

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WOMEN'S BUREAU  
MARY ANDERSON, Director

BULLETIN OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, NO. 10

HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF WORK  
FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY  
IN VIRGINIA



MARCH, 1920

WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
1920

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WOMEN'S BUREAU  
MARY ANDERSON, Director

BULLETIN OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, NO. 10

**HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF WORK  
FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY  
IN VIRGINIA**



**MARCH, 1920**

WASHINGTON  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
1920

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WOMEN'S BUREAU  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

STUDY OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN

HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF WORK  
FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY  
IN VIRGINIA



MARCH 1933

WASHINGTON, D.C.  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE  
1933

## CONTENTS.

	Page.
Letter of transmittal.....	5
Letter of request from the governor of Virginia.....	6
Introduction.....	7
Summary of facts.....	12
Recommendations.....	12
Hours—Working conditions—Administration of labor laws.	
Hours.....	14
Daily—Weekly—Saturday half holiday — Lunch period — Night work—Posting of hours.	
Working conditions.....	20
Toilets—Washing facilities—Drinking facilities—Cloakrooms— Lunch and rest rooms—Seats—Cleaning—Lighting—Ventila- tion—Health service—Employment policy.	
The workers.....	27
Home responsibilities—Wages—Reasons for high labor turn- over—Hours.	
The administration of labor laws.....	30
Appendix—The need for new legislation.....	31

CONFIDENTIAL

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

---

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,

WOMEN'S BUREAU,

*Washington, March 1, 1920.*

SIR: Submitted herewith is a report giving the results of an investigation of women in industry in the State of Virginia. This survey was undertaken at the request of the governor of that State, a copy of whose letter follows, and in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics of Virginia. Valuable assistance and advice were given by Mr. Howard T. Colvin and Miss Mary J. Schall, of that bureau.

The survey was started October 7 and continued until December 15, 1919, when it was temporarily suspended because of coal shortage. A preliminary report of this survey was then submitted to the governor before January 1. After January 1 the towns which had not been visited were surveyed and return visits made to several localities from which additional information was desired.

The investigation was directed by Miss Agnes L. Peterson, assisted by Mrs. Ethel L. Best, Miss Helen Bryan, and Miss Agnes H. Campbell. The report was prepared by Miss Mary N. Winslow.

Respectfully submitted.

MARY ANDERSON,  
*Director.*

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

## LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA.

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA,  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE,  
*Richmond, October 10, 1919.*

HON. WILLIAM B. WILSON,  
*Secretary of Labor, Washington, D. C.*

DEAR SIR: I am informed that the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor has from time to time made surveys covering women engaged in industry in the various States. I am of the opinion that such an investigation in Virginia would supply valuable information concerning the industrial activities of this State, and would be of especial value as a basis for any legislation that might be enacted in the interest of women engaged in industry.

I ask, therefore, that a similar investigation be made in Virginia by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor in cooperation with the bureau of labor and industrial statistics of this State.

Yours, very truly,

(Signed)

WESTMORELAND DAVIS,  
*Governor.*

# HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF WORK FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY IN VIRGINIA.

## INTRODUCTION.

In October, 1919, Gov. Westmoreland Davis, of Virginia, sent a request to the Secretary of the United States Department of Labor that the Women's Bureau in that department should make a survey of hours and conditions of work for women in industry in Virginia, in order to secure a foundation of facts upon which legislation to better conditions might be based. The survey was started in the latter part of October and continued until December 15, 1919, when it was temporarily suspended because of the coal shortage which occurred toward the end of that period. This shortage caused many plants to shut down and several towns were necessarily omitted at that time. Realizing the need for immediate use of the facts disclosed by the survey, the Women's Bureau submitted a preliminary report before January 1, giving an outline of the prevailing conditions and recommending definite subjects for legislation. After January 1, the towns which had not been visited in December because of the coal shortage were surveyed and return visits made to several localities from which additional information was desired. The conditions found in the new localities did not alter any of the recommendations which were made in the preliminary report, but only added greater force to the underlying reasons for them.

The work of the survey was done in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics of Virginia, and valuable assistance and advice were given by Mr. Howard T. Colvin and Miss Mary J. Schail of that bureau. Miss Schail was especially helpful not only because of her thorough knowledge of conditions throughout the State but also because of her willing cooperation in making actual investigations.

As the period in which the survey was to be made was brief, it was thought wiser to sample a large field than to attempt to make a comprehensive study of any special locality or industry. Inspections were made, therefore, in Richmond, Petersburg, Danville, South Boston, Lynchburg, Bedford, Charlottesville, Staunton, Alexandria, Norfolk, Roanoke, Buena Vista, Culpeper, Salem, Martinsville, and Fielddale.

For each locality visited a list of all the establishments employing women was secured from the bureau of labor and industrial statistics. The investigators visited as many of these plants as time permitted. In places where it was obviously impossible to cover the whole field, industries were selected which employed a large number of women or in which the employment of women was known to present special problems. One hundred and forty-six establishments were visited, which employed 34,913 persons, of whom 18,781, or 53.8 per cent, were women.

The following table shows the number of establishments visited, the total number of employees, and the number and per cent of women employed, by industries:

TABLE I.—*Number of establishments investigated, total number of employees, and number and per cent of women employed, by industries.*

Industry.	Number of establishments.	Total number of employees.	Number of women employed.	Per cent of women in each specified industry.
Tobacco.....	43	16,699	10,344	61.9
Textiles.....	16	7,522	2,860	38.0
Clothing.....	16	2,423	2,206	91.0
Hosiery and knit goods.....	5	1,230	782	63.6
Bakeries and other food products.....	19	1,227	547	44.6
Boots and shoes.....	4	1,319	485	36.8
Paper and paper products.....	13	1,128	517	45.8
Peanuts.....	5	347	231	66.7
Printing and publishing.....	9	706	297	42.1
Miscellaneous.....	16	2,312	512	22.1
Total.....	146	34,913	18,781	53.8

There are no reliable figures to show the total number of women gainfully employed at present in Virginia, but estimating from the number of women gainfully employed in the State in 1910, according to the census of 1910, and the percentage of increase in the decade from 1900 to 1910, there are probably not less than 226,000 wage-earning women in the State. If the same percentage (15.4 per cent) of women is employed at present in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits as was so employed in 1910, the total number of women in these occupations would amount to 34,917. According to this estimate—probably a conservative one, as the field of employment for women in industrial work has increased considerably in the last 10 years—over one-half of the total number of women in industrial establishments in the State were included in this survey.

The facts obtained during the survey are limited chiefly to hours and working conditions. Although the question of wages is recognized as being of supreme importance to any group of workers, the time at the disposal of the investigators did not permit of a wage

study in addition to securing the other information that was desired for immediate use. Many reports were obtained, however, through interviews with working women and also from the superintendents of plants which seemed to indicate that a very low wage rate prevails throughout the State.

The important position which women have achieved in industry throughout the country is reflected in the figures of Table I. Women constituted 53.8 per cent of all workers included in the survey, 61.9 per cent of all workers in the tobacco industry, 38 per cent of the textile workers, and 91 per cent of the employees in the clothing industry.

A scarcity of labor was reported to the investigators by many superintendents, and, according to their reports, seems to exist throughout the State. This would indicate a need for the further recruiting of women as well as men to meet the needs of the increasing industrial development of the State. Shorter hours, better wages, and good working conditions can not fail to stimulate the enlistment of new workers as well as to stabilize those who are already employed. Women are indispensable to the industries of Virginia and the conditions under which they work must be recognized as a definite asset or menace, as the case may be, to the well-being of the State from an industrial as well as from a social point of view.

The benefit to industry resulting from a general improvement in working conditions is secondary, however, in the case of the employment of women, to the effect on the community itself. Many studies have shown the extreme danger to health accompanying fatigue and the lessened output and increase in the amount of sickness and number of accidents which accompany long hours. In the last analysis it is the community or State which bears the cost of industry's failure to care for its human machinery. The double burden of family responsibility and work in the factory which is carried by so many women is a tax on their strength which renders them more susceptible than men to the dangers of many existing industrial conditions.

A steady increase in legislation for safeguarding women in industry is taking place year by year throughout the United States. The power of the State to regulate hours for its women workers was recognized many years ago by the courts as coming within the police power of the State for regulating conditions affecting the public health.<sup>1</sup> This principle has already been recognized in Virginia by the passage of legislation limiting to 10 the daily hours of work for women in any factory, workshop, laundry, or in any mercantile

<sup>1</sup> 1909, *Muller v. Oregon*, 208 U. S., 412; 1915, *Miller v. Wilson*, 236 U. S., 373; *Bosley v. McLaughlin*, 236 U. S., 385.

or manufacturing establishment. The Virginia law also limits weekly hours of work to 60, but more than 60 hours is permitted in tobacco rehandling plants when a permit is secured. The 10-hour day, however, is no longer a standard to be proud of. Already an 8-hour limit to the working day for women has been established for certain occupations in seven States—Arizona, California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Washington—and the District of Columbia and Porto Rico, and the 48-hour week for women has been established for certain occupations in California, Utah, North Dakota, Massachusetts, Oregon, the District of Columbia, and Porto Rico. By trade-union agreement the 8-hour day has been established in other localities for thousands of workers in the textile and garment trades, two of the leading industries of Virginia. Adopted as a principle by the International Labor Conference and by the First International Congress of Working Women, followed as a practice by thousands of modern and efficient employers, sanctioned by governments, employers, and workers, the 8-hour day would not seem to be too high a standard for a State as important industrially as Virginia.

Except for the limitation of hours there has been very little attention given to the regulation of working conditions for women by the laws of Virginia. While the laws of many States have gone into great detail to provide such regulations, and while in many other States industrial commissions are empowered to establish the necessary standards and have done so with the utmost care and stringency, the Virginia Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics has very few laws to enforce and no power to make regulations. The few provisions in the Virginia statutes which do attempt to regulate conditions of work for women are so indefinitely drawn or so restricted in their scope as to render them of little value. For instance, the law relating to the provision of seats requires that they shall be provided for every three women in mercantile establishments, but no requirement is made for seats for the thousands of women in industrial establishments, although in the experience of many manufacturers in Virginia, as well as in other States, such a requirement has proved practicable.

The sanitary law of Virginia provides that toilets in establishments where women are employed shall be "sufficient" and separate from those provided for the men. No definition is given as to the exact meaning of "sufficient," so it is not possible to require that a certain number shall be supplied in proportion to the number of women employed. The wording of the law is so vague that to enforce sanitary conditions the labor officials are often obliged to turn for authority to the local board of health where city ordinances are

more specific than the State regulations. Except for the provisions that where women are employed stairs must be properly screened at the sides and bottom, no further legal consideration of special working conditions for women is given in Virginia, and the bureau of labor and industrial statistics is not given power to make special rulings.

Under the general laws regulating the employment of both men and women there is a provision which prohibits the placing of a common towel for use in any factory, workshop, or mercantile establishment, but there is no provision which requires that individual towels or any other washing facilities be provided, nor does the law require sanitary drinking facilities. Protection against dust is provided for in the use of grinding, polishing, or buffing wheels by the requirement of hooding and an exhaust system, but no such protection is given workers in other dusty trades, such as the tobacco industry. The Virginia law also requires that dangerous machinery shall be guarded, and that there shall be adequate fire escapes, and that doors leading in or to any factory employing over 25 persons shall open out. Even these provisions were found not to be universally enforced, owing principally to the very limited number of inspectors who are provided to administer the law.

The facts which are included in the body of this report emphasize, naturally, the conditions existing throughout the State which are in need of improvement or regulation. There are, of course, many manufacturers in the State who are conforming to the highest standards and the conditions found in their plants have led to the firm conviction on the part of those responsible for this survey that their example can be emulated by the less progressive employers with benefit to the entire community. Particular stress has been laid on the less commendable conditions found, as it is felt that these conditions are allowed to exist largely because of an uninformed public which has not known the real facts and therefore has not felt the need of regulation.

It is obvious from a study of the increasing amount and scope of industrial legislation in the various States, from the action taken by progressive employers throughout the country and in Virginia, and from the attitude of the workers themselves that certain industrial standards eventually will have to be met. A number of the plants visited in Virginia are branches of firms which are operating successfully in other States where the standards of employment are much higher, and the State of Virginia can ill afford to permit these manufacturers to operate under conditions which would not be tolerated in their home States. It will be easier to establish high

standards in a young and comparatively small industry than to readjust conditions later on. Some of the industries of Virginia are of very long standing and employ large numbers of people, others are small and are just beginning. Conditions seem to show that all are growing, and the plans for a considerable extension of business which were reported to the inspectors by the superintendents of many plants would indicate that now is the time for Virginia to establish standards for the protection of its wage-earning women which will equal those of other progressive industrial communities.

#### SUMMARY OF FACTS OBTAINED THROUGH THE SURVEY.

1. Forty-six per cent of the women were working 10 hours a day. Forty per cent of them worked over 54 hours a week.
2. Eleven per cent of the women worked 8 hours or less and over 19 per cent worked 48 hours a week or less. Every industry except the peanut industry was represented in the group working 48 hours a week or less.
3. Three and two-tenths per cent of the women were working at night.
4. Equipment, cleanliness, and other conditions of the buildings and workrooms in the majority of the establishments were very unsatisfactory from the viewpoint of comfort, sanitation, and efficient management.
5. Provision for the comfort and health of the workers was most inadequate.
6. Superintendents of many plants requested advice and assistance in raising the standards of working conditions.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS.

As a result of this survey, which included many conferences with employers, workers, and others interested in the subject, the Women's Bureau recommends that the following standards be established either through specific laws or through legislation empowering the State bureau of labor and industrial statistics to regulate conditions of employment.

##### Hours.

1. Women should not be required or permitted to work more than eight hours in any one day.
2. Women should not be required to work more than one-half day on Saturday.
3. Not less than 30 minutes should be allowed for a meal in each working day.
4. No woman should be employed between the hours of 12 midnight and 6 a. m.

5. The time when the work of women employees shall begin and end and the time allowed for meals should be posted in a conspicuous place in each workroom, and a record should be kept of the overtime for each woman worker.

### **Working conditions.**

1. Where women are employed there should be provided one toilet for every 20 women and one toilet for every additional 15 women or fraction thereof. These toilets should be properly screened, should have outside ventilation, and should be kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

2. Washing facilities with hot and cold water, soap, and individual towels should be provided.

3. Drinking water should be cool and accessible, with individual drinking cups or sanitary bubble fountain provided.

4. Cloakroom facilities should be provided, and provision made outside of the workroom for eating lunch and resting.

5. Adjustable seats with backs should be supplied for all women workers.

6. The dust protection law in Virginia should be extended to include protection in all processes involving exposure to dust and fumes.

### **Administration of labor laws.**

1. One or more women should be appointed in the bureau of labor and industrial statistics with full authority to investigate conditions and enforce the laws.

2. There should be an adequate number of inspectors to enforce the laws regulating conditions in industrial establishments.

From experience in other States it has been found that labor legislation to be effective must contain certain provisions in order to make enforcement possible. In the appendix to this report the special needs for new legislation are outlined.

## HOURS.

In spite of the general tendency throughout the country toward a reduction in working hours, Virginia is still backward in joining this movement. According to the Census of Manufactures<sup>1</sup> 29.6 per cent of all workers in the country worked 54 hours a week or less in 1909. In 1914, 51 per cent of all workers had a working week of 54 hours or less, an increase of over 20 per cent in five years. In Virginia, however, the same report shows that in 1914 only 25.5 per cent of the workers worked 54 hours or less. This situation was emphasized in the schedules of hours which were secured from the 146 factories visited.

### Daily hours.

Table II shows the daily hours worked by the women employed in the different industries.

TABLE II.—Number of women working each classified number of daily hours in 144 plants in Virginia in December, 1919, by industries.<sup>a</sup>

Industry.	Number of plants and number of women employed where daily hours of work were—										Total.			
	Under 8 hours.		8 hours.		Over 8 and under 9 hours.		9 hours.		Over 9 and under 10 hours.				10 hours and over. <sup>b</sup>	
	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.
Tobacco.....					4	2,454	6	1,239	8	906	28	5,048	43	9,647
Textile.....					2	454	1	61	1	46	12	2,299	16	2,860
Clothing.....	2	1,188	5	420	1	46	4	299	3	186	1	67	16	2,206
Hosiery and knit goods.....			1	230	1	132					3	420	5	782
Bakeries and other food products.....			2	6	1	36	4	97	10	366	1	29	18	534
Boots and shoes.....					4	485							4	485
Paper and paper products.....			1	65	4	140	2	110	2	36	4	134	13	485
Peanuts.....									2	97	2	106	4	203
Printing and publishing.....	1	41	1	48	7	208							9	297
Miscellaneous.....			1	3	5	96	2	150	3	44	5	219	16	512
Total.....	3	1,229	10	772	29	4,051	19	1,956	29	1,681	56	8,322	144	18,011
Per cent of women employed in each hour group.....	6.8		4.3		22.5		10.9		9.3		46.2		100	

<sup>a</sup> In two plants employing 41 women the daily hours of work were not reported. The hours of 729 women employed on night shifts in six plants are not included in this table.

<sup>b</sup> Two plants, employing 405 women, in the tobacco industry worked over 10 hours.

It is extremely significant to note in this table that 2,001 women employed in 13 plants were found to have a working day of eight hours or less. The fact that their employment for such hours in so many instances was successful is an indication of the possibilities

<sup>1</sup> Abstract of the Census of Manufactures, 1914, p. 482, Table 212.

which may be attained through the good will and intelligent efforts of managements which are awake to the needs of their workers and the importance of maintaining high standards in the industry.

The largest number of women (8,322) were employed 10 hours or over. Of this number only 405 worked over 10 hours, the remaining 7,917 working a straight 10-hour day. This group constitutes over 46 per cent of the entire number of women included in the survey. The next largest number of women were employed between eight and nine hours a day, 4,051, or 22.5 per cent of the total number of women coming within this group. The distribution of this number among the various industries is particularly interesting. The tobacco industry, which employs over 5,000 women 10 hours a day, employs nearly 2,500 over eight and less than nine hours a day. The textile industry does not make such a good showing, with only 454 in the shorter-hour group, against 2,299 in the 10-hour group.

### Weekly hours.

No less important than the length of the working day is the length of the working week, and Table III gives the weekly hours of work by industries.

TABLE III.—Number of women working each classified number of weekly hours in 143 plants in Virginia in December, 1919, by industries.<sup>a</sup>

Industry.	Number of plants and number of women employed where weekly hours of work were—												Total.	
	Under 48 hours.		48 hours.		Over 48 and under 54 hours.		54 hours.		Over 54 and under 60 hours.		Over 60 hours.			
	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.	Plants.	Women.
Tobacco.....	1	2	.....	.....	16	4,597	.....	.....	26	4,643	2	405	43	9,647
Textile.....	1	416	.....	.....	3	1,229	.....	.....	12	1,215	.....	.....	16	2,860
Clothing.....	8	1,654	.....	.....	6	466	.....	.....	2	86	.....	.....	16	2,206
Hosiery and knit goods.....	.....	.....	2	362	.....	.....	.....	.....	3	420	.....	.....	5	782
Bakeries and other food products.....	3	42	.....	.....	10	336	4	127	1	29	.....	.....	18	534
Boots and shoes.....	.....	.....	4	485	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4	485
Paper and paper products.....	2	71	2	100	5	180	.....	.....	4	134	.....	.....	13	485
Peanuts.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	97	.....	.....	2	106	.....	.....	4	203
Printing and publishing.....	2	89	7	208	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	9	297
Miscellaneous.....	2	26	1	5	6	229	.....	.....	6	222	.....	.....	15	482
Total.....	19	2,300	16	1,160	48	7,134	4	127	56	6,855	2	405	143	17,981
Per cent of women in each hour group.....	12.8		6.5		39.7		0.7		38.1		2.2		100	

<sup>a</sup> In three plants employing 71 women the weekly hours were not reported. The hours of 729 women employed on night shifts in six plants are not included in this table.

Nearly 3,500 women were found to be working 48 hours a week or less, and these women were employed in every industry covered by the investigation with the exception of the peanut industry.

The weekly hours of work for the majority of women included in the survey fell into two groups, 39.7 per cent being employed over

48 hours but under 54 hours, and 38.1 per cent working over 54 hours and under 60. In many of the industries there was very nearly an equal number of women whose hours of work fell within each of these two groups. Four thousand five hundred and ninety-seven women in tobacco plants worked over 48 but under 54 hours, and 4,643 worked over 54 but under 60 hours. Four hundred and five women were employed over 60 hours a week in two tobacco re-handling plants. These hours were not contrary to the Virginia law, as this law permits rehandling plants to employ women more than 10 hours if a permit is secured from the State bureau of labor and industrial statistics. One thousand two hundred and twenty-nine women in the textile industry worked between 48 and 54 hours, and 1,215 worked between 54 and 60 hours. In the manufacture of hosiery and knit goods three plants employing 420 women ran over 54 hours a week, while two plants employing 362 women worked 48 hours.

From the foregoing figures it would seem that the arrangement of both daily and weekly hours is dependent not on the special needs of different industries, as examples of all hours are found in almost every industry, but on local standards in individual plants, although certain industries, notably the clothing and printing trades, have advanced far ahead of the others in the matter of providing a working day of reasonable length.

What does it mean to the well-being of the State that 46 per cent of its women are working 10 hours a day and 40 per cent over 54 hours a week? There is nothing more vital to any community than that the strength and health of its industrial workers should be maintained and guarded. Especially is this true of a group of women on whom depends not only so large and important a part of the industrial work of the State, but also in many instances the maintenance of a family and the rearing of future citizens.

A typical story of the life of a working woman whose hours are from 7.30 a. m. to 6 p. m. was told to one of the investigators by the woman herself. Deserted by her husband and with two little children to support, she went to work in a tobacco factory. To be at the factory at 7.30 she had to get up at 5.30, cook breakfast, dress the children and take them to a day nursery, leaving home at 6.30. As the factory did not close until 6 in the evening, and she had to stop for the children on the way home, she did not get home until 7 o'clock. Then the housework must be done, and the children's clothes made, with the result that bedtime did not come much before midnight. This is not a story of an isolated case. Fifty-nine women were interviewed by the investigators and 37 of them supported others than themselves, 21 being responsible for the care and maintenance of children. The women who were interviewed were se-

lected entirely by chance, as they were met in the factory, in the Y. W. C. A., at the day nurseries, or in their homes, so they can be considered to be fairly representative of the entire group of working women who were included in the survey.

It is not only the married women, or those who must help at home, who feel the strain of the long hours. One girl, a weaver in a silk mill, working from 7 a. m. to 6 p. m., said that Saturday afternoons and Sundays she almost always spent at home, too tired to go out. She said she did not do anything special at home—"just sat." She had found she could not even go to the "movies," as her eyes became so tired she did not dare use them for anything except work. In the tobacco industry a condition was found illustrating the evil effects of long hours spent in doing monotonous repetitive work. Many of the girls who place the container on the wrapped cigarettes, who fit on the box, or who paste the stamps are afflicted with a constant shaking motion of the entire body. This affliction is like a mild form of shaking palsy. The superintendent of one plant laid it to temperament. "Some girls are more nervous than others, and just hurry more." However, as the output of these girls was no higher than that of many not afflicted, that explanation was not satisfactory. One girl said "It's all in the way you begin; some people teach you to do it and some don't." Another girl said: "You do the work as fast as you can; you reach for the cigarettes, for the tin foil, for the box, and, if you get a little behind, your body keeps right on making all the motions even if your hands don't keep up. Sometimes I'm so tired at night I would give anything in the world to be able to stop doing it."

Frequently women in Virginia start work at 7 o'clock in the morning and do not leave the factory until 5 or 6 o'clock at night. On the other hand, women in the same industries, at the same occupations but in different plants, are working hours which leave them time for rest and recreation, and enable them to take an intelligent part in the life of the community. From an industrial viewpoint the shorter hours do not appear to have been a drawback. The group of plants running the shorter hours were competing successfully with many other plants in the same industries which were running 10 hours a day and over 54 hours a week.

One fact, however, which stood out through the entire survey was the universal observance of the existing law limiting the daily hours of work to 10. It speaks well for the enforcing authorities that they have been able to insure to its fullest extent whatever legal protection along these lines already has been given to the women of the State. No examples of illegal overtime were found in the 146 plants surveyed. The two plants which did report a working day

of more than 10 hours were tobacco-rehandling plants, where the longer hours were not against the law.

### **Saturday half holiday.**

The Saturday half holiday was found to be observed almost universally throughout the State. Of only 31 plants, employing 1,159 women, was it reported that the Saturday closing hour was later than 1 p. m. Thus experience and custom in Virginia have already given sanction to the half holiday on Saturday, which now only needs legislative indorsement to secure universal application.

### **Lunch period.**

At least one-half hour was allowed for lunch in every one of the 146 plants visited by the investigators. Whether a 30-minute lunch period is adequate depends very largely on the local conditions, both in the plant and in the neighborhood surrounding the plant. It was found in many localities that it was the custom for the employees to go home for lunch, and occasionally complaint was made that it was difficult to get back in time. In many other cases, however, the girls felt they would rather have a shorter lunch period and get off earlier in the evening. In plants where no provision is made for a lunch room, and where the employees live at too great a distance to enable them to go home for lunch, it can be easily understood that it might be unnecessary and even unpleasant to spend more than half an hour in eating sandwiches while sitting in a dusty workroom with no lunch table except the machine and no chair except a makeshift stool or box. Some processes of work clearly demand a rest and lunch period longer than 30 minutes, and 30 minutes for lunch should be considered a minimum in all industries. The determination of a satisfactory lunch period is dependent upon the locality, the industry, and the desires of the workers themselves. It would seem that the general practice in the State has conformed to such a policy, and the only adjustment necessary could be met by intelligent cooperation between management and workers, with a law to establish a minimum standard.

### **Night work.**

Very little work was found being done at night, but the fact that six establishments, employing 729 women, were operating night shifts would indicate that there is a need for the establishment of a definite prohibition of this condition, which has been shown in so many ways to be such a serious menace to health and efficiency. Four of the establishments which were running night shifts were making cigarettes and two were manufacturing paper products. In neither of these industries is there any inherent reason for night work, as the process of manufacturing is not necessarily continuous, nor is the product perishable nor the industry seasonal. The abo-

lition of night work in Virginia, therefore, would not require a fundamental alteration in process, but merely a local readjustment in a few plants. The particular hardship to women of employment during the night hours, which has been emphasized many times in different reports and investigations, was brought out again by the stories of several women who worked at night in a tobacco factory in one city in the State.

Mrs. ——— was waiting at 7 p. m. to see if she could get a job on the night shift. Her husband was living and working, but she had been sick ever since her baby came, about three months ago, and they had gotten in debt. She couldn't leave the baby daytimes, but her husband could look out for him at night. She had worked in the factory before the baby came, almost up to the time he was born, but had "pleurisy and fever" ever since. Doctor didn't want her to go to work, but she felt she must.

Mrs. ——— did daywork through the summer, but did not like it because it kept her away from the children. She has two children, one 5 and one 4 years old, and another coming in a couple of months. Her husband works in another State and sends money home, but not enough. By working at night she can be with the children and do the housework in the daytime. She sleeps a couple of hours in the morning and a couple in the afternoon. Her sister-in-law stays with the children at night.

Surely it is in the interest of the State to see that such sacrifices as these shall not be required or permitted. Under the strain of this double work women are unable to give to either family or industry the attention and interest which are needed by both. By the prohibition of their employment at night these double tasks can be prevented.

### Posting of hours.

All of the figures which have been given in the foregoing tables as to hours of work in different establishments are based upon the oral reports made by superintendents or their representatives to the investigators. In a number of instances there was considerable divergence of opinion among different authorities as to the exact opening and closing hours. The following quotation from the report on one plant will illustrate the difficulties facing anyone who is interested in securing exact figures as to hours of work. The management of one plant had stated that the hours were from 8 a. m. to 5.15 p. m., with a lunch period of 30 minutes, and the closing hour on Saturday 12.30, making a working day of 8 hours and 45 minutes and a working week of 48 hours and 15 minutes. The investigator's report, however, said:

On questioning the superintendent admitted that the factory opened at 7.30 a. m. and employees can come in and begin work at any time before 8 a. m. The factory is supposed to close at 5.15 p. m., but sometimes workers stay on until 5.30. Interviews with employees have brought out the fact that they can go in and begin work at any time after 7 a. m. Several work from 7.15 a. m. to 5.30 p. m., which, with 5 hours and 15 minutes' work on Saturday,

makes a 54-hour week. Several others claimed they worked until 6 p. m. All of the workers interviewed stated that if anyone arrived after 7.45 a. m. they were not allowed to work that day, which disagrees with the statement of the management that work began at 8 a. m.

In many States the law requires that a record of hours shall be posted in each factory, and frequently, even when the law does not require it, up-to-date managers have found it advisable to follow this system. In the course of this survey, of the 146 plants visited only 13 plants, employing 2,737 of the 18,781 women, were found to have posted a record of hours. The work of factory inspectors would be materially aided if such a provision were enacted in the law, and a clear-cut statement of the working hours in force in a plant could not fail to better relations with employees, who would then have no reason for uncertainty as to what was expected of them, and could not feel that they were being exploited without the knowledge of the authorities.

### WORKING CONDITIONS.

The general standard of working conditions in the factories employing women was found to be very low. Of course there were many instances in which efficient employers had installed modern sanitary facilities and arrangements for the comfort and health of their employees, but on the whole there was evidence of very scant appreciation on the part of employers of the importance of this phase of factory management. Matters of sanitation, comfort, and cleanliness were often left to the direction of superintendents or foremen, with the result that in some large plants a most amazing variety of conditions was found.

#### Toilets.

The most serious condition from the point of view not only of the comfort of the employees but also of the general public health was the insufficiency and insanitary condition of toilets. There is naturally a great diversity of conditions in the various plants, depending either upon the point of view of the management, the age and construction of the building, or the efficiency of the cleaning force, but seldom upon the most important consideration of all—the needs of the workers. It was found that there were an insufficient number of toilets in 52 plants, employing 7,877 women. It was a usual thing to find only one toilet provided for 25 or 30 women, and in many instances the number ran much higher, the worst case being 89 women to one toilet. Screening, ventilation, or cleaning of toilets was considered necessary by the investigators in 61 establishments employing 9,000 women, more than 47 per cent of all those included in the investigation.

### **Washing facilities.**

It would seem to be a moderate requirement that workers should have facilities for washing in preparation for the midday meal or for their return home, and yet in 128 factories, employing 14,730 women, or 78 per cent of all the women employed in 146 plants studied, these facilities were found to be entirely lacking or quite inadequate. The significance of the lack of provision for washing appliances is emphasized by the fact that 62 per cent, or nearly two-thirds, of these women were working in the tobacco or food industries where contamination of the product might react on the public health. Especially in the tobacco industry is the lack of washing facilities a great hardship. Women working with tobacco necessarily get it on their hands, and in the dusty processes they are covered with tobacco dust. Not to be able to wash off this accumulation before eating and before going home, or to be able to wash only in cold water without soap or towels is a condition which might cause real discomfort to any group of women. Often the only possible place to wash was a sink in one corner of the workroom, sometimes for the use of both men and women, usually with only cold water, and no soap or towels. In one plant the girls who were pasting boxes had pails of water on a stool by their work table which they used for moistening their pasting brushes. These pails of water were also the only washing facilities provided. Several plants have installed modern washrooms, which are equal to those in the most up-to-date establishments in other States, but such provision was the exception rather than the rule. One plant, which manufactures food products, has a washroom separate from the cloakroom. In this room are four white-enameled basins with hot and cold running water for each, and liquid soap. The room was clean and well kept and had an outside window. One clean towel a day was supplied for each girl. Such a standard as this will surely make for better health conditions in any industry, without causing an excessive increase in overhead expense. Aside from the right of the worker to the comfort and protection of adequate and sanitary washing facilities, the public should demand protection in special industries such as those in which food products are manufactured.

### **Drinking facilities.**

More serious than the scant washing facilities was the evidence of insufficient or insanitary drinking facilities. Nothing can be more important than that people who work all day, sometimes in dusty, hot rooms, shall have a constant and easily accessible supply of clean, cool drinking water, and yet in 106 plants, employing 9,673 women, it was found that the drinking facilities were insufficient or insanitary.

The common drinking cup was often found. It was frequently stated by the employers that the girls were expected to bring their own glasses, but these glasses were seldom in evidence, and there was apt to be one mug, or sometimes only a tin can, conspicuously placed near the water. One tobacco plant supplied "two tin mugs attached by a chain to the tank of water on each floor." Another tobacco plant had a "barrel of ice water at the side of the room with one glass on top. The girls are told to bring their own." In another plant 62 women were employed sorting peanuts, a very dusty process. Drinking facilities for them consisted of "one faucet in the workroom and a common drinking cup."

### **Cloakrooms.**

Provision for cloakrooms, lunch rooms, and rest rooms varied in the different plants from the few establishments that provided cloakrooms with individual lockers, rest rooms with couches and comfortable chairs, and lunch rooms where a hot lunch was served, to the many where none of these facilities was found. Coats hanging on nails around the walls of the workroom, exposed to dust and dirt, are a common sight in Virginia factories. In a number of other plants the girls work with their hats and coats on, whether because of lack of place to put them or because of insufficient heat it was impossible to determine, as the two conditions were apt to appear simultaneously. Even when there was a cloakroom provided it was apt to be one more in name than in fact. The following quotation from a report describes a typical condition:

A cloakroom was partitioned off from the workroom on each floor. No lockers were provided; the women hung their coats from nails in the walls and partitions. No seats of any kind were in the room. The floors were littered with papers and dirt.

### **Lunch rooms and rest rooms.**

Rest rooms and lunch rooms were as few and far between and as inadequate as were the cloakrooms. Because of the varying demands of different industries dependent upon the product manufactured and the numbers employed, specific regulations covering such provisions can not be made for industry as a whole. In a small plant employing only a few women it would be quite possible to arrange one room so that it would meet the requirements for both lunch and rest room, while in another plant employing a large number of women or where the processes on which women are working may be especially trying, it would be advisable to have the rest room separate from the lunch room. There is no excuse in any plant, however, for a condition such as was found in one establishment where a sick girl was discovered lying on the floor in the toilet, as there was no other place for her to rest. This occurred in one of the many buildings of a large plant whose management had shown much personal interest in

the employees, but had evidently overlooked the need for a rest room. When this girl was discovered she said: "I wish Mr. —" (a member of the firm) "had been with you and seen this. He'd build a hospital to-morrow if he had." In another plant the women made a pile of their coats in the corner of the workroom to serve as a couch if any of their group was taken sick. Such conditions are clearly detrimental to the workers' health, and experience has shown elsewhere that a cloakroom and a place to rest outside of the workroom should be provided.

### Seats.

Continuous standing or sitting on improperly adjusted chairs are both recognized as having a decidedly injurious effect on the health of women. The provision of a sufficient number of chairs so that all women who are working in a standing position may have an opportunity to sit occasionally, the adjustment of chairs and worktables so that work may be done either sitting or standing, and the provision of scientifically constructed chairs so that workers when seated shall have the best support, are all practical measures which have been adopted to lessen this strain on the vitality and health of working women. The manufacturers of Virginia do not seem, however, to have appreciated the importance of this matter, as in 130 plants, employing 17,040 women, or 90 per cent of all the women covered by this survey, seats were found to be either too few in number or of such a makeshift type as to be quite unsatisfactory. Many operations were found where women were standing continuously, sometimes for as long as 10 hours a day, when a properly adjusted worktable and chair would have enabled them either to sit or stand at their work.

In many tobacco factories women who were hanging the leaves of tobacco onto frames preparatory to sending them to the drier stood at work, and it was said that they could not do this work while seated. In several plants, however, they were found sitting while working at this process, and apparently the work was being performed in a satisfactory manner. In another tobacco plant where the women were standing at moving belts, taking off the good tobacco leaves, the superintendent said he could not allow the women to sit down as he was afraid they would go to sleep if they did.

Occasionally in the textile mills there were a few chairs or stools provided for the operators to use in spare moments, but the superintendent of one cotton mill was satisfied with providing a leather strap about three inches wide which the operator could hang between two looms to make a seat when she needed a rest. Other seats in use in some of the plants were wooden boxes, homemade stools, broken kitchen chairs, stools with straight boards nailed onto them to serve as backs, seats too low for the worktable, and high seats

without foot rests so that the operators must sit all day with swinging feet.

Although these examples would seem to indicate a lack of interest on the part of the employers in comfortable seating for their working force, the superintendents of many plants expressed the intention of bettering conditions when their attention was called to them, and asked for information as to the best type of factory chair.

### **Cleaning.**

Aside from the specific matters pertaining to comfort and sanitation which have already been described in this report, the general standards of cleanliness, lighting, and ventilation were not found to be very high. One hundred and one of the plants were in need of cleaning, sometimes in only part of the building, such as the stairs, toilets, or cloakrooms, but more often a general scrubbing of the entire building was necessary. It seemed often to be most surprising to a superintendent that anything more than a casual sweeping once a week or month should be considered advisable. The naïve astonishment of one superintendent who was asked how many years had elapsed since his building had been scrubbed and his reply, "Why, you couldn't scrub this floor, the water would run right through," indicating a point of view as well as a condition of the building. Frequently it was found that there was no regular cleaning force, and this duty devolved upon the employees whenever they had any spare time. In one factory in which candy was being made and where absolute cleanliness is particularly important, the investigator reported:

Stairs are caked with candy. Floors need scrubbing; also tables where candy is worked. Cleaning is done by the men in shipping department when they are not busy. This is a very busy season.

In some plants there seems to have been a definite idea that a cleaning force should be supplied for this work and that it should be done regularly, but the real meaning of cleanliness in the factory did not seem to be appreciated. One superintendent said that the man he hired to do the cleaning swept the whole building every morning. When he went into detail, however, he admitted that "the man sort of brushes up every morning and sweeps it good every Saturday." The investigator of this factory reported:

It was obvious that the floors were never scrubbed, and the windows were covered with dirt. The toilet and coat room were filthy.

And yet in this building the foreman said the cleaning man was given some light factory work to do to "keep him busy" and that sometimes rather than let him be idle they had him move boxes from one end of the room to the other. Several employers who had not been able to stimulate their cleaning force to sufficient efforts en-

listed the aid of the investigators in impressing a higher standard of cleanliness in the minds of those who were responsible for this work.

In strong contrast to such conditions, which were the more general ones, was the standard maintained in one factory where the whole building was swept thoroughly every afternoon after work and cleaning was also done during the day if needed. The cloakroom, toilets, and office were scrubbed once a week and the floors throughout the building were flushed every two or three months. Aside from every other consideration the depreciation of both building and material in a plant which is not kept clean and in good repair should be sufficient reason to stimulate employers to a better standard. The great advertising value of a clean, well-kept plant, and the possibility of securing better grade and more satisfied employees, should be added inducements. In the course of over 50 interviews with working women employed in these plants many complaints were heard about the conditions in the various industries. Frequently the investigators were asked if they could not do something to get a factory "cleaned up." And once or twice the women remarked that if they could get a broom or a scrubbing brush they would be willing to do the cleaning themselves rather than work under such conditions.

### **Lighting.**

The adequacy of lighting was often dependent upon methods of cleaning in the factory. It was not infrequently reported that there was sufficient window space, but that the windows were so covered with dust and dirt that the light was dim. The question of lighting is one which is well worth attention by any manufacturer who desires to keep up a maximum production, for it has been found that it has a very definite bearing on production. In experiments made during the war to determine the extent of the effect of lighting on production it was found in one factory that when the intensity of light was tripled production increased 7 per cent on some operations and as much as 27 per cent on others. Proper shading of lights increased their intensity 25 per cent, and increased production from 30 to 100 per cent.<sup>1</sup> But in many plants in Virginia girls are working all day facing the light, sometimes obliged to hang strips of cloth or aprons on strings across the windows to protect them from the glare. Artificial lighting also was apt to be very haphazard. Sometimes electric-light bulbs hung high, without shades, and without relation to the position of the worker. In other cases bulbs were hung low but without shades, so that the light glared in the eyes and the workers had to endure this additional discomfort. In a few cases

---

<sup>1</sup> Durlin, W. E. Bulletin of Society of Illuminating Engineers, New York, December, 1918.

they had improvised shades of paper, but proper shading was found very infrequently.

### **Ventilation.**

Ventilation is so technical a subject that a discussion of it would not come within the scope of this survey, and yet it would seem significant to quote from reports on three different tobacco factories:

1. In the steaming and drying room the air was so heavy with fumes that it was impossible for the inspector to remain more than a few minutes in the room. The superintendent said that the workers got used to it, although at first they had difficulty in keeping their food down.

2. No exhaust on the screener and tobacco dust was so thick the workers could barely be distinguished from the machines and piles of tobacco. They could not have worked at all if they had not tied handkerchiefs over nose and mouth.

3. Air was unusually good. In steaming and ordering room large exhaust pipes with electric fans took off much of the dust. The blending room had 11 humidifiers which kept the dust from flying and gave freshness to the air. Other workrooms were well ventilated by a system of washed air.

In many plants there were elaborate arrangements for humidifying air where special conditions were necessary to the product, but a similar attention to the needs of proper air for the workers employed in manufacturing the product was seldom observed.

In 20 plants employing 3,633 women it was felt by the investigators that immediate steps should be taken to remove the dust incident to the industry. The dust-protection law in Virginia requires that grinding, polishing, or buffing wheels shall be protected by hoods and an exhaust system for removing dust, but this law does not cover any other occupations. Eleven of the 20 plants where some special exhaust system was considered necessary were in the tobacco industry where the need of relief from the fumes and dust of tobacco was particularly urgent.

### **Health service.**

Minor accidents and illnesses are likely to occur occasionally in any plant, and yet in 89 establishments employing over 6,000 women no proper equipment was found for the treatment of injuries or illness. A bottle of turpentine for remedies and old rags for bandages in a plant where girls were running power sewing machines; a bottle of "colic cure," to be administered indiscriminately by the foreman in another factory, should surely be replaced by up-to-date first-aid equipment in charge of some one who is trained to administer it. There was also an almost total absence of any health or accident records in the plants surveyed. Such records would be of great significance to the manager of a plant who wished to reduce losses in labor caused by preventable accidents or illnesses, and would also be a very clear indication to State inspectors of certain conditions in plants which should be remedied.

### Employment policy.

Frequent complaints were made to the investigators of the scarcity of labor and the high labor turnover, and yet in only a few cases had a definite employment policy been instituted by the management. "Who hires?" "The foreman." "Who fires?" "The foreman." "Who transfers?" "No one." This series of questions and answers occurs so frequently in the reports on the various plants as to become monotonous. Employers seem to have given very little attention to the possibility of conserving the labor supply by intelligent and careful placing of the new worker, and by arranging a system by which a worker unsuccessful in one process may be transferred to another and not discharged at the whim of her immediate boss. One superintendent said he did not recognize his employees when he saw them because they never stayed long enough to get acquainted.

Frequently the securing of new workers is done by the employees themselves, who receive a small payment for each recruit. In a large tobacco factory it was reported:

Each foreman hires for his own department. When help is needed a notice is posted in the dressing room and any girl who brings a worker who is accepted gets \$2. If the new girl stays a month the girl who brought her receives \$5. The new girl is placed next to her friend, who shows her how the work should be done.

In another factory, a peanut plant, the head woman at each endless belt on which the women are employed sorting peanuts is charged with keeping enough employees at her table to keep the work going. If she fails she is removed as head woman. She gets slightly better pay than the other workers, but receives nothing additional for each individual employee she brings in. Another plant employing over 150 women reported that there was the greatest difficulty in getting and keeping workers. Out of 26 girls employed at one time only nine remained at the end of five weeks. Half of the machines in one room were idle because of the lack of workers. This plant paid a bonus for attendance but had not installed an employment department.

The modern employer, and there are many examples of this type in Virginia, will conserve his labor supply not only by providing short hours, adequate wages, and good working conditions but also by the intelligent placing of his employees and a careful supervision of their records in the factory, so that all unnecessary discharges may be eliminated.

### THE WORKERS.

More important than the report of any investigator on industrial conditions is the report of those who are most interested in the subject—the women themselves. No suitable program for the improvement of conditions can be outlined or inaugurated without the ad-

vice and assistance of the workers. Fifty-nine women were interviewed during the course of this survey. They were seen at work, at home, and at evening meetings, and they can be assumed to be fairly representative of the working women of the State. The greater number of these women worked in cigarette factories and textile mills, though there were a few of them in the other industries.

### **Home responsibilities.**

Thirty-seven of the 59 women were responsible for the entire support of other members of their families, or were contributing to their partial support. The wages which were being earned by this group were very low, particularly when their responsibilities were taken into consideration. Two sisters, almost children, 15 and 18 years old, were making \$7.50 and \$11 a week in a silk mill. Their wages were the sole support of their mother and four younger brothers and sisters. To earn this amount one is working 10 hours a day as a weaver, while the younger one works eight hours a day, giving out quills. The next oldest member of the family is a boy of 12 so it will be several years before these girls have anyone to share their responsibilities. Four women who were supporting from two to five dependents were making only \$10 or \$11 a week. Of the others who were supporting dependents, seven were making between \$10 and \$12 a week; 10 between \$12 and \$14 a week; five from \$16 to \$18; one from \$18 to \$20, and only four were making over \$20 a week.

### **Wages.**

Several women who worked as weavers in a silk mill reported a situation with regard to wages which was particularly difficult for them. It is usually the custom in mills to pay the weaver a weekly wage, based on the average amount of her earnings, when because of poor warp, stoppage of machinery, or other causes she has not been able to complete a "cut," for which she is usually paid by the yard. This system guarantees a regular income, a very important matter when a woman has not only her own expenses to meet but often those of her children or younger brothers and sisters. Three women, one of whom gives all of her wages to her mother to help support her and two small brothers, and one of whom, with her mother, cares for five younger sisters, reported that they were paid for only the completed "cut." Thus sometimes, when they had had bad luck with their machine or when the warp had been particularly poor, they got no wage at all, and often received as little as \$2.50 or \$3.50 a week. As the causes for not getting out the work were entirely beyond the control of the weaver herself, it would seem to be a great injustice to penalize her in this manner.

The median wage for the entire group of women was \$15.07, and the wage earned by the largest number of women (nine) was \$12 or less than \$13. Although, except for these interviews, the question of wages was not included in the survey, these figures indicate that the women of Virginia have more to contend with, in these days of the high cost of living, than poor working conditions and long hours. Their responsibilities and the struggle to make two ends meet are an additional drain on their vitality. One woman who sewed about 3 dozen middy blouses a day on a power sewing machine was paid at the rate of 70 cents a dozen. She said that she worked just as hard as she could and only once had made as much as \$15 a week. She lives in a boarding home which is supported partly by charitable contributions, and she helps her sister support the children of another sister who is dead. Another woman has been a widow for 18 years and has supported her son since he was a baby. She has had only her work to depend upon, and said she must work very fast as, now that her boy has come back from the war and is in the hospital, she is the sole support of her father who is ill with heart trouble. The old man should not be left alone, but "what else can you do? Last week I had to pay \$5 for his medicine." She works from 7 a. m. to 5.30 p. m., takes just enough time off for lunch, and always stays until one of the last, so that she can earn as much as possible. Saturday she works till 3 or 4 o'clock and then goes home to do her weekly house cleaning. She makes from \$26 to \$29 a week, but "you have to work like mad to do that." She is afraid, too, that she may not be able to keep it up, as she is not as strong as she used to be. This last sentence bears a warning which must be heeded if the welfare of women in industry is to be preserved.

### **Reasons for high labor turnover.**

Reasons for the high labor turnover which was complained of by so many employers were brought out in the remarks of several of the girls. They showed a very human tendency to go from one plant to another in search of better pay, shorter hours, and better working conditions. One woman, who was responsible for the partial support of one child and three adults, was working in a cigarette factory. She had worked in another tobacco factory before, but had left because "the dust got in her lungs and the doctor said she must." Then she went into another industry, where she liked the work, but she had to stand all day, and that made her sick. Although she liked the work she was doing in the cigarette factory, she said she thought she would leave soon, as it was "a poor place to work. Low pay, and sanitary conditions bad. No ventilation in one toilet; not enough toilets, and those there are are not kept clean.

Girls don't stay long in that place." She added to these remarks a fervent wish that there might be a law "to make the bosses keep places clean."

Another woman reported that she had worked at the same process in three different tobacco factories. She liked her present place of work best, although it was the dirtiest of the three, because she could work at her own pace, sometimes on a day rate and sometimes on piece rate, according to the job. At one of the other places the work had been all piecework and it was "an awful rush," and at the other she had to do a certain amount of work or she was not kept at all. In her present position she was making \$2.70 a day on day work and could earn as much as \$4.50 a day on piecework. Another woman had worked for 18 months running a power sewing machine, but had left that job because she found 8 hours of such work more fatiguing than 10 hours of matching and packing cigars, her present occupation.

### Hours.

Many of the women reported that they found the long hours a great strain, and some felt that they could turn out as much work in shorter hours. Others feared that shorter hours might reduce their pay, which was already so low they could barely manage to get along. One girl when asked if she ever worked overtime replied: "How could I, working from 7 to 6? I spend about 12 hours each day going to and from work and at work. I couldn't stand much more." She said she found very little time to read, and that although she thought the Y. W. C. A. and other clubs must be "great" and just the kind of thing she would like, "they would not do me much good because I am so tired at night I can't do anything."

## THE ADMINISTRATION OF LABOR LAWS.

Some of the problems which surround the employment of women in industry in the State of Virginia have been outlined in the foregoing pages. The conditions under which more than 18,000 women are working have been described. With increased numbers of women in industry additional problems will present themselves and constant care and attention will be necessary to guarantee that adequate protection is given and that unnecessary restrictions are removed.

The creation of a special division in the bureau of labor and industrial statistics to deal with the problems of women in industry and the appointment of a woman as chief of this division are two steps which must be taken if the more than 226,000 wage-earning women of the State are to have the benefit of a continuous and constructive policy for the advancement of their interests.

## APPENDIX.

### THE NEED FOR NEW LEGISLATION.

From "Labor Laws for Women in Industry in Indiana." Women's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Bulletin No. 2, 1919.

The facts revealed even in this brief inquiry show that without State action women workers are subjected to the fatigue of long hours, which is clearly detrimental to their health and efficiency. Without clearer definitions of standards of comfort, safety, and sanitation in the workrooms, working conditions are often allowed to exist which are below a wholesome or decent minimum. Most important of all is the need for an adequate inspection force and for a plan of administration which shall give recognition to the urgent problems of women in industry. It is for the people of the State to determine the form and content of legislation to accomplish these purposes. It may be appropriate, however, to outline the tests of adequacy in such laws which experience has revealed.

1. A clear definition of occupations covered is essential as a means of enforcement, unless it is deemed wise to include all gainful employment under the law.

2. Regulation of hours of work requires a statement of (*a*) the length of the maximum working day permitted, (*b*) the length of the working week, and (*c*) limitation of employment to six days in a week. Without a clear limitation on the length of the day, the total weekly hours permitted might be required in so brief a portion of the week as to result in exceedingly long daily hours. Without a limitation on the total weekly hours, and on the number of days of employment in a week, a day of rest is not assured and weekly hours may be therefore excessive. Moreover, all three restrictions are necessary for effective enforcement.

3. A period of rest at night should be assured both to prevent employment at night, and to make more possible the enforcement of the daily limitation of hours, by naming a closing hour after which presence in the establishment is a violation of law regardless of the length of employment.

4. A definite requirement should be made for a sufficiently long recess at noon and for a limitation on the maximum hours of continuous employment, as otherwise the strain and speed of modern industry may result in continuous work, without the necessary provision of time for food and rest before fatigue results in exhaustion from which recovery is difficult.

5. Provision for comfort and sanitation should be so definite as to leave no doubt in the minds of employers, workers, and inspectors as to their application in any plant.

6. Because of the complexity of industrial conditions, and especially the differences between different industries, the administrative authorities should have authority to build up codes of regulations for

these different occupations, basing them always upon the minimum standards of health and safety which are found to be common to all occupations.

7. It has been found that enforcement of the laws limiting hours of labor is greatly facilitated by the requirement that in each work-room a printed notice be posted stating the exact hours of work required of the women employed there. Employment of any woman at a time other than that stated in the notice is deemed a violation of law. In addition to the posted notice, it is also desirable to require the keeping of a time book with records of the actual daily hours of each woman employed, since the hours of individuals often differ from those of the department as a whole. These two forms of records provide a means of enforcement depending upon inspection and not upon the testimony of workers. Fear of losing a position makes workers always unwilling to testify in court against their employers, and this has resulted in difficulties out of which have come the suggestions for requiring records to be available as evidence.

8. An effective labor law must contain also a clause defining penalties for violation.

9. Public opinion should demand that employers be prosecuted for violations of law, and that appropriate sentences be imposed upon those who are convicted in court. Vigilance in requiring compliance with the laws on the statute books is essential if the labor legislation of the State is to be an effective agency for establishing proper conditions of employment.

10. It should be said, however, that prosecution is only one means of insuring compliance with the law. It is only when employers have become so enlightened and progressive as to accept the standards imposed by the State as the basis for efficiency in industry to be adopted willingly and not through the compulsion of threatened punishment that a satisfactory condition can be said to prevail. When this is achieved the inspectors of the State department of labor become advisers in the application of standards rather than policemen. The test of achievement in this respect, however, is to be found not in the absence of prosecutions, but in the actual conditions existing in the industries of a State. It is fair to assume always that the effectiveness of the laws enacted and of their administration is to be found in the actual hours and working conditions found in the industries.

11. With the growing complexity of the problems of women's employment and with the increase in their numbers in industry it becomes important that State departments of labor should be equipped not merely to enforce laws regulating their employment, but to study their needs and to observe new conditions. To accomplish this task it is necessary that women should be in responsible positions, as members of industrial boards or as chiefs of divisions directly responsible to the boards or to the labor commissioner. This is important not merely to represent the interests of women workers, but to add the wisdom of new points of view to the labor department in dealing with all the problems of labor affecting, as they do, both men and women.

