

In recent years, floor coverings cut to fit the room have become very popular. Department stores employ *carpet cutters* and *carpet sewers,* who prepare sections of carpet to the customer's specifications. The *floor-covering estimator* has the job of measuring the customer's room and determining how to cut the rolls of carpet or linoleum so as to waste as little as possible. The *floor-covering layer* install the carpet or linoleum in the customer's home.

As a convenience to customers, most stores have a cold storage vault for storing furs and employ *fur cleaners* and *fur repairers.* Many stores provide other services such as watch repairing, appliance and radio repairing, and interior decorating advice.

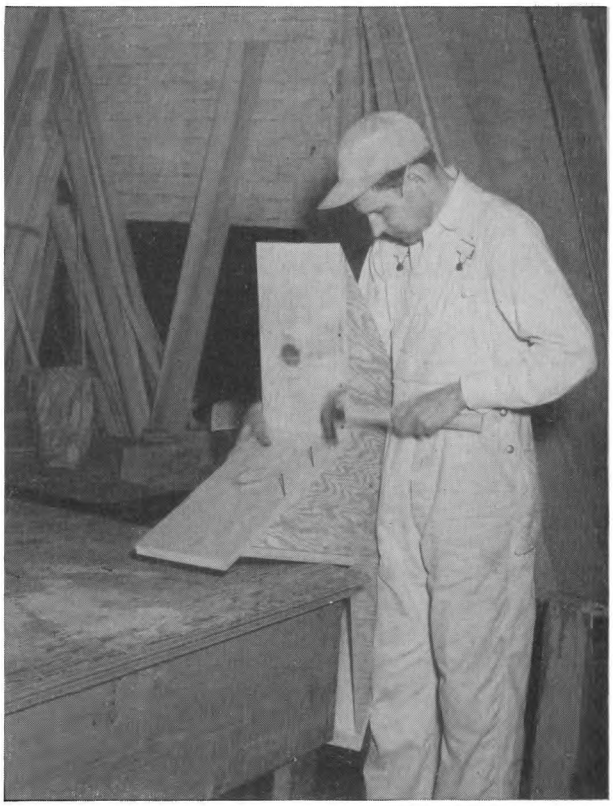
Adjustments

Jealous of their reputations for fair dealing, department stores will often go to great length to give a customer satisfaction. For this purpose, large stores operate a bureau of adjustments, known to most people as the "complaint department." Most complaints arise from such things as nondelivery of merchandise, damage to goods received by the customer, defective or unsatisfactory merchandise, improper alterations or repairs, bookkeeping errors on charge accounts, and lack of courtesy or efficiency on the part of employees. The *adjustment manager* supervises this bureau. Working under his supervision are *adjusters* who listen to complaints and try to work out a solution that is fair to the customer and the store. The adjusters try to satisfy all legitimate requests for adjustment because the stores realize the value of a customer's good will. In some stores the adjuster's work is divided between an *interviewer,* who listens to complaints, and a *tracer,* who investigates the facts and helps make the adjustment.

Maintenance and Operation

Maintenance

The maintenance department has the job of keeping the store clean, comfortable, and attractive. This is a big job which calls for a sizable crew of workers. Most of the buildings are large with complicated systems of electrical wiring, ventilating, plumbing, telephone lines, sprinkler pipes, elevators, and electric stairways. All of these must be kept in good operating condition.



Carpenter constructs star for Christmas decoration.

Maintenance of the building is the responsibility of the *maintenance superintendent,* who directs the work of a number of differently skilled craftsmen. *Carpenters* build and repair store fixtures, display stands, and other woodwork in the building; *painters* keep walls, floors, and fixtures neat and attractive; and *plumbers* install new pipes and repair the piping systems. *Electricians* are

responsible for the store's lighting and wiring systems. Minor repairs on elevators, electric stairways, ventilating equipment, and other machines are made by *maintenance mechanics*. Heating, air-conditioning, and ventilation are the responsibility of the *chief stationary engineer* and his crew. Among the workers in the engineering crew are electricians, pipefitters, firemen, and oilers.

Housekeeping

Housekeeping is supervised by the *housekeeping manager*. His porters do all the janitor work, such as scrubbing and sweeping, removing trash, washing windows, and rearranging fixtures. *Maids* or *porteresses* do the same sort of cleaning work except for the heavy jobs. Most of the cleaning is done before the store opens in the morning or after it closes at night.

Elevator Operation

Since most stores have three or more stories, they must have elevators and/or electric stairways. *Elevator operators* convey passengers from floor to floor, call out the main lines of goods located on each floor, and answer questions about the location of merchandise. The *elevator starter* stays on the main floor and regulates the departure of elevators so as to keep traffic moving smoothly. He also instructs and supervises the elevator operators, from whose ranks he himself has usually been promoted.

Protection

Protection against fire and theft at night is the responsibility of the *watchman*, who patrols the store looking for signs of fire or disorder and sends in an alarm in serious situations. During the day, the *store detective* polices the store in street clothes, watching carefully for any signs of shoplifting. He must be so skilled in detecting thievery that he will catch anyone stealing merchandise, but, at the same time, he must never arrest a person without proof of guilt because of the store's liability for damage suits. In addition to detectives, the stores employ uniformed *guards* to safeguard the public and protect property.

Financial Control

As in every large enterprise, department stores must keep accurate records of all the operations. A large number of workers are engaged in collecting and analyzing all the figures coming in from every part of the store. The director of these activities is called the *controller*. He is responsible for all bookkeeping, accounting, credit and collections, cash disbursements, and budget control. Working with other store executives, he helps to keep the store on a sound financial footing.

Among the workers in the financial and record-keeping departments are *bookkeepers*, who collect information from the various departments and record it on standard forms, and *calculating-machine operators*, who make routine computations. There are also *accountants*, who check the figures for accuracy and consistency and then prepare financial statements, such as balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements, and reports to stockholders. High-level accountants determine the most efficient systems for recording costs and other operating data. Workers with a basic knowledge of arithmetic can be trained on the job for clerical work and lower-level bookkeeping jobs. For accounting and the more difficult statistical work, on the other hand, a high degree of skill and training is needed. Ordinarily, the training is acquired outside department stores—in colleges and business and correspondence schools. Persons already working at lower-level jobs in the stores need additional training to be eligible for promotion.

The credit bureau headed by the *credit manager* keeps records of customers' accounts, investigates applicants for charge accounts, sends out monthly bills, and makes up reports for the controller. Among the workers in this bureau are *credit application clerks*, who check local sources of informa-

File clerks handle the voluminous credit records of a large store.

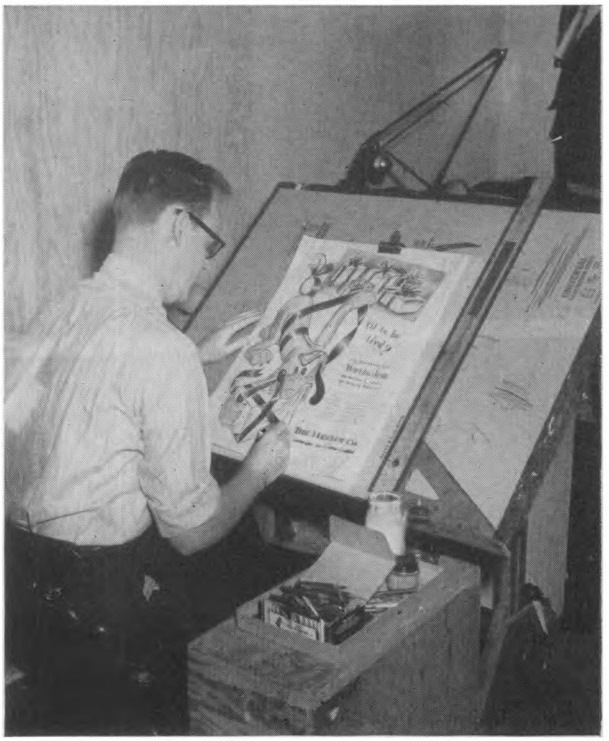
tion about the reliability of applicants, and *credit interviewers*, who award charge accounts in routine cases. Customers' account cards are kept in order by *file clerks*. *Billing-machine operators* type monthly bills on special machines. Reminding customers that their accounts are overdue is the responsibility of the *collection clerks*.

Publicity

Making the public aware of the store, its merchandise, and its services is the function of the publicity department. The main activities of this department are preparing advertisements and planning and setting up store displays.

The *advertising manager* is responsible for the store's advertising program. He finds out what merchandise the buyers want to advertise and after he decides where to advertise—in newspapers, or through radio and television stations—he sets up a general plan for the ad. His subordinates work out the details. The *copy writer* composes short, simple sentences describing the chief selling points of the merchandise. Sketches and drawings of merchandise in use or in a natural or attractive setting are created by the *commercial artist*. When photographs of the goods are needed, they are taken by the *commercial photographer*. The *layout man* arranges drawings, photographs, and copy so as to make an effective page of advertising. The *production man* proofreads the finished advertisement, clears it with the buyer and the advertising manager, and sees that it is printed at the right time. For these specialized jobs in advertising, department stores prefer persons with previous training. Sometimes, however, workers in clerical or helper jobs in the advertising department acquire the needed skills and thus earn promotions.

The *display manager* plans and directs the construction of window and floor displays. The *display artist* designs, constructs, paints, and sketches backgrounds and fixtures used in window or interior displays. The *sign writer* paints or prints signs. Window dressing is supervised by a *window trimmer*, who arranges merchandise in showcases and windows so that it will attract passers-by. Under his direction, *window trimmer helpers* put backgrounds in place, move display fixtures and signs, and place merchandise on racks, pedestals, and mannequins. The display of fashion merchandise requires the services of the *display stylist*, who keeps the publicity department informed of the latest trends in fashions and styles.



A commercial artist prepares a newspaper ad.

Personnel

The personnel department is responsible for hiring and training good workers and keeping them contented with their jobs. Establishing personnel policies and conducting labor relations are the responsibilities of the *personnel director*. He and his staff handle grievances of individual workers; in stores in which the workers are organized, they deal with the union and, in many cases, with several unions.

Before applicants are hired, they are screened by one or more *interviewers*. Often, tests are given to determine the type of work for which they are best suited. If they pass the interviews and physical examination satisfactorily, they are hired.

The training section is responsible for teaching new employees store policies, how to do their work, and how their jobs are related to other store operations. Promotional and executive training programs are supervised by this section.

Responsibility for the safety, morale, recreation, and insurance of employees lies with the welfare section. Employee morale is promoted through outings, company newspapers, and athletic programs. Other matters for which the personnel department is responsible are transfers, discipline, job evaluation, wage payment plans, and counseling. Because the personnel department is responsible for the many activities which affect the relations between the store and its employees, the key employees should have thorough training as well as a wide knowledge of many general subjects. For this reason, more and more college graduates are being selected for work in personnel departments. As in other departments, though, they must usually start in lower-level jobs.

Earnings and Working Conditions

Earnings

All Store Jobs

Earnings of department store employees below the supervisory level have a very wide range. Sales clerks generally have the highest earnings, many of the men having weekly pay checks of more than $100. Elevator operators and porters usually are at the bottom of the earnings scale; some of them earn less than $30 a week. Earnings for the same types of work differ greatly from city to city, and from one store to another in the same city in both supervisory and nonsupervisory occupations. Even within a single store, individual earnings differ greatly among buyers and sales clerks.

Information on earnings of nonsupervisory department store employees in 1950 is available from a survey covering 17 metropolitan areas.[1] (See table 5.) The earnings shown for these 17 areas are not of course typical for cities not included in the survey. These average weekly earnings data do not reflect that the employees on the regular staff of department stores usually have steady year-round employment, and that they generally have other advantages—vacations, paid holidays, and discounts on merchandise.

Sales Clerks

Sales clerks in department stores are paid in one of four ways: (1) straight salary; (2) salary plus commission; (3) straight commission; (4) and salary plus a bonus after they have sold an established quota.

[1] The information in this and the following section is based on a survey made by the Division of Wage Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, in May–July 1950. Selected occupations were studied in 158 department and women's ready-to-wear stores, each with more than 250 workers, located in 17 areas in various sections of the country.

TABLE 5.—*Average weekly earnings*[1] *of workers, selected occupations in department and women's ready-to-wear stores in selected cities, May–July 1950*[2]

Occupation and sex	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Buffalo	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Minneapolis-St. Paul
WOMEN								
Store occupations								
Cashier-wrappers	$27.59	$27.43	$29.29	$28.31	$40.82	$29.99	(3)	$32.45
Elevator operators, passenger	(3)	25.55	30.34	26.74	37.09	(3)	$35.08	36.11
Fitters, women's garments	(3)	38.44	38.79	(3)	53.14	(3)	(3)	43.60
Sales clerks, regular or upstairs departments:								
Bedspreads, draperies, and blankets	(3)	33.39	33.45	(3)	54.24	42.96	(3)	40.67
Blouses and neckwear	(3)	29.88	33.24	(3)	46.03	42.30	(3)	34.80
Boys' furnishings	34.31	32.28	34.11	(3)	47.66	43.86	(3)	39.44
Housewares (except china, glassware, and lamps)	(3)	32.57	35.21	(3)	49.21	37.59	(3)	37.18
Men's furnishings	37.64	33.64	33.83	35.66	47.84	44.03	46.12	38.98
Notions and trimmings	31.01	30.04	31.68	30.03	42.27	31.80	(3)	33.77
Piece goods (yard goods, upholstery fabrics)	(3)	33.21	32.57	(3)	47.28	38.25	40.48	37.10
Silverware and jewelry (excluding costume jewelry)	(3)	37.28	(3)	(3)	47.95	44.38	(3)	41.05
Women's accessories (hosiery, gloves, and handbags)	(3)	31.68	33.51	32.12	43.96	39.81	40.16	38.68
Women's and misses' dresses	37.72	35.47	34.90	36.86	49.22	44.47	44.23	40.74
Women's shoes	(3)	36.18	40.59	43.62	58.42	57.39	(3)	49.29
Women's and misses' suits and coats	42.08	39.63	41.59	40.96	57.79	70.57	48.81	45.99
Sewers, alteration, women's garments	30.45	31.58	34.41	29.54	41.04	(3)	35.99	35.15
Stock girls, selling sections	22.22	27.75	(3)	(3)	34.07	27.32	(3)	32.28
Office occupations								
Billers, machine (billing machine)	(3)	(3)	33.51	(3)	41.67	37.12	(3)	35.89
Billers, machine (bookkeeping machine)	(3)	39.40	(3)	32.89	44.17	(3)	35.67	41.67
Calculating-machine operators (Comptometer type)	37.62	35.82	34.03	33.13	40.10	(3)	36.39	37.53
Clerks, payroll	(3)	42.20	39.31	40.91	44.39	42.93	41.74	41.35
Stenographers, general	(3)	36.97	35.96	34.83	44.66	40.20	38.70	41.56
Switchboard operators	(3)	33.27	40.70	32.94	40.79	34.63	38.82	38.41
MEN								
Store occupations								
Carpenters, maintenance	(3)	69.87	73.14	63.02	92.48	82.01	80.71	84.41
Elevator operators, passenger	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	32.03	(3)	(3)
Finishers, furniture	(3)	51.74	51.64	(3)	58.24	47.24	(3)	61.20
Fitters, men's garments	(3)	59.44	(3)	(3)	74.83	(3)	(3)	63.70
Packers, bulk	(3)	36.24	37.60	(3)	44.79	(3)	39.18	47.37
Porters, day (cleaners)	29.10	30.88	38.46	34.04	42.24	31.74	34.81	41.91
Receiving clerks (checkers)	(3)	34.04	40.36	(3)	44.48	(3)	(3)	50.16
Sales clerks, regular or upstairs departments:								
Bedspreads, draperies, and blankets	(3)	(3)	39.64	(3)	64.55	(3)	(3)	53.03
Boys' clothing	(3)	43.40	45.19	(3)	69.81	(3)	(3)	65.14
Floor coverings	70.19	63.49	76.73	(3)	94.89	(3)	(3)	84.90
Furniture and bedding	95.71	88.21	111.89	83.09	98.61	(3)	(3)	93.30
Housewares (except china, glassware, and lamps)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	56.25
Major appliances (refrigerators, stoves, washers, etc.)[4]	74.04	82.52	95.32	(3)	86.27	79.69	(3)	86.75
Men's clothing	86.62	60.40	76.33	64.46	85.91	81.84	78.25	75.82
Men's furnishings	(3)	42.38	40.34	51.76	67.81	62.26	57.79	61.41
Women's shoes	48.64	47.82	61.52	56.19	68.70	66.09	(3)	63.00
Stockmen, selling sections	(3)	29.16	31.77	(3)	39.06	30.79	(3)	37.24
Stockmen, warehouse	35.35	38.39	45.41	(3)	46.85	38.25	(3)	50.93
Tailors, alteration, men's garments	56.50	(3)	60.40	54.27	62.67	60.94	(3)	46.43

See footnotes at end of table.

TABLE 5.—*Average weekly earnings* [1] *of workers, selected occupations in department and women's ready-to-wear stores in selected cities, May–July 1950* [2]—Continued

Occupation and sex	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Providence	San Francisco-Oakland	Seattle	Toledo	Washington, D. C.
WOMEN									
Store occupations									
Cashier-wrappers	(3)	$40.94	$30.59	$40.82	$30.71	$42.65	$38.16	$36.17	(3)
Elevator operators, passenger	$24.25	39.45	42.11	44.61	30.56	46.58	38.78	37.70	$30.20
Fitters, women's garments	(3)	61.15	44.31	54.45	38.11	(3)	47.67	45.08	44.16
Sales clerks, regular or upstairs departments:									
Bedspreads, draperies, and blankets	38.53	47.38	44.90	49.80	35.20	(3)	41.42	45.82	38.44
Blouses and neckwear	(3)	41.66	36.53	43.37	33.96	(3)	38.43	39.73	34.56
Boys' furnishings	34.35	47.57	40.47	46.33	(3)	(3)	39.02	41.57	39.76
Housewares (except china, glassware, and lamps)	(3)	46.65	39.67	45.68	(3)	(3)	39.24	43.00	36.38
Men's furnishings	35.49	46.11	38.59	47.78	35.51	49.88	40.07	42.15	41.25
Notions and trimmings	29.41	41.70	35.77	42.00	(3)	44.69	38.50	41.05	34.82
Piece goods (yard goods, upholstery fabrics)	35.13	50.43	38.79	45.32	(3)	(3)	39.31	40.94	37.15
Silverware and jewelry (excluding costume jewelry)	(3)	53.68	40.19	50.37	(3)	(3)	39.73	(3)	44.02
Women's accessories (hosiery, gloves, and handbags)	34.18	42.76	38.61	43.35	34.29	48.44	38.50	43.28	36.16
Women's and misses' dresses	38.20	46.73	44.41	48.56	34.40	51.09	44.94	45.18	40.46
Women's shoes	(3)	67.42	49.64	55.92	(3)	59.41	(3)	(3)	48.88
Women's and misses' suits and coats	44.69	51.37	54.73	63.15	36.85	57.02	53.06	56.70	43.26
Sewers, alteration, women's garments	26.66	47.80	42.08	46.36	35.41	47.02	40.95	41.39	38.47
Stockgirls, selling sections	(3)	37.79	27.12	43.77	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	27.21
Office occupations									
Billers, machine (billing machine)	36.64	49.86	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	41.87	40.88	(3)
Billers, machine (bookkeeping machine)	(3)	45.97	38.50	(3)	39.41	49.62	(3)	(3)	39.72
Calculating-machine operators (Comptometer type)	32.38	44.01	34.54	(3)	35.02	45.54	39.55	38.97	40.36
Clerks, payroll	40.42	47.20	37.67	48.96	40.23	50.56	46.17	42.88	42.11
Stenographers, general	33.00	42.97	37.10	42.59	33.34	47.77	43.52	42.24	42.67
Switchboard operators	31.25	43.10	36.87	43.93	32.80	46.04	40.93	39.59	39.22
MEN									
Store occupations									
Carpenters, maintenance	(3)	78.20	99.47	95.63	(3)	89.56	87.05	75.27	82.62
Elevator operators, passenger	(3)	45.83	42.70	48.48	(3)	50.46	(3)	(3)	(3)
Finishers, furniture	44.79	65.27	56.54	76.21	67.31	(3)	67.22	67.66	52.44
Fitters, men's garments	(3)	74.83	68.65	72.21	(3)	(3)	69.17	(3)	70.11
Packers, bulk	(3)	48.49	38.66	59.83	(3)	52.37	54.64	46.41	(3)
Porters, day (cleaners)	27.02	44.26	40.46	47.60	37.23	48.37	43.01	46.69	31.96
Receiving clerks (checkers)	36.81	43.54	41.68	54.01	44.20	(3)	54.88	(3)	38.73
Sales clerks, regular or upstairs departments:									
Bedspreads, draperies, and blankets	47.30	58.09	60.65	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	55.27	(3)
Boys' clothing	(3)	70.69	64.66	65.37	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	50.76
Floor coverings	73.71	114.32	102.42	104.46	(3)	(3)	81.71	83.91	79.72
Furniture and bedding	99.94	153.27	115.72	115.87	62.32	92.43	86.72	97.54	112.10
Housewares (except china, glassware, and lamps)	57.84	48.47	47.07	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Major appliances (refrigerators, stoves, washers, etc.) [4]	105.70	121.87	94.15	104.48	(3)	(3)	(3)	87.00	(3)
Men's clothing	63.92	98.96	95.06	107.56	(3)	71.78	85.55	73.07	82.94
Men's furnishings	52.00	57.50	48.96	55.53	(3)	53.85	50.32	(3)	62.60
Women's shoes	56.60	83.02	63.78	60.51	52.03	72.96	65.89	59.01	65.86
Stockmen, selling sections	31.29	40.05	33.57	45.14	(3)	(3)	50.86	(3)	(3)
Stockmen, warehouse	(3)	53.46	45.51	59.42	42.15	(3)	52.66	63.54	36.58
Tailors, alteration, men's garments	(3)	62.11	58.56	63.99	(3)	69.57	70.92	65.59	62.43

[1] Excludes premium pay for overtime work.
[2] Data for Buffalo and San Francisco relate to January 1950. In these cities as well as Denver, the occupational coverage was primarily designed for other studies and was smaller than that used in the regular study of department and women's ready-to-wear stores.
[3] Data not available.
[4] Excludes radios and television receivers.

Many sales clerks—both men and women—have high earnings. Earnings in the various selling departments in 1950 varied widely from city to city. (See table 5.) For example, the intercity range for saleswomen in women's accessory departments was from $48.44 to $31.68, in women's dresses from $51.09 to $34.40, and in women's suits and coats from $70.57 to $36.85.

Moreover, earnings within a city for clerks selling the same kinds of merchandise differed greatly from one store to another. For example, 11 women selling women's and misses' dresses in Denver earned less than $35 a week, 3 others earned more than $95, and the earnings of the rest were scattered between these figures. Generally, sales personnel in large stores had higher earnings than those in small ones.

Men sales clerks generally had considerably higher earnings than women, mostly because men clerks are concentrated in the selling departments which pay the most, and women in the selling departments which pay the least. Very often only a small proportion of the women remain with the stores long enough to be promoted to higher-paying departments. Salesmen of furniture and bedding had the highest earnings in most of the cities. In 5 cities these employees averaged over $100 a week; average earnings were between $80 and $100 in all other cities except Providence ($62.32). Men selling floor coverings or major

appliances (excluding radios and television receivers) in 3 cities and men's clothing salesmen in 1 city were the only other workers whose weekly levels of earnings exceeded $100. Men's furnishings salesmen had substantially lower average earnings, ranging from $40.34 in Boston to $67.81 in Chicago.

Other Nonsupervisory Employees

Nonselling department store employees below the supervisory level are usually paid by the hour or by the week. Their average earnings generally were lower than those of sales clerks. However, women fitters of women's garments had higher average earnings in every city than did the women sales clerks in the majority of the selling departments. In New York, fitters had average weekly earnings of $61.15, a figure which was topped only by women clerks selling women's shoes in New York and women's suits and coats in Pittsburgh. Among the men in nonselling jobs, carpenters, tailors, and fitters generally had earnings that compared favorably with earnings in some of the selling sections. In every city, however, earnings of the nonselling groups shown in table 5 fell considerably below those of the clerks who sold furniture and beddings and major appliances in the upstairs departments. Although the earnings of sales personnel generally were higher in large stores than in small stores, there was no such pattern among the nonselling occupations.

Hours of Work, Vacations, and Discounts

Workweek

Full-time employees in most of the stores surveyed had workweeks of 40 hours or less. (See table 6.) A 40-hour workweek was scheduled for all full-time employees in all the establishments studied in Atlanta, Denver, New Orleans, San Francisco-Oakland, Seattle, and Toledo. A majority of the stores in Baltimore, Buffalo, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence, and Washington had this schedule. Regular workweeks of over 40 hours were scheduled in more than half the stores in Minneapolis-St. Paul. In Boston and Buffalo different stores reported workweeks of 40 hours, more than 40 hours, and less than 40 hours. Ten of the 26 New York stores studied had workweeks of 37½ hours or less, and none had workweeks longer than 40 hours. A majority of the stores included in the survey had their employees on 5-day workweek schedules, but in 3 cities all reporting stores had 6-day workweeks.

TABLE 6.—*Scheduled hours and days per week for full-time workers in department and women's ready-to-wear stores, May–July 1950*

Item	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Buffalo	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Minneapolis-St. Paul	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Providence	San Francisco-Oakland	Seattle	Toledo	Washington, D. C.
Total establishments studied	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
Scheduled hours:																	
Less than 37½			1		[1] 1					2							
37½										8							1
Over 37½, less than 40		1	6	2									1				
40	4	7	3	6	6	3	8	5	4	16	11	7	4	18	7	5	7
42				1		1											
43 or 43½						[2] 1		4									
44											1	1					
45						1					1						
Other			1					2									
Scheduled days:																	
5	3	6	10	1	4	1		4	2	26	2		5	18		1	8
5½	1			1		2			2		1					4	
6		2	1	7	3	[2] 3	8	7			10	8			7		

[1] One store had a 34-hour week for women only and a 40½-hour week for men.
[2] On alternate weeks, employees in 1 establishment work a 5-day (36½ hours) week.

Vacations

All stores studied had provisions for paid vacations. The usual practice was to give a vacation of 1 week after a year's service and 2 weeks after 2 years. (See table 7.) Regular store and office workers had paid holidays in all but 10 of the 158 stores studied. (See table 8.) The number of paid holidays ranged from 1 to 10, with 6 or 7 days granted most frequently.

Discounts

All but one of the stores studied gave discounts ranging between 10 and 20 percent on merchandise purchased by full-time employees. (See table 9.) Three out of five stores allowed discounts as soon as the employees were hired. Most stores extended this privilege to members of the employees' immediate families.

Labor Unions

Some department store workers are members of labor organizations. Union strength is concentrated in several large cities. The principle union organizing all types of department store workers is the Retail Clerks International Association, AFL. Several unions concentrate mostly on certain specialized types of department store workers that are within their jurisdiction. Deliverymen and warehousemen are organized by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffers, Warehousemen and Helpers of America, AFL. Tailors and other store personnel are organized by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, CIO. Persons working on dress alterations, salespeople in women's apparel, and in some cases other store personnel are organized by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, AFL. Other smaller unions also organize department store workers.

TABLE 7.—*Paid vacations for full-time workers in department and women's ready-to-wear stores, May–July 1950*

Vacation policy	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Buffalo	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Minneapolis-St. Paul	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Providence	San Francisco-Oakland	Seattle	Toledo	Washington, D. C.
Total establishments studied	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
Store workers																	
After 6 months of service:																	
Total establishments with vacations	2	4	9	2	3		3	1	2	17	5	1	3	1		4	2
Under 1 week	1	3		2	2			1		9	5					4	1
1 week	1	1	9				3		2	8		1	2	1			1
Over 1 week, under 2 weeks					1								1				
2 weeks																	
Establishments with no vacations	2	4	2	7	4	6	5	10	2	9	8	7	2	17	7	1	6
After 1 year of service:																	
Total establishments with vacations	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
1 week	3	7	2	4	3	5	5	11	2	19	12	7	1	16	7	5	7
Over 1 week, under 2 weeks				5						2							
2 weeks	1	1	9		4	1	3		2	5	1	1	2	2			1
Over 2 weeks													2				
Establishments with no vacations																	
After 2 years of service:																	
Total establishments with vacations	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
1 week								4	1								1
Over 1 week, under 2 weeks						1											
2 weeks	3	8	10	3	7	5	8	7	3	23	13	8	3	18	7	5	7
Over 2 weeks	1		1	6						3			2				
Establishments with no vacations																	
Office workers																	
After 6 months of service:																	
Total establishments with vacations	2	4	9	2	3	1	3	2	2	17	5	1	3	1		4	2
Under 1 week	1	3		2				2		9	5					4	1
1 week	1	1	9		2	1	3		2	8		1	2	1			1
Over 1 week, under 2 weeks					1								1				
2 weeks																	
Establishments with no vacations	2	4	2	7	4	5	5	9	2	9	8	7	2	17	7	1	6
After 1 year of service:																	
Total establishments with vacations	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
1 week	3	7	2	4	3	5	5	11	2	19	12	7	1	16	7	5	8
Over 1 week, under 2 weeks				5						2							
2 weeks	1	1	9		4	1	3		2	5	1	1	2	2			
Over 2 weeks													2				
After 2 years of service:																	
Total establishments with vacations	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
1 week								4	1								1
Over 1 week, under 2 weeks						1											
2 weeks	3	8	10	3	7	5	8	7	3	23	13	8	3	18	7	5	7
Over 2 weeks	1		1	6						3			2				

TABLE 8.—*Paid holidays for full-time workers in department and women's ready-to-wear stores, May–July 1950*

Item	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Buffalo	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Minneapolis-St. Paul	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Providence	San Francisco-Oakland	Seattle	Toledo	Washington, D. C.
Total establishments studied	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
Total establishments providing paid holidays	4	8	6	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	4	18	7	5	4
Number of holidays:																	
1			2														
2																	
3																	
4						5											
5						1				1	1						
5½	4																
6		8		8	7		8	11	3	1	12	8		1		5	
6½																	4
7			2	1					1	23				16	7		
7½										1							
8			1											1			
9													4				
10			1														
Establishments with no paid holidays			5										1				4

TABLE 9.—*Discount policies for full-time workers in department and women's ready-to-wear stores, May–July 1950*

Item	Atlanta	Baltimore	Boston	Buffalo	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Minneapolis-St. Paul	New Orleans	New York	Philadelphia	Pittsburgh	Providence	San Francisco-Oakland	Seattle	Toledo	Washington, D. C.
Total establishments studied	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	26	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
Total establishments with discount privileges	4	8	11	9	7	6	8	11	4	25	13	8	5	18	7	5	8
Discount on merchandise wearable to work:																	
Upon employment	1	7	3	6	4	4	2	10	3	10	9	5	4	10	5	5	5
5 percent										1							
10 percent	1	4	2	3	3	2	2	2	1	2	4	5		3	1	1	1
15 percent			1			1		3			1		1		4		
20 percent		3		3	1	1		3	2	6	4		1	5		4	4
Over 20 percent								2		1			2	1			
Other														1			
After waiting period	3	1	8	3	3	2	6	1	1	15	4	3	1	8	2		3
10 percent	2		1				1			1							
15 percent			2			1		1	1	2	2	2		2			
20 percent	1	1	4	2	3	1	5			8	1	1	1	5	1		3
Over 20 percent			1	1						4	1			1	1		
No discount on merchandise wearable to work										1							
Discount on other wearable merchandise:																	
Upon employment	1	7	3	5	4	4	2	10	3	10	9	5	4	10	5	5	3
5 percent																	
10 percent	1	4	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	7	5	5		3	1	1	1
15 percent			1			1		3			1		3	4	4		
20 percent		3		2	1	1		3	1	2	3		1	2		4	2
Over 20 percent								2		1							
Other														1			
After waiting period	3	1	8	4	3	2	6	1	1	15	4	3	1	8	2		5
10 percent	1		1	1			1			7				2			
15 percent			2			1	1	1	1	2	1	2		6	1		
20 percent	2	1	4	2	3	1	4			2	2	1	1		1		5
Over 20 percent			1	1						4	1						
Other																	
Other discount policies																	
No discount on other wearable to work merchandise										1							
Discount on other merchandise: [1]																	
Upon employment	1	7	3	6	4	4	2	10	3	9	7	5	4	10	5	5	3
5 percent																	
10 percent	1	4	2	6	3	2	2	6	2	7	5	5	1	3	2	1	1
15 percent			1			1		3	1		1		3	4	3		
20 percent		3			1	1				1	1			2		4	2
Over 20 percent								1		1							
Other														1			
After waiting period	3	1	8	3	3	2	6	1	1	8	1	3	1	8	2		5
10 percent	1		2	2			1			5		1		2			
15 percent			3			1	2	1	1	2	1	1		6	2		
20 percent	2	1	2		3	1	3			1		1	1				5
Over 20 percent			1	1													
No discount on other merchandise																	
Discount privileges granted to other members of employee's family:																	
Yes	4	7	9	9	5	6	8	11	4	13	10	8	3	18	7	5	7
No		1	2		2					13	3		2				1

[1] Not applicable to women's ready-to-wear stores.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1951