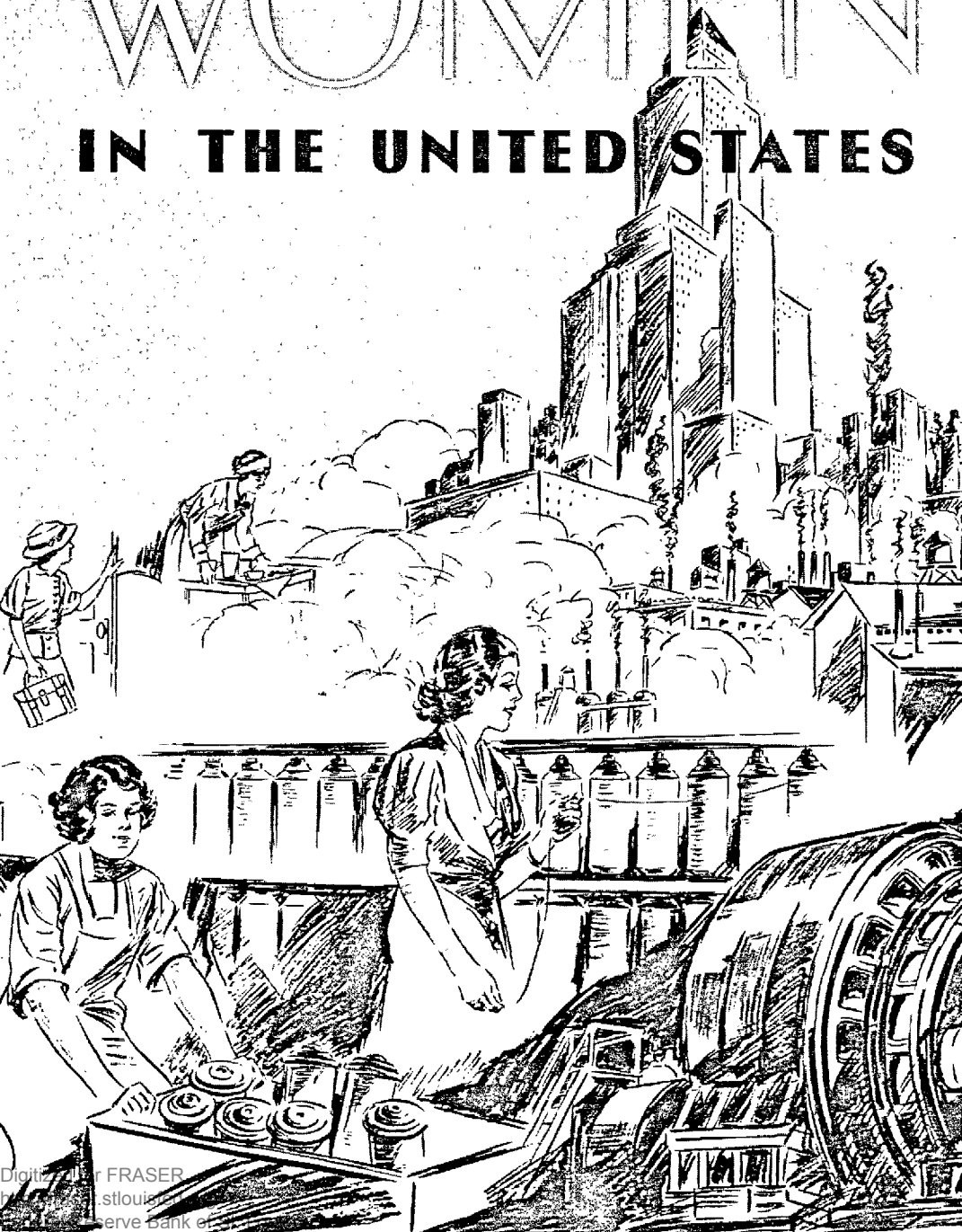


U. S. Census

13.3: 155

# WOMEN

## IN THE UNITED STATES



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU

MARY ANDERSON, Director

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# Women in the Economy of the United States of America

## A Summary Report

By

MARY ELIZABETH PIDGEON



UNITED STATES  
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## LETTERS OF TRANSMITTAL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
WOMEN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, May 24, 1937.*

MADAM: I have the honor to transmit to you a compiled report on the situation of women in the economy of the United States of America, with especial emphasis on their opportunity for a livelihood and their experience under labor legislation.

This study has been prepared at the request of officers of 10 large national organizations of women (listed on next page), which were not themselves equipped to do this work, though they desired that a report presenting facts along these lines should be sent to the International Labor Office and also should be made available for use by their organizations within this country. These women have been in touch with the outlines and progress of this work, some of them have made valuable suggestions as to its content. Several of them read it and made appreciative comments on its content and organization just before it went to the International Labor Office, to which it has been sent.

The report represents a general compilation of such available information as it has been possible to bring together within the limitations of funds, staff, and time. The material was collected under the direction of Mary Elizabeth Pidgeon, chief of the Research Division of the Women's Bureau, who organized the data and wrote the report.

Respectfully submitted.

MARY ANDERSON, *Director.*

HON. FRANCES PERKINS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*





DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
WOMEN'S BUREAU,  
Washington, May 1937.

Hon. HAROLD BUTLER,  
*Director of the International Labor Office,  
Geneva, Switzerland.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit to you a report on the status of women in the economy of the United States of America. This factual study has been prepared at the request of representatives of the following large national organizations of women which were not equipped to do this work themselves but desired that such a report should be sent in answer to the request of the International Labor Office for such information:

- American Association of University Women.
- American Home Economics Association.
- Interprofessional Association.
- National Board, Young Women's Christian Association.
- National Consumers' League.
- National Council of Catholic Women.
- National Council of Jewish Women.
- National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.
- National League of Women Voters.
- National Women's Trade Union League.

Some of these organizations are preparing supplementary data from studies being made within their own organizational membership to be submitted to the Office.

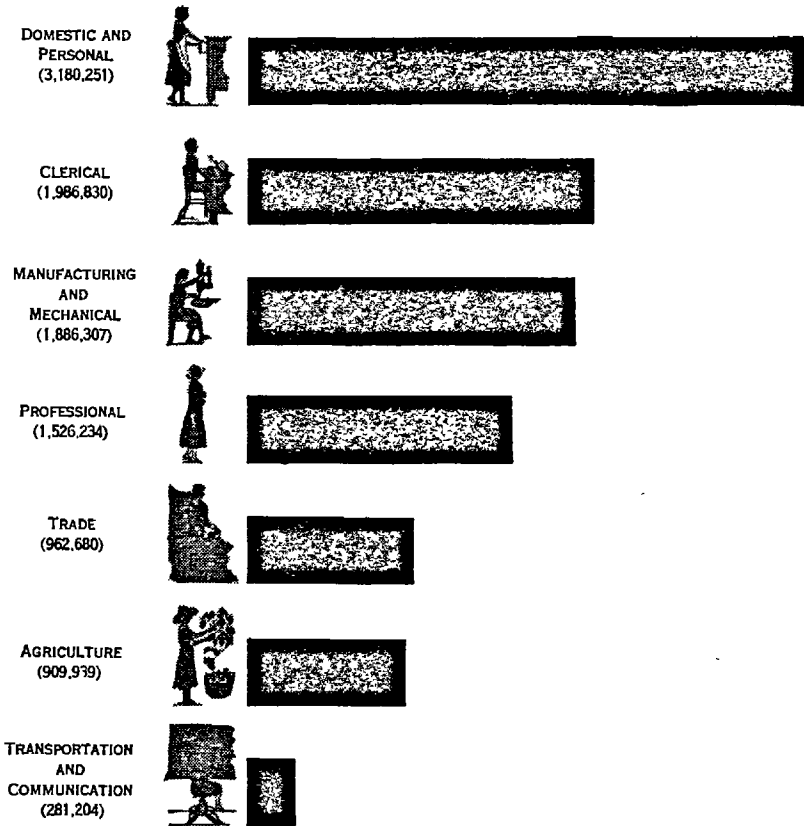
The facts in the following report represent a general compilation of such available data on women's economic situation as it has been possible to bring together within the limitations of funds, staff, and time. They include unpublished material from this Bureau as well as information collected from a wide variety of sources. The report was prepared by Mary Elizabeth Pidgeon, chief of the Research Division of the Women's Bureau.

Sincerely yours,

MARY ANDERSON, *Director.*

# OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN 1930

[Figures from U. S. Census]



# Women in the Economy of the United States of America

## A SUMMARY REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

#### WORLD-WIDE INTEREST IN THE SITUATION OF WOMEN

Women in many parts of the world have become increasingly articulate in their desire to improve the economic situation of women, and especially to make more effective, through wider organization and fuller study, the contribution of women toward the advancement of policies to better the employment conditions and the opportunities for fullness of life for both women and men.

With such lines of thought and action being pursued by women in many countries, it was natural that attention should be paid to these questions by the international body in which so many of these countries are represented. The Assembly of the League of Nations, at its session in the autumn of 1935, officially expressed a hope that the International Labor Organization, of which the United States is a member,

will, in accordance with its normal procedure, undertake an examination of those aspects of the problem within its competence—namely, the question of equality under labor legislation—and that it will, in the first place, examine the question of legislation which effects discriminations, some of which may be detrimental to women's right to work.<sup>1</sup>

The International Labor Organization undertook such a study, enlarging its investigation to include more fully the entire economic situation of women. The Director of the International Labor Office stated in his annual report for the year 1935:

The Governing Body agreed that the suggestion made by the Assembly should be carried out and that a report should be prepared in regard to the legal status of women in industry with particular reference to any discriminatory measures which may have been taken against their employment. This is to be followed by a more extensive investigation covering not only the legislation affecting women's employment but also their actual position in respect of conditions of employment, wages, and economic status. Clearly this inquiry involves many difficulties and will require considerable time. It will be carried out in consultation with members of the correspondence committee on women's work, and it may be hoped that it will throw some light on the various questions relating to women's work and position in industrial and commercial occupations about which controversy has been provoked.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For full text of the resolution, see appendix C.

<sup>2</sup> International Labor Office. Report of the Director, 1936, pp. 64-65.

**WOMEN'S BUREAU REQUESTED TO PREPARE REPORT**

When the request for such information came to the regular International Labor Office correspondents in the United States, the research representatives of several of the national organizations of women expressed the desire that the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor should take the leadership in preparing a report, or a series of reports, on the economic situation of women, since this agency, through its many technical studies and its continuous examination of the problems of employed women, has formed the repository in this country for such factual data.

In making this request these women expected that a preliminary report based on these and further investigations would make possible the more widespread knowledge and use of this type of information, which is greatly desired and needed by the women here, and they thought that it also could be used in answer to the inquiries from the International Labor Office.

Meanwhile, several of those large national organizations of women that were making this request of the Women's Bureau—for example, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the American Association of University Women—also have had in progress surveys among the gainfully occupied women within their own membership, covering certain phases of the subject, and particularly inquiring into the family status of employed women and the extent to which they are responsible for the support of dependents. Others of these organizations, such as the National Women's Trade Union League and the National League of Women Voters, determined to rely entirely on the Women's Bureau report and not to undertake their own supplemental studies, though they as well as many other organizations freely furnished to the Women's Bureau all the material they could possibly make available from studies they had made and from their files.

The time within which the present report must be completed does not permit the undertaking of new investigations. These must be planned subsequently. It enables only a preliminary collection and examination of the data already available, both from primary and secondary sources, whether from the Women's Bureau, from other governmental authorities, from studies made by various national women's organizations, from special technical studies of other agencies, or from data collected by the Women's Bureau so recently that it has not yet been possible to organize them for general use.

**VARIATIONS AMONG THE 48 STATES**

An evaluation of the economic situation of women at a given period is exceedingly complicated, particularly in an intensively developed industrial society such as exists today in the United States of America.

Wide generalizations for this country are further precluded along some lines by the great variations among the States in extent of industrial development, in types of occupations and industries prevailing, and in status of legal control. Variation in the last named is accentuated by the fact that many of the matters that affect industrial and economic conditions here lie within the legal province that the Federal Constitution has reserved to the individual States; and hence it is possible to have 48 different stages of action, a separate one for each State.

Thus on the one hand a particularist control has tended to develop, though on the other hand economic organizations and influences have followed much broader lines and areas that overlap State borders. To some extent the tendency to isolated solutions or efforts has been offset by consultation among the authorities of States having similar economic problems and industrial growth, and by national action in certain fields.

#### **MAJOR THEMES INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT**

If a complete consideration be given to the situation of women in the economy of this country, this necessarily must be based upon a general description of the main features of the entire economic setting, and the chief observable currents of its direction of change or movement. While the many and varying phases of women's place in the life of the United States can be included in a broad working outline, it is obvious that sustained research along a variety of lines is necessary for full understanding of such a complex situation.

Certain outstanding parts of this whole can be selected for more immediate investigation and presentation, with the understanding that these do constitute only parts of what later must be expanded much further within the same and added fields in order to approximate a more complete picture. The present report therefore has concentrated upon two major themes of primary importance in the situation of women.

*First:* Women's opportunity for a livelihood. This includes a consideration of the occupations in which women are engaged and the apparent directions of occupational change; evidences as to the unemployment of women, the irregularity of their employment, and certain employment problems that confront their sex with special difficulties; the levels of compensation ordinarily available to employed women, particularly in comparison with the levels afforded to men; and the family status of women, especially as to the extent to which they are responsible for the support of others.

*Second:* The other main theme of this report deals with available evidences as to the results of labor legislation affecting women, having a bearing on their employment opportunities and on their wages and conditions of work. Such effects do not confine themselves to

legislation for women only, but include the effect on women (as well as men) of labor legislation applying to both sexes.

It is apparent immediately that it has been necessary to omit from the present report many important phases of the economic situation of women—for example, their security of livelihood outside their occupational situation, being developed now in the broad social-security program recently inaugurated; their opportunities to secure adequate training; the control of wealth that is said to rest in their hands; the extent to which they participate in local, State, and Federal government; the extent to which certain factors, such as marital status for example, particularly affect women's opportunities to obtain and keep employment; the activities and influences of women's national and international organizations of various types. The list of important subjects of investigation lying outside the present report could be extended more or less indefinitely. These just enumerated and many more must be the subjects of future study as rapidly as they can be approached with confidence.

## GENERAL SUMMARY

Following the general outline of the present study, the brief summary of the chief findings here presented is concerned with (1) consideration of a variety of questions bound up with women's own means of livelihood and their contributions to family support, and (2) examination of the effects of legislation designed to improve the conditions of women's work and compensation.

### WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITY FOR LIVELIHOOD

**Trends in Women's Occupations.** (For details, see pt. I, ch. 1.)

Over 10½ million women were in gainful employment in the United States at the time of the 1930 census—almost six times as many as were so occupied 60 years before. Thus two women were in gainful work to every seven men so employed.

The introduction of machinery, superseding the hand skills formerly carried on in the home, opened to women factory employment on an increasing scale, and the textile, clothing, food, leather, cigar and tobacco, printing and paper, electrical, and certain metal industries are major manufacturing employers of women today. The development of education for women made it possible for them to assume clerical and professional duties. The growth of the modern structure of commerce, trade, and communication accelerated the entrance of women into clerical work and opened to them further occupations in the field of trade. Recent technological changes, which have broken up factory work into more and more minute processes, also have required additional technicians both in laboratory and shop, and many of these are women. However, in spite of the great variety of employments open to both sexes, the largest proportion of gainfully occupied women—three-tenths of them—still are in domestic and personal service.

The net result of the various economic changes more recently has been to place increasing numbers of women in the ranks of clerical and other white-collar workers, while the hand trades have declined and entrance into factory employments has been less rapid than formerly. In professional service women have increased in numbers as helpers and in semiprofessional work, but in most of the major professions there has been a slowing up and in some even a decline. Three-fourths of all women professional workers still are school teachers and nurses. The growth of life in urban centers has been accompanied by a decline in agricultural occupations and an increase or development of certain types of service.

More than three-fourths of all women are not in gainful occupations, and of these the great majority are homemakers, whose value to the



family is signified by the fact that 95 percent of the families in this country have no paid help. The contribution these 24½ million home-making women make to the economy of the Nation still is paramount, despite the difficulties of measuring its value.

#### **Unemployment Among Women.** (For details, see pt. I, ch. 2.)

The extreme depression that began toward the close of 1929 bore with great severity upon women in three ways: (1) It caused many to lose jobs, (2) it made demands on women to institute various family economies that would help to offset the privation it created, and (3) it impelled many women to seek jobs to make up for declines in the income of men wage earners.

Practically one-fifth of the women normally employed were out of work, and though the proportions unemployed were larger among men than among women, there were important woman-employing industries in which larger proportions of women than of men were the sufferers—for example, the electrical supply, woolen and worsted, and certain food industries. The proportions of women service workers and of those in sales occupations were larger among the women unemployed than among those employed. Moreover, practically one-tenth of all jobless women in 1930 were heads of families.

Women were greatly affected by certain industrial factors closely bound up with the depression, such as the prevalence of part-time work, seasonal and other irregularities in employment, and numerous technological changes. Women also had to cope with employment discriminations that bore upon them with especial severity because they were women, such as those having to do with sex, age, and marital status.

#### **Compensation of Women.** (For details, see pt. I, ch. 3.)

An important point in the assurance of opportunity for a livelihood is the scale of compensation that can be commanded. On the whole, women's occupations differ from men's and the wages in women's jobs almost invariably are at a lower level than those of men. Even where the two sexes are employed in the same industries the levels of women's wages are much below those of men.

Indeed, it is remarkable that this difference is so universal, both in extent and in degree, no matter what the year, the locality, or the type of occupation. Despite the fact that women generally are found in semiskilled processes, in work that often requires considerable dexterity and care, while unskilled jobs ordinarily employ men, even in such a comparison women's wage rates are well below those of the unskilled men.

This arises partly from the fact that women so often are used as a fill-in labor supply for highly seasonal industries; partly from the fact that women's work, formerly concerned so largely with unpaid house-

hold tasks, traditionally has been considered of low money value; partly from the fact that women form large proportions of the workers in the great piece-work industries and piece rates for such jobs often are fixed on the old customary basis of considering women's work as of slight money value.

It is because women thus have constituted an especially exploited group so far as their wages are concerned, that efforts have been made to establish minimum wages for women with the sanction of the Government, in order to fix a bottom figure below which women may not be paid, and thus to draw their wages in the lower brackets more nearly up to the levels already maintained in the payment of men.

In some cases it has been impossible to overcome the traditional idea of low pay for women's jobs even through trade-union action, and the customary low wage rates for certain women's jobs have been continued even in some union agreements.

**Women's Share in the Support of Their Families.** (For details, see pt. I, ch. 4.)

The responsibilities of women as contributors to the family exchequer are considerably larger than many persons have realized. Probably more than one-tenth of the employed women in the United States are the entire support of families of two or more persons, in many cases of those that are much larger. Large numbers of these are single women, many are married; they are engaged in industrial, professional, clerical, domestic and personal, and other types of employment.

A very large body of women in addition to those who are the sole family wage earners are supporting dependents, either wholly or in part, and many of these are fully responsible for the support of some persons and have partial dependents as well.

Many employed women contribute all their earnings, and a very large proportion turn over at least half of what they make, for the family expenses.

Of the family heads in the United States one-tenth are women. This number is a minimum when extent of responsibility is considered, since the census enumerators normally report a man as the family head wherever possible to do so.

In practically one-sixth of the urban families in this country the only wage earners are women. Since two or more women may be sharing the family support, this does not show the responsibility of individuals, but it does form one indication of the large share women are bearing in the financial economy of families in the United States. A further indication of women's share in this economy lies in the fact that well over one-third of all wage-earning women are homemakers as well, thus carrying a double responsibility to those depending upon

them for money aid as well as for the social ministrations required in the home.

### **EFFECTS OF LABOR LEGISLATION ON CONDITIONS OF WOMEN'S WORK**

#### **Experience of Women Under the National Industrial Recovery Act.** (For details, see pt. II, ch. 1.)

The National Industrial Recovery Act sought to secure for both sexes shortened hours, increased wages, and further protection of collective bargaining rights, and it did secure advances for workers along all these lines, especially in its earlier stages. So far as women were concerned, operation of the act gave a vivid illustration of two facts:

(1) As legislation applying to both sexes, it benefited most the sex formerly suffering from the lowest wages—women—though there was a considerable area within which it left women's wages below men's. That the powerful force of tradition keeps women's wages down even under legislation applying to both sexes shows that there still is need of special measures to assist women in attaining adequate standards.

(2) This act for both sexes gave relatively little assistance to two major occupation groups consisting chiefly of women—the service and clerical workers. This again illustrates the present need of special measures for women, and several of the States having minimum-wage provisions for women recognized this and applied their earliest action to women in service occupations, such as laundries and beauty shops.

#### **Experience of Women Under Minimum-Wage Laws.** (For details, see pt. II, ch. 2.)

At the present time minimum-wage laws in this country apply to women and minors only in nearly all the 24 jurisdictions in which they are in effect. (See p. 101.) While their application to men in some instances would be desirable, they have been much more greatly needed by women, since women are so largely employed in low-wage industries and under conditions of exploitation. An added consequence of the fact last named has been that organization of workers to secure wage improvements presented much greater difficulties for women than for men. Moreover, up to this time the constitutionality of minimum-wage legislation has been less clear for men than for women.

The universal experience with minimum-wage legislation, wherever it has been introduced into the various States in this country, is that it has very materially raised the wages of large numbers of women. In some cases this effect has been most marked.

Far from reducing the wages of those receiving above the minimum, this type of law has resulted in raising the wages of many of those who previously had received more than the minimum fixed, and experience

has shown that the minimum put in operation does not become the maximum.

In regard to women's employment, the usual experience has been that it continues to increase regardless of whether or not there is minimum-wage legislation, and indeed in the State where the highest minimum was maintained over a long series of years (California) women's employment increased considerably more than in the country as a whole. The constant changes in employment that are occurring are attributable to many factors not connected with the minimum wage, and there is no evidence that such legislation has any general or controlling effect toward inducing the replacement of women by men.

**Experience as to Effects of Labor Legislation for Women on Their Employment Opportunities.** (For details, see pt. II, ch. 3.)

The development of gainful employment for women has been accompanied by extensive increases in the labor legislation applying to women; and just as the growth of women's opportunities has shown different trends in different places, so has the legislative regulation of their work. In some States the legal regulation of most phases of women's employment in industry is very complete; in other States there is practically no regulation whatsoever. In some States the laws in question cover a large proportion of the women who are at work; in other States they apply to only a small group. In practically no State, however, does the law apply to women in agriculture, in household service, in business and professional occupations, to women who work independently, or to women in supervisory positions.

The Women's Bureau made a very extensive survey of the effects of labor legislation on women's employment opportunities, sampling a wide variety of types of employment under the kinds of laws usually in operation for women. The investigation covered more than 1,600 establishments employing over 660,000 men and women, and in addition it included objective interviews with more than 1,200 women who actually had experienced changes in labor laws.

It was found that regulatory hour laws as applied to women engaged in the manufacturing processes ordinarily *do not handicap the women* but serve to regulate employment and to establish the accepted standards of modern efficient industrial management. Legislation is only one of the influences operating to reduce hours in manufacturing establishments. Other factors that have the same effect, and that operate to a greater or less degree according to the locality and type of industry, are agreements with employees or with other firms, competition with other firms, production requirements, and business depressions.

In most localities and industries night work for either men or women is frowned upon and is decreasing. The majority of employers in

industry consider night work to be even more undesirable for women than for men, and they would not employ women at night even if the law permitted. Laws prohibiting night work for women in industry are chiefly a reflection of the usual attitude of employers regarding such practice, but occasionally they have resulted in a limitation of women's employment.

Labor legislation divides broadly into two parts—(1) laws definitely prohibiting employment of women; (2) laws regulating their employment. The effects of the laws prohibiting employment in certain occupations are very different from those of the regulatory laws. The occupations prohibited for women by the laws of one or more States are limited in number. Many of these laws are insignificant in their possible effect on women, but certain of them deserve very careful consideration. From the fact that at the time of the survey women were successfully employed elsewhere in a number of the prohibited occupations, it appeared that the prohibition must have been something of a restriction where it existed. This restriction afforded the outstanding example of possible discrimination against women resulting from labor legislation.

In almost every kind of employment the real forces that influence women's opportunity were found to be far removed from legislative regulation of their hours or conditions of work.

## **Part I.—WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITY FOR A LIVELIHOOD**

### **Chapter 1.—THE TREND IN THE OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA<sup>1</sup>**

The work of women has been employed in some way in all types of economy from the most primitive to what is thought of today as the more highly organized. Indeed, there are indications that larger *proportions* of women are gainfully occupied in the less industrialized countries than in those having a high state of industrialization.<sup>2</sup>

Whether women have or have not found their occupations chiefly in their homes and more largely in gainful than in unpaid employment, and the special skills used or the particular nature and variety of the contributions made by their work, have depended largely upon the form, constitution, and requirements of the economic system of which they are a part. Therefore a fair understanding of women's present occupational situation and the direction of its trend requires some consideration both of the chief influences that have surrounded women and helped to shape their destiny and of the major factors that have influenced and are influencing the development of the entire modern economic organization within which women's work is being carried on.

#### **SHIFT FROM HOUSEHOLD TO FACTORY MANUFACTURE**

According to the United States census, well over one-fifth of the women of this country were engaged in gainful work in 1930. The history of woman employment in this country has been a history of the transition from household manufacture to factory and office and sales occupations outside the-home. This shift has developed with the growth of machine fabrication as a substitute for the older skilled handicrafts and the consequent industrialization of society, and with the parallel change in public thinking as to the education and position of women.

Alexander Hamilton's report on the subject of manufactures in 1791 described "A vast scene of household manufacturing" and stated:

It is computed in a number of districts that two-thirds, three-fourths, or even four-fifths of all the clothing of the inhabitants are made by themselves.<sup>3</sup>

The Census of 1810 reported the greater part of 51½ million dollars'

<sup>1</sup> A brief list of important references on this subject will be found in appendix B. United States decennial census of occupations is source of data on employment in the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Data for women in gainful employment tabulated by Woytinsky; also *Die Welt in Zahlen*, vol. 11, Berlin, 1926, p. 71, as cited in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, vol. 15, p. 453: *Women in Industry—General Principles*, by Mary van Kleeck.

<sup>3</sup> *Works of Hamilton*, vol. I, pp. 210-11, as cited by Thomas Woody in *A History of Women's Education in the United States*. 1929. vol. II, p. 6.

worth of cotton and wool products as made in the home, but by 1840 the total value of home products had fallen to 29 million dollars.<sup>4</sup> It is reported that in 1816 Indiana had 2,512 looms and 2,700 spinning wheels "most of them in private cabins, whose mistresses, by their slow agencies, converted the wool which their own hands had often sheared, and the flax which their own fingers had pulled, into cloth for the family wardrobe."<sup>5</sup> By 1831, when the "Convention of the Friends of Industry" was held in New York, 39,000 females were employed in various cotton factories in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

Though some industrial home work now exists on a commercial scale, the very large part of it in clothing manufacture or processes incident thereto, its continuation is opposed by those influences that seek a more adequate standard for women's wages in the factory.<sup>7</sup> The amount of work done by women at home has decreased steadily, and the amount of their gainful work done outside has increased, usually with greater rapidity than the woman population, as the following shows for the more recent decades:

	Percent increase in—	
	Woman employ- ment	Woman popula- tion
1870 to 1880.....	44. 2	29. 0
1880 to 1890.....	51. 3	27. 9
1890 to 1900.....	32. 8	22. 5
1900 to 1910.....	51. 8	22. 3
1910 to 1920.....	<sup>8</sup> 5. 9	17. 1
1920 to 1930.....	25. 8	20. 6

<sup>4</sup> Changes in census date and in instructions to enumerators are considered responsible for much of the reduction in this figure.

A number of careful studies of the status and the direction of change in woman employment in this country have been made, a few of the more outstanding of which are listed elsewhere in the present report.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps one of the most succinct statements made as to the general causes of the occupational shifts that may be observed for the entire working population during the latest census period (and indeed extending over a longer period) is that "The occupational shifts of the last decade exhibit the marked characteristics of a maturing industrial and commercial civilization."<sup>10</sup>

### MACHINE DEVELOPMENT AND THE DECLINE OF HAND SKILLS

As the major forces that impelled economic development along the lines that now are known may be listed the progress of invention and introduction of machinery, and later the splitting up of machine work into more and more minute processes and the consequent intensive development of technology now customarily referred to as the first and

<sup>4</sup> U. S. Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census, 1900: vol. VII, p. 116

<sup>5</sup> From *History of Woman Suffrage*, as quoted by Mary R. Beard in *America Through Women's Eyes*. 1934 p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> Abbott, Edith. *Women in Industry*. 1924. p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix B.

<sup>10</sup> Hurlin, Ralph G., and Meredith B. Givens. *Shifting Occupational Patterns*, ch. VI of *Recent Social Trends in the United States*. 1933. Vol. I, p. 269.

second industrial revolutions. These had a profound effect on the entire life and work of women.

Early inventions led to the later development of machinery of various kinds designed to take over both the heavy operations and the tedious household tasks. Of most importance to woman employment was the machinery for spinning and weaving, operations done in the home in the early colonial days. At the beginning of the eighteenth century women still were spinning at home but the yarn was brought for weaving to large rooms where looms were in use. The earliest cotton mill was established in Rhode Island in 1789.<sup>11</sup> The power loom was introduced in 1814, and thereafter weaving became a factory occupation. By the middle of the century the sewing machine came into effective use, usually operated by women.<sup>12</sup> Such inventions resulted in a break-down of certain of the particular crafts formerly carried on by women in their homes.

### THEIR SKILLS SUPERSEDED, WOMEN WENT INTO FACTORIES

With the decline in the special hand skills in which women had been expert arose the demand for persons to carry on the routine of tending the rapid and exacting machinery being introduced, and of inspecting with speed and accuracy the products they turned out.<sup>13</sup> Women began to go into the factories to do this work. In describing one of these new cotton mills in Boston, President Washington said of the workers: "They are daughters of decayed families, and are girls of character—None others are admitted."<sup>14</sup>

Enterprising entrepreneurs were quick to see their own advantage in the employment of women as cheap labor, for the work of women at home had not received a money wage. In a time when gainful occupation was much restricted for women, there was no dearth of benign arguments that even the low pay accorded women enabled the poor to obtain bread.

Another factor operating to send more women to outside employment was the excess of women over men, especially in the large cities, a condition very different from that of earlier colonial times.<sup>15</sup> This meant that many women could not marry, in a monogamous society, and many of these could honorably support themselves as "spinsters" in the early cotton mills, even though the pay received was indeed a mere pittance.

Reports of cotton-mill wages in the first quarter of the nineteenth century show women almost never earning so much as \$4 a week, though as weavers they sometimes were paid that much, while men

<sup>11</sup> See Abbott, *cit.* Ch. III gives a history of this period. The mill here referred to was the Slater mill.

<sup>12</sup> The Elias Howe sewing machine was patented in 1846.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of changes in skills from the home production to the factory state, see Stuart Chase's *Men and Machines*. 1929. ch. IX.

<sup>14</sup> Abbott, *cit.*, p. 40. See also ch. IV for further discussion of types of girls going into early cotton mills in New England.

<sup>15</sup> Woody, *cit.*, vol. II, p. 1.



received at least \$4.50 and \$5, usually more.<sup>16</sup> By no means the earliest of the men's complaints as to having wages so undercut was the following from a labor paper in the 1860's:

After trying many experiments in vain to keep down wages to the old standard, when paper and gold were equal in value, they now attempt to substitute female for male labor \* \* \* [or bring down wages] to the female standard, which is generally less than one-half the sum paid to men.<sup>17</sup>

#### **OTHER EFFECTS OF THE FACTORY ERA ON OCCUPATIONS**

The vast acceleration of mechanical invention over the past 50 years, accompanied by the division of labor into minute industrial processes, has demanded not only machine-tending operations, but much more—increased technical service both in laboratory and shop, the organization of management, added clerical services, and expansion in all facilities for the distribution, sale, and delivery of new and increased numbers of products.

This growth of mass production by factory process, and its accompanying additions to managerial and clerical forces, have been followed very closely by an almost continuous shift in population from rural to urban areas, with all the characteristics of closely concentrated human existence, crowded living, smaller-scaled family operations, and increased demands for community services, as, for example, those having to do with housing, the provision of food, or recreation. The magnitude of the change from rural to city living is dramatized by the fact that in the days of the early Republic only 3 percent of the population resided in cities of over 8,000.<sup>18</sup>

The contrasting urban concentration of today has required a development of many community household services hitherto unknown or minor in their place. Increased apartment living, great additions to numbers of hotels and public eating places, with corresponding increases in a long line of occupations needed to maintain such establishments, have been among the results of this movement.

In consequence it is not surprising to find a decline in the numbers following agricultural pursuits, and an accompanying concentration on the improvement of agricultural techniques and organization, including the further development of different types of large-scale farming and the introduction of such occupations as those of farm agent, home demonstration agent, or organizer of girls' and boys' clubs, some of these usually supported as a public service by the State, and to a considerable extent also with the aid of Federal funds.

Closely allied to these developments have been the increases in transportation, communication, and sales facilities, each further added to in an almost pyramiding scale by new inventions and the develop-

<sup>16</sup> See Abbott, *cit.*, ch. XII.

<sup>17</sup> Fincher's *Trades' Review*, Jan. 28, 1865, as cited in Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States. U. S. Bureau of Labor, 1910. vol. IX, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Beard, Charles A. *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*. 1913. p. 242.

ment of new ingenuities such as the perfection of the radio and the extension of telephone service, which have increased greatly the numbers employed in the occupations connected with transportation and communication.

Finally, the complexity, haste, physical concentration, and generally advanced tempo of modern living have induced new and increased demands for types of personal service hitherto unknown or little used. Examples of the way this has affected women's occupations appear in the greatly increased numbers of beauty-shop operators, and also of laundry operatives, though the progress of machinery also is a contributing factor here.

As the foregoing paragraphs indicate, there has occurred a great shift from manual labor and the older hand skills to the so-called white-collar jobs, including those requiring quick adjustment of thought and activity of brain. This has been accompanied by marked advances in professional-service occupations and added demands for technical and professional training.

#### **WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONS AFFECTED BY CHANGES IN THEIR EDUCATION AND IN ATTITUDE TOWARD THEIR WORK**

The fact that women have had some (if not always sufficient) preparation to meet the needs of the growing educational, professional, and clerical services is due not so much to any economic factor as to the gradual change that has occurred in the entire status of women, based primarily on a definitely changing thought and attitude of society toward women's education, capabilities, and position. That the shift in emphasis in the development of women's education that has occurred from 1800 to the present time is quite remarkable is indicated from a few instances.

Throughout the home stage of production in this country, relatively little thought was given to the general education of women outside the household arts. Of course, there were outstanding individual women, especially those of the upper classes, who were highly educated, but this was not the situation of the great majority. Even a woman such as Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams and later first lady of the land, who had the best opportunities of learning accorded women in the early days of the American Republic, wrote her husband during his sojourn abroad: "Well ordered home is my chief delight, and the affectionate domestic wife, with the relative duties which accompany that character, my highest ambition."<sup>19</sup> An enterprising school official in those earlier times made some such statement as that "girls are a tender and interesting branch of the community, to whose education too little attention has been given."

In the days of the early Republic it was the exceptional woman who was prepared to teach, or who conducted a "dame's school" for

<sup>19</sup> Bobbé, Dorothea. *Abigail Adams, the Second First Lady*. 1929. p. 202.

small children. Even Emma Willard, of New York, an early advocate of more substantial training for girls, who prepared an address for the New York Legislature in its behalf, stated that the "absurdity of sending women to college must strike everyone."<sup>20</sup> Even the beginnings of public schooling such as we know it today were unthought of. The results of Emma Willard's efforts were referred to by Governor Clinton, a warm sponsor, as "the only attempt ever made in this country to promote the education of the female sex by the patronage of government." In 1826 New York and Boston public high schools were opened for girls, but both were closed shortly, the one in Boston having been such an "alarming success" that it was thought the city could not afford to continue it.<sup>21</sup>

It was not until the 1830's that practical efforts came to fruition for the establishment of colleges for women equivalent in standing to those of the day for men.<sup>22</sup>

In 1852 the earliest American woman's magazine, Godey's Lady's Book, known to the youth of the grandmothers and great-grandmothers of the present day, a publication that was thought very advanced in its time, declared: "We only want our sex to become fitted for their sphere", in which they included preparation for physicians, nurses, teachers, social workers, and managers of savings banks.<sup>23</sup>

It was about this time that two young women—Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell—were struggling to obtain the first medical education in this country for their sex. Elizabeth sought admission at 12 different medical schools before she was finally allowed to study at Geneva, N. Y., graduating in 1849. She and her sister founded the first women's dispensary, which developed into the New York Infirmary, chartered in 1854.<sup>24</sup>

As late as 1861, the founder of Vassar College, in his address to its first board of trustees, could make a point of saying: "It seemed to me that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right to intellectual culture and development."<sup>25</sup>

From the viewpoint of workers, as late as 1867 the address of the National Labor Congress to the Workingmen of the United States deplored the prejudice against the employment of women and declared:

We claim that if they are capable to fill the position now occupied by the stronger sex—and in many instances they are eminently qualified to do so—

<sup>20</sup> Goodsell, Willystine. *The Education of Women*. 1923. p. 18. Also Woody, cit., vol. II, pp. 138, 147.

<sup>21</sup> Goodsell, cit., pp. 19-22.

<sup>22</sup> Goodsell, cit., p. 24 ff. and Woody, cit., vol. II, p. 140. See also *Journal of the American Association of University Women*, April 1937, p. 152. The Georgia Female College in Macon, 1836, and Oberlin Collegiate Institute, 1833, are those usually cited as the earliest. The first incorporated academy for girls in New England, probably in the world, established by the first legacy ever left for their education, was founded in 1822. Vassar College, chartered in 1861, was considered the first fully equipped modern college for women commensurate with those of the day for men.

<sup>23</sup> Woody, cit., vol. II, p. 2, quoting Godey's Lady's Book, March 1852, p. 228.

<sup>24</sup> Jacobi, Mary Putnam. *Woman in Medicine*, ch. VII of *Woman's Work in America*, Annie Nathan Meyer (Ed.). 1891. pp. 151-153.

<sup>25</sup> Talbot, Marion. *The Education of Women*. 1910. pp. 109-110.

they are entitled to be treated as their equals, and receive the same compensation for such services.<sup>25</sup>

From the advancement in the education of women it was a logical result that they should be able to take up the kinds of work that led to their great increase as school teachers; social workers; stenographers, typists, and other clerical workers;<sup>27</sup> as technicians; and in a wide variety of white-collar and professional occupations. That in many cases these also are the types of work into which women have gone in greater and greater numbers even in the most recent decades is indicated by the following list of occupations in which woman employment increased in this country by more than 100,000 from 1910 to 1930:<sup>28</sup>

Servants.	Trained nurses.
Clerks (except in stores).	Bookkeepers and cashiers.
School teachers.	Waitresses.
Stenographers and typists.	Operatives—Clothing industries.
Store clerks.	Telephone operators.

### LARGE NUMBERS OF WOMEN NOW GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

Obviously, these influences affecting the occupations of a people have had a profound effect on the work done by women, on the wages in which their livelihood is maintained. The accelerated invention of machinery and the subdivision of manufacturing into even more minute processes, the destruction of old and substitution of new skills, the concentration of living and the decline in agricultural occupation, the rapid development of sales techniques, of communication and transportation facilities, and of new types of service, as well as the advance in women's education, have been accompanied by such an increase in the gainful employment of women that their number in paid occupations has increased by one-third since 1910, and is almost six times as great as in 1870. Their total advance through the past 50 years—from 152 to 220 in every 1,000 employed persons—is quite sufficient to demonstrate that the economic causes that have carried them from their homes into the market for paid labor have taken them there to stay.

At the present time, when more than a fifth of the women in the country are in gainful work chiefly outside their homes, the subject of woman employment in the United States deals with very large numbers and includes a vast scattering of workers in all sorts of jobs, many of them difficult to classify precisely. The immensity of the subject is indicated by the fact that the latest census (1930) reported more than 10½ million women in gainful occupations.

It is not surprising that in a land geographically so widespread there should be more women in paid work than in some of the countries

<sup>25</sup> Woman and Child Wage Earners, cit., vol. IX, pp. 29-30.

<sup>27</sup> The first practical typewriter was patented in 1868, earlier patents going back to 1829.

<sup>28</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. The Occupational Progress of Women, 1910 to 1930. Bul. 104. 1933. pp. 76-79.

of smaller area, though even the large proportion American women form of all persons in gainful work is exceeded elsewhere. A few sample comparisons with recent census data available from other countries illustrate this, as follows:

Country	Age	Number of women employed	Percent women formed of all workers
England and Wales <sup>29</sup> (1931)-----	14 and over--	5, 606, 043	29. 7
France <sup>30</sup> (1926)-----	11 and over--	7, 837, 776	36. 6
U. S. S. R. <sup>31</sup> (July 1933)-----	Not shown--	7, 066, 900	37. 7
United States <sup>32</sup> (1930)-----	10 and over--	<sup>33</sup> 10, 752, 116	22. 0
Germany <sup>34</sup> (1925)-----	All ages-----	11, 478, 000	35. 9

<sup>29</sup> Census of England and Wales, 1931, Industry Tables, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Statistique Generale de La France Annuaire Statistique, Cinquantieme volume, 1934, pp. 10, 12.

<sup>31</sup> International Labour Review, February 1935, p. 232.

<sup>32</sup> U. S. Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census, 1930: Population, vol. IV, Occupations, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> There were 10,545,740 of 16 years and over, or 21.9 percent of all workers of these ages.

<sup>34</sup> Encyclopedin of the Social Sciences, vol. 11, p. 432, Occupation, Statistics

The characteristic shifts in the United States, the marked decline in agriculture and the marked increase in clerical, professional, and trade occupations, are illustrated from the percent distribution of women in the various main occupational groups in 1880, 1910, and 1930, as follows:

	Percent distribution of women in—		
	1880	1910	1930
Agriculture and allied industries-----	22. 5	22. 4	8. 5
Manufacturing and mechanical industries-----	23. 8	22. 5	<sup>35</sup> 17. 5
Trade, transportation, and communication-----	2. 1	7. 3	11. 6
Clerical occupations-----	. 3	7. 3	18. 5
Professional service-----	6. 7	9. 1	14. 2
Domestic and personal service-----	44. 4	31. 3	29. 6
Public service (not elsewhere classified)-----	. 2	. 1	. 2

<sup>35</sup> This represents a decline chiefly in the earlier manual skilled work, such as that of tailoresses and dressmakers and seamstresses. If the figure be taken on factory occupations alone, the proportion in 1930 is greater than in these earlier years. Also see summary immediately following.

This picture of occupational shifts is rounded out by consideration of the marked increases in woman employment in the five major groups in which they are found. From 1910 to 1930, their numbers more than doubled in the clerical, professional, and trade groups, increased by one-fourth in domestic and personal service, and by two-fifths as factory operatives, though declining heavily in the chief hand trades, as shown in the following:

	Percent increase in number of women employed, 1910 to 1930
All occupations-----	33. 1
Domestic and personal service-----	25. 7
Clerical occupations-----	237. 5
Manufacturing and mechanical industries-----	3. 6
Chief hand trades-----	<sup>36</sup> 65. 3
Factory operatives-----	39. 7
Trade-----	103. 7
Professional service-----	107. 7

<sup>36</sup> In this case a decrease, as group comprises dressmakers and seamstresses not in factories, and milliners and millinery dealers.

It is true that, due to a variety of causes, this country, like others, recently has passed through the greatest economic depression ever known. However, an advanced state of recovery now is evident,

and certain outstanding economists and others, not without definite evidence as to trends supporting their belief, are predicting confidently that a short span of years will see a very considerable increase in employment, and indeed under some conditions a shortage of labor in this country.

This points to increased employment of women, especially since any employment shortage tends to draw more women into gainful work. Moreover, certain of the occupations counted on to help produce this situation are those in which a large proportion of the present employees are women, such for example as educational and recreational work, or salesmanship and promotion.

The effective occupational placement of women and the situations under which they may be enabled to work with satisfaction to themselves and their jobs must be given a definite and growing consideration in the economic management of this country.

The adjustment of youth to the occupational aspects of the times is likely to require ready adaptation to the routines of frequently changing machines; the inventiveness and the ingenuity to develop possible new types of work; or the ability to give superior and varying kinds of personal service. In education, these tendencies mean, on the one hand, the intensification of technical training, and on the other, training in adaptability to a series of divergent but closely allied occupational possibilities.

#### **RELATION OF EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN TO THAT OF MEN**

In discussing the great increases in women's employment, it also is of importance to note their changes in certain occupation groups in relation to employment of men.

Though woman employment had increased by about one-third since 1910, and also had increased somewhat more than men's employment, the number of men in gainful occupations in 1930 was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times the number of women. Naturally, the distribution in the main occupational groups differs considerably for the two sexes. The chief ones for men, in order of their importance, are manufacturing, agriculture, and trade, which together employ seven-tenths of the men; for women they are domestic and personal service, clerical occupations, manufacturing, and professional work, which together employ eight-tenths of the women.<sup>37</sup>

In their five major occupation groups, women outnumber men only in domestic and personal service, though they almost equal men in clerical work and are not far behind them in professional service, the last mentioned being due in a large measure to the number of women who are teachers. In the manufacturing and mechanical group<sup>38</sup> and in trade there are more than 5 men to every woman.

<sup>37</sup> See also p. 49, in section on Compensation.

<sup>38</sup> Exclusive of the building industry, which consists almost wholly of men's occupations, but still including the large woman-employing groups dressmakers and seamstresses and millinery and millinery dealers.

Since 1910, women have lost out somewhat to men in domestic and personal service and very considerably to men in the manufacturing and mechanical group as a whole (but only slightly among factory operatives) and there are now more men per 100 women in these types of work than was the case in 1910. On the other hand, women have gained in relation to men in professional service (but more especially in semiprofessional work and as attendants and helpers), and very considerably in trade and in clerical occupations. The figures upon which the foregoing discussion is based are as follows:

	Men per 100 women in—	
	1910	1930
All occupations.....	373	354
Domestic and personal service.....	48	56
Clerical occupations.....	192	103
Manufacturing and mechanical industries <sup>39</sup> .....	485	648
Factory operatives.....	162	167
Factory laborers.....	2,404	1,740
Trade.....	669	532
Professional service.....	133	113
Professional persons (not including attendants and helpers, semiprofessional and recreational pursuits).....	128	104

<sup>39</sup> Exclusive of the building trades, these figures are 382 and 516.

#### SHIFTING OCCUPATIONS WITHIN EACH MAIN GROUP

The general shifting in women's occupations and their proportionate distribution within the major occupational groups have been indicated. Within each of these groups, however, there have been significant changes in the types of occupations performed.

##### Domestic and Personal Service.

The division of occupations in which the largest numbers of women are found has been that of domestic and personal service, which employed more than 3 million women in 1930. Some of the work followed in this group has been in line with the age-old employments of women—those of household service. For example, it is reported that in the days of Charles II the gentlemen of the Court "thought that women were educated enough if they could spell out the recipes of pies and puddings, the manufacture of which nature had entrusted to their tender mercies." <sup>40</sup>

On the other hand, new service industries have arisen, some of which have been almost of mushroom growth, such as the occupations in beauty shops. The greater mobility of modern society, as well as the shifts in household economy arising from the ramifications of the factory and business systems of today, have accelerated the growth of the hotel and restaurant industries.

The coverage in certain of the census classifications in domestic and personal service varies somewhat in different years, and clear comparisons cannot be made in all cases. However, by 1930 there

<sup>40</sup> *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, November 1914, p. 38. *The Education of Women and Sex Equality*. By Gertrude S. Martin, Cornell University.

had been a 25-percent increase in the entire group over the figure for 1910, and still greater increases over earlier dates. Most of the chief occupations in the group also show increases, and these are especially great in those lines of work that reflect the major economic trends of the period. For example, while a marked falling off occurred in one large group representing a hand occupation pursued along older lines, that of laundresses not in laundry, which declined from 1910 to 1930 by nearly one-third, in the same period the number of operatives in laundry establishments more than doubled. Other increases in major occupation groups were as follows:

	<i>Percent increase in number of women em- ployed, 1910 to 1930</i>
Domestic and personal service.....	25. 7
Cooks and other servants.....	34. 1
Waitresses.....	170. 4
Housekeepers and stewardesses.....	36. 4
Hotel, restaurant, and boarding-house keepers.....	10. 4
Midwives and nurses (not trained).....	22. 2
Barbers, hairdressers, and manicurists.....	407. 6

Though there still are many more women than men in the domestic and personal service groups, women lost out somewhat as compared to men in the period from 1910 to 1930. In this time men had a slight gain as cooks and other servants, including, of course, those in hotels and restaurants as well as those in homes, and a considerable gain as proprietors of hotels, restaurants, and boarding houses. On the other hand, women's employment grew more rapidly than men's as operatives in laundries and very much more rapidly as waiters and as beauty shop operators. The relation of the two sexes in these occupations was as follows:<sup>41</sup>

	<i>Men per 100 women in—</i>	
	1910	1930
Domestic and personal service.....	48	56
Cooks and other servants.....	24	26
Waiters and waitresses.....	119	70
Laundry operatives.....	40	30
Hotel, restaurant, and boarding-house keepers.....	74	99
Barbers, hairdressers, and manicurists.....	776	231

### Clerical Occupations.

The occupational group second in importance in woman employment is the clerical, in which nearly 2 million women were at work in 1930. This number is almost 2½ times that of the women in the clothing and textile industries combined, the largest and the more traditional manufacturing employers of women.

The phenomenal growth in the number of women in clerical occupations, which increased by 16 times between 1890 and 1930 (by 40 percent between 1920 and 1930), illustrates perhaps more vividly than any other the two major forces influencing women's employment that already have been referred to—the industrialization and commerciali-

<sup>41</sup> In the other two major women's occupations in this main classification, housekeepers and midwives and nurses (not trained), relatively few men are found.



zation of our economic society, with its many added requirements for clerical work, and the changed attitude toward the education of women with its opening to them of increased educational opportunities. The growth during recent decades in the numbers of women in the chief clerical groups as they are reported in the census has been as follows:

	<i>Percent increase in number of women em- ployed, 1910 to 1930</i>
Clerical occupations.....	237. 5
Stenographers and typists.....	194. 4
Office clerks.....	476. 0
Bookkeepers and cashiers.....	153. 7

Today clerical work naturally is thought of as one of the primary occupations of women, and indeed this is the one group in which the numbers of men and women are most nearly equal. Furthermore, though in both factory and domestic and personal service employment women have lost ground in comparison with men, in the clerical groups women have gained considerably.

Women have done most of the typing and stenographic work since this kind of employment came to the fore, and in 1930 there were 20 women to every man so employed. Of late years women also have definitely outstripped men as bookkeepers and cashiers. Men still retain the edge on women as general office clerks, but their position here has declined greatly; though in 1910 there were nearly five men to one woman in this occupation, by 1930 there were less than two men to every woman. The following shows the relative position of the two sexes in the chief clerical occupations:

	<i>Men per 100 women in—</i>	
	<i>1910</i>	<i>1930</i>
Clerical occupations.....	192	103
Stenographers and typists.....	20	5
Office clerks.....	487	183
Office-appliance operators.....	Not reported	16
Bookkeepers and cashiers.....	144	59

The tendency in offices, as in manufacturing plants, has been to split up the work more and more into minute processes with the great increase in mechanical devices. Machines for adding, computing, tabulating; for bookkeeping and billing; for addressing, duplicating, and a host of other tasks, are in wide use.

Office-appliance operators were reported separately for the first time by the census of 1930, and the figures show that women vastly predominated at work on office machines, there being more than six women to every man so employed.

### **Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries.**

The general group for which this title is used ranks third in the gainful employment of women. It includes, besides factory operations, the building trades and the sewing and other hand crafts. In 1930 it

engaged something under 2 million women. While as a whole the group of women declined slightly in recent years, analysis shows that this decrease was in the hand trades rather than in factory operations. The total includes three large groups in nonfactory employments ordinarily performed in homes or small shops, and woman employment in these decreased between 1910 and 1930 in the following proportions:

	<i>Percent decrease in number of women employed</i>	
	<i>1910 to 1930</i>	<i>1920 to 1930</i>
Dressmakers and seamstresses (not in factory).....	64. 7	32. 9
Milliners and millinery dealers.....	67. 2	42. 4
Tailoresses.....	46. 6	31. 5

On the other hand, there was a great increase through the same period in women in factory employment, especially as operatives, since women in such occupations very greatly outnumber the women factory laborers. The following shows the increases:

	<i>Percent increase in number of women employed</i>	
	<i>1910 to 1930</i>	<i>1920 to 1930</i>
Factory operatives and laborers.....	40. 8	5. 0
Operatives.....	39. 7	8. 6
Laborers.....	56. 6	<sup>42</sup> 26. 1

<sup>42</sup>In this case a decrease.

From 1910 to 1930 the numbers of women employed as semiskilled operatives increased in most textile industries, in some to a considerable extent, and in the clothing, food, shoe, electrical machinery, chemical, rubber, and certain metal industries. Comparison of 1930 census figures with those as far back as 1880 shows a great increase in number of women factory employees in each industry where comparison is possible.

If the relative employment of women and men in manufacturing and mechanical industries be compared, women's position is seen to have declined very definitely in the past two decades, a situation exactly opposite to that in clerical occupations, where women have increased in relation to men. While in 1910 there were less than 5 men to every woman in manufacturing and mechanical industries, in 1930 there were more than 6 men to every woman, the numbers of men per 100 women in the manufacturing and mechanical industries being as follows:

1910.....	485
1920.....	565
1930.....	648

In actual numbers women have exceeded men as operatives in textile and clothing manufacture, and in 1920 and 1930 in the cigar and tobacco industry. Men have gained ground somewhat in the textile, electrical machinery, chemical, paper, and rubber industries, and women have done so in the clothing, shoe, food, tobacco, and

certain metal industries. A comparison of the numbers of men and women factory operatives in these industries follows:

	<i>Men per 100 women in—</i>	
	<i>1910</i>	<i>1930</i>
Textile industries.....	79	89
Electrical machinery and supply factories.....	124	159
Chemical and allied industries.....	191	307
Paper, printing, and allied industries.....	107	161
Rubber factories.....	203	280
Clothing industries.....	63	41
Shoe factories.....	205	157
Food and allied industries.....	256	153
Cigar and tobacco factories.....	111	53
Iron and steel, machinery, and vehicle industries.....	1,467	972
Metal industries (except iron and steel).....	235	198

### Occupations in Trade.

The great increase in numbers of women employed in the selling trades, in which they have more than doubled in the past 20 years, reflects the growth in the distribution incident to mass manufacture combined with a highly organized system of money and credit. Moreover, added types and methods of selling have developed, and the number of women has increased in such work as that of real-estate and insurance agents very much more rapidly than in store selling. Almost any city homemaker could testify as to the frequency of door-to-door selling. The trade occupations engaged something under a million women in 1930. The increases in recent decades in the chief woman-employing groups in trade are as follows:

	<i>Percent increase in number of women em- ployed, 1910 to 1930</i>
Trade.....	103.7
Saleswomen and store clerks.....	94.9
Retail dealers.....	64.2
Real-estate agents and officials.....	986.0
Insurance agents.....	410.6

In general, trade has been more of a man's than a woman's pursuit. Nevertheless, in recent years women have gained over men in this occupation group and in its separate branches under consideration. Though even now there are more than 5 men to every woman so employed, in 1880 there were 19 men to every woman. This growth in proportion of women is especially marked in the case of real-estate agents and officials and of insurance agents, while the change in the relative position of the two sexes as store salespersons has been comparatively slight. The relative place of women and men in the chief woman-employing groups in trade is as follows:

	<i>Men per 100 women in—</i>	
	<i>1910</i>	<i>1930</i>
Trade.....	669	532
Salespersons and store clerks.....	249	239
Retail dealers.....	1,681	1,446
Real-estate agents and officials.....	4,200	655
Insurance agents.....	3,387	1,884

### Professional Occupations.

In the professional occupations as in the clerical, women and men approach equal numbers, though it is in the groups of helpers and in semiprofessional work that women find their major activities outside teaching and nursing. The change from 1920 to 1930 was practically the same for the two sexes. A vivid illustration of the effects of extending fuller education to women is shown in the marked contrast between the two white-collar groups, professional and clerical, and, for example, manufacturing and mechanical industries, where there are more than six men for every woman. From 1910 to 1930 woman employment in the professional group increased in actual numbers more than in any other major group but clerical, though trade is a close third and, like professional, more than doubled in the 20 years. More than 1½ million women were in professional service occupations in 1930. Their increase over 1910 and their relation to the men so employed were as follows:

	Percent increase in number of women employed, 1910 to 1930	Men per 100 women in—	
		1910	1930
Professional service.....	107.7	133	113
Professional persons (not including attendants and helpers, semiprofessional and recreational pursuits).....	100.7	128	104

A closer scrutiny shows that the increase is very largely in women's traditional fields of teaching and nursing and that about one-tenth of the growth is in the number of women attendants and helpers or in semiprofessional work.

It is especially in semiprofessional work and in positions as attendants and helpers that women's increase since 1910 has far outstripped men's, though in some of the more advanced professions, where men much more greatly outnumber women, for example, in the legal and writing professions, women have gained relatively. In at least one of great importance—that of physicians and surgeons—woman employment has dropped off practically a fourth since 1910.

Considering the 16 major professional occupations (those in which as many as 50,000 persons were reported in 1930) women form but very small proportions of the dentists, draftsmen, lawyers and judges, and clergymen. Since practically no women are engineers these groups will not be considered separately. Men form negligible proportions of the trained nurses and school teachers, and the number of women nurses more than trebled after 1910.

Women remained very nearly stationary or lost out in relation to men in six of these major professional occupations, though in one of them women outnumbered men and the actual numbers of women

increased. As school teachers there were more than four women to every man, and the number of women increased by nearly four-fifths in the 20 years. The figures showing changes in these occupations are as follows:

	Percent of increase (+) or decrease (-) in number of women employed, 1910 to 1930	Men per 100 women in—	
		1910	1930
School teachers.....	+79.1	25	22
Actors and showmen.....	+58.7	269	262
Artists, sculptors, teachers of art.....	+40.3	121	165
Musicians, teachers of music.....	-5.8	65	107
Physicians and surgeons.....	-24.3	1,576	2,154
Dentists.....	+2.6	3,090	5,421

In 2 of the 16 major professional occupations women not only outnumbered men and advanced in numbers in the 20 years, but they gained in comparison with men, as follows:

	Percent increase in number of women employed, 1910 to 1930	Men per 100 women in—	
		1910	1930
Social, welfare, religious workers <sup>4</sup> .....	401.1	80	40
Trained nurses.....	277.4	8	2

<sup>4</sup> Two groups combined, since separate figures for social workers not reported in 1910.

In the remaining five of the major professional occupations (excluding the engineering occupations, that employ practically no women) women advanced markedly after 1910, both in numbers and in favorable position in comparison with men, though in all of them men still greatly outnumber women. The legal group, for example, had 46 men for every woman in 1930. The figures are as follows:

	Percent increase in number of women employed, 1910 to 1930	Men per 100 women in—	
		1910	1930
Lawyers, judges, and justices.....	506.6	20,456	4,645
Draftsmen.....	274.2	8,420	5,363
Editors and reporters.....	185.2	722	335
College presidents and professors.....	580.6	430	208
Clergymen.....	378.2	17,128	4,444

### Agricultural Occupations.

Agricultural occupations engage fewer than 1 in 10 (8.5 percent) of the women in gainful employment, and less than a million women were in agricultural and allied work in 1930. In line with the general economic trends, their number declined markedly in the 20 years, being cut practically in half; however, there was only a very small decrease in farm owners and tenants, who formed about 15 percent of the women in agriculture in 1910.

Seven-tenths of the women in this type of gainful work in 1930 were farm laborers, though there were nearly six men to every woman so employed.

Women in agricultural work not only have declined in number in recent years, but they have lost out in relation to the employment of men, so that while in 1910 there were only about 6 men to every woman in such work, in 1930 there were more than 10 men to every woman so engaged. The figures are as follows:

	Percent decrease in number of women employed, 1910 to 1930	Men per 100 women in—	
		1910	1930
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....	49. 6	599	1, 078
Farmers (owners and tenants).....	3. 8	2, 145	2, 189
Farm managers and foremen.....	87. 6	547	6, 880
Farm laborers.....	57. 6	307	580

NOTE.—It was hoped to include at this point information as to women in the public service, but it has not been possible to prepare such a section at this time.

### WOMEN AS HOMEMAKERS

Up to the present point this section has dealt with women who are in gainful employment—22 percent of all those in the country 10 years of age or older.

Of the more than three-fourths of the woman population remaining, many are less than 16 years old, many others are sisters and daughters living at home and not wholly responsible for the house-keeping, but the great majority are homemakers. The numbers are as follows:

	Number of women (in millions)
Gainfully occupied:	
All (10 years and over).....	10. 75
Homemakers (16 years and over) <sup>44</sup> .....	3. 92
At home.....	. 76
Away from home.....	3. 15
Not in gainful employment:	
All (10 years and over).....	38. 02
Aged 10 to 15 years.....	6. 87
Aged 16 years and over (other than homemakers).....	6. 67
Homemakers (16 years and over).....	24. 48

<sup>44</sup> For analysis of the situation of almost 3½ million homemakers who are in gainful occupations besides their home duties (exclusive of 1-person families—of which there were 570,757—and excluding races other than the native and foreign-born white and Negro), see Women's Bureau Bul. 148, The Employed Woman Homemaker in the United States

These homemakers are to a large extent married women, but many of them are single daughters keeping house for fathers, sisters maintaining homes for brothers, or in other similar relationships to their families. Many of these homemakers (whether married or single) also help in the family support through wage earning outside the home, as the foregoing data show. Moreover, in the case of 2½ million families in the United States consisting of two persons or more, a woman was the head of the family and in almost 1 million of these families she was a gainfully-employed homemaker as well; 58 percent of these 2½ million families had at least one child under 21 years of age (data for younger children not available) and 18 percent had three children.

### Importance of the Homemaker in the Economic Structure.

A considerable body of facts exists on the economic status of women at work in the various occupations paying a money wage; but on the measurement of woman's economic status as a housewife little is available. The years of the depression have revealed a new appreciation of the economic importance of the housewife's services—of how large a share of the family living she produces. A distressing situation for multitudes of families could have developed if the general industrial collapse had involved certain home occupations not yet wholly bound over to commercial enterprise.<sup>45</sup>

The contribution of the homemaker is great, whether measured by the time she labors, the money value of the actual work she accomplishes, or the cost of those things that would have to be bought by the family if she did not produce or preserve them.

One economist has stated that "the value added to goods by family activity, if it could be set down as a pecuniary sum, would make the railroad or the banking industry small by comparison."<sup>46</sup>

The economic position of the housewife is rather an anomaly: Her services never come on the market and she is outside the price system, yet her contribution as a producer in the home holds a compelling position in the economic life of any community. More than this, she is found exerting an influence measured in many lines of manufactured commodities, while her efficiency as a homemaker definitely affects the productive capacity of those members of the family at work outside the home. Further, the standards she maintains in her work, or wishes to attain, have an important bearing on a wide range of commercial products, for as a purchaser of foods and household goods she wields tremendous economic power.

### Homemaker Not Assisted by Paid Help in Most Families.

The extent of the homemaker's contribution is more fully understood when it is realized that in 1929, usually cited as the peak year of prosperity, only 5 percent of the families in the United States had paid help.<sup>47</sup> In the great majority of the remaining 95 percent the housewife herself constituted the entire working force. The multitudinous jobs taken on by her as a part of the home-keeping duties may be performed poorly, indifferently, or well, but the data that exist on the distribution of time spent by farm women, or city women,

<sup>45</sup> A study made in 1934 of 61 cities and covering 300,000 families shows that family income had decreased one-third from 1929 to 1933. See U. S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, release of June 25, 1935.

The average money income of 144 families living on owner-operated farms in 1 county in Michigan decreased from \$1,353 in 1929 to \$664 in 1932. The study showed that while there was little change in the total amount of food used, in 1932 there was much less purchased and more produced. See Changes in Standards of Consumption During a Depression. By Irma H. Gross and Julia Pond. Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. Special Bul. 274. July 1936. Abstract in Journal of Home Economics, December 1936, p. 705.

<sup>46</sup> Hamilton, Walton H. Economic Organization. In Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, vol. 11, p. 487.  
<sup>47</sup> Kneeland, Hildegard. Is the Modern Housewife a Lady of Leisure? In Survey-Graphic, June 1, 1929, p. 301.

college graduate or with education "otherwise", during our most prosperous years, show a surprising uniformity in time expenditure, and we find that the overworked housewife has by no means passed into history.

### Use of Newest Household Equipment Limited.

Despite the development of new types of household equipment, and of various labor-saving devices for home use, the great majority of families in this country have been able to buy such aids to only a limited extent or not at all. According to census estimates, the average family is composed of about four persons. In a large majority of cases, the family income just covers the traditional type of consumption goods, leaving no surplus for the large investment new household machinery entails. Such home helps are relatively expensive, and in 1929, for example, over 19 million families in this country—nearly three-fourths of the total—had yearly incomes of less than \$2,500, and for over 16 million families the income was less than \$2,000 a year.<sup>48</sup>

The housewives in these 19 million families of less than \$2,500 income must take their kitchens as they find them. It is only in the newly built home, and for women whose husbands can afford to buy in these still uncertain times, that the architect has endeavored to produce a kitchen plan economical for the housewife's use.<sup>49</sup> In a study in Illinois where kitchen clinics were set up to show how improvements could be made simply, 137 records were analyzed, and the median age of the kitchens was 35 years; 12 percent were in houses built 70 or more years ago, and only 10 percent were less than 10 years old.<sup>50</sup>

### Time Spent in Household Duties.

With the tendency today to decrease the hours in industry to a 40-hour week basis, it may surprise the reader to find how long the housewife's day still is. The data cited<sup>51</sup> show household hours averaging at least 50 a week, 73 in farm homes where there are babies. If the picture of home duties in our grandmothers' time looms larger than that covering the duties of housewives today, it must not be forgotten that the number of household workers per home has fallen off also. In earlier times the maiden aunts and spinster sisters who lent a hand in

<sup>48</sup> Moulton, Harold G. *Income and Economic Progress*. 1935. p. 37. See also Ezekiel, Mordecai. *\$2,500 a Year; From Scarcity to Abundance*. 1936.

<sup>49</sup> For time-saver standards in kitchens and bathrooms, see *American Architecture*, September 1935, pp. 89-95. Abstract in *Journal of Home Economics*, January 1936, p. 53.

<sup>50</sup> Ward, Gladys J. *Kitchen Clinics*. In *Journal of Home Economics*, September 1936, p. 445.

<sup>51</sup> Unless otherwise stated data on this subject are from a survey made by the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. See the following articles by Hildegard Kneeland of the Bureau of Home Economics: *Is the Modern Housewife a Lady of Leisure?* In *Survey-Graphic*, June 1, 1929, p. 301; *Abolishing the Inefficient Kitchen*. In *Journal of Home Economics*, July 1929, p. 475; *Homemaking in this Modern Age*. In *Journal of American Association of University Women*, January 1934, p. 75. See also mimeographed copy of talk: *The Share of Family Members in Work and Leisure*, given before the Farm Living Section of the Agricultural Outlook Conference, Washington, D. C., Oct. 31, 1934. (Figures supplied by Dr. Kneeland and Miss Ruth Moore of Bureau of Home Economics.)



various family duties were more numerous than in these days when such relatives are likely to be engaged in outside gainful work.

Most of the housewife's time still is consumed in routine housework, the three meals a day, daily care of house, laundering, and mending. Generally speaking, vacations and holidays are unknown, for her job goes on 7 days in the week, all the year round. The variation in the amount of work from day to day, the emergency needs of the family with small children, the unstandardized character of her tasks in their varied assortment, make the primary problem still one of fitting the day's hours into a reasonable schedule, not of decreasing them much.

Some years ago the United States Bureau of Home Economics, with the help of the extension and research staffs of several colleges, analyzed the schedules of more than 2,000 homemakers who kept daily records of how they spent their time for several days of a typical week. The homemakers came from farms and villages, and in smaller number from towns and cities. Only one-sixth spent as little as 42 hours a week in homemaking; five-sixths of them spent over 42 hours a week, more than one-half spent over 48 hours, and one-third spent over 56 hours. The average for all was slightly over 51 hours a week.

Even in the city households, more than half of this time was spent in the kitchen, meals alone taking over 21 hours a week; the time was longer in farm homes. Washing, ironing, and cleaning took up the rest of the time spent in the kitchen.

The city homemakers showed a surprising record; women in cities of under 50,000 population spent an average of 51 hours a week in homemaking. In the larger cities of 50,000 and over the average was a little above 48 hours a week, and only 10 percent of the women spent less than 35 hours a week in their homemaking.

The average time spent in all work by the 950 farm women, including care of poultry and milk and gardening, was over 62 hours a week. These records came from a group fairly typical of the farm and village housewife, at least in the middle-class home, and the pattern of time expenditure is seen to be surprisingly uniform for the different sections of the country. Similar studies for 5 States show average working hours of farm women a little more than 60 hours a week.<sup>52</sup>

The number of persons in the average city household reported was 4.1 as against 4.4 in the average farm home. For routine tasks other than meal preparation the figures of farm and city homemakers are almost identical—7½ hours a week on cleaning, 5¼ for laundering, 1½ for mending, and 4½ for sewing. The city homemaker spent a few hours more during the week in care of children and purchasing, and a few hours less in cooking and dishwashing, than did the farm woman.

<sup>52</sup> Studies similar to that of the Bureau of Home Economics, made under Purnell funds by several States in cooperation with said Bureau.

A later analysis of these records of the Bureau of Home Economics gives the following data:

	Number of homes scheduled	Average size of household	Average time spent per day in—			
			Homemaking alone		Farm and other work	
			Hrs.	Mins.	Hrs.	Mins.
Farm (25 States)-----	559	4.3	7	23	1	22
Rural-nonfarm (22 States)---	249	4.0	7	21	0	39
Urban (43 States and District of Columbia)-----	692	4.0	6	52	0	18

Where there were very young children in the family the total working time for farm households was almost 66 hours and where there was a baby under 1 year it was more than 73 hours. In households consisting only of the homemaker and her husband the average working time was less than 56 hours. The amount of time these farm homemakers gave to care of the family ranged from 21 hours a week in homes where there was a child under 1 year to a little less than 1½ hours a week in homes where the children were from 10 to 14 years old.

The records from some 700 urban homemakers (those living in towns of 2,500 and more population) throughout the country, came from graduates of the eastern women's colleges. The women in this group who had children under 15 years of age averaged no less than 52 hours a week in homemaking activities, 13 hours being given to the care of children. Four-fifths of them employed some paid service in the home, amounting on the average to 30 hours a week. In spite of this assistance, for which 5 hours a week were spent in planning, purchasing, and other management jobs, the tasks of preparing meals and dishwashing, of cleaning, laundering, and mending, took up the major part of the working week. These households probably fall within the social group known as "relatively well-to-do", and with the modern equipment and other conveniences belonging to kitchens in such homes, it appears that the homemaker is still predominantly a housewife.

The hours reported as devoted to the children do not include any time spent in walking with them, driving, or other recreation—"airing the baby"—which was considered part of the homemaker's leisure time when the tabulation of the records was prepared.

For the household including only the homemaker and her husband, the duties of these college women averaged 36 hours a week, so even here housekeeping hardly can be called a leisure-time job.

Another compilation shows time expenditure on an enumerated list of household duties by farm women<sup>53</sup> in four States with large rural populations.<sup>54</sup> While no information is readily available as to comparability in size of households, as to paid help, nor as to extent of modern equipment in the kitchen, it is probable that each group is

<sup>53</sup> Normal women only taken, no aged nor very poor.

<sup>54</sup> Journal of Home Economics, January 1936, p. 38 ff. Data used are from bulletins of State agricultural experiment stations and unpublished material.

representative of the home demands on the time of very large numbers of housewives in this country, and indicates the tremendous contribution they make to the Nation's economy.

	Oregon	South Dakota	Mon- tana	New York
Number of farm families in State <sup>55</sup> .....	57, 754	83, 628	49, 152	176, 440
Number of women reporting in survey.....	288	100	92	139
	<i>Hours per week</i>			
Total of house and farm work.....	60. 26	63. 88	62. 70	58. 70
Housework alone.....	49. 77	52. 99	53. 53	51. 88
Meals—Preparing.....	16. 95	17. 05	17. 00	17. 35
Clearing away.....	7. 50	8. 85	8. 42	8. 50
General care of house.....	7. 55	8. 60	7. 85	8. 25
Care of fires, water.....	1. 05	1. 87	1. 25	2. 28
Laundrying—Washing.....	3. 60	3. 41	3. 42	3. 17
Ironing.....	2. 00	2. 53	2. 01	2. 18
Care of clothing—Sewing.....	3. 01	3. 57	4. 25	3. 63
Mending.....	2. 64	1. 72	2. 75	2. 52
Care of family.....	3. 82	3. 72	4. 58	2. 43
Management.....	1. 65	1. 67	2. 00	1. 57
Farm work—garden, fields, poultry, live- stock, dairy.....	10. 49	10. 89	9. 17	6. 82

<sup>55</sup> U. S. Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census, 1930: Population, vol. VI, table VI.

### The Housewife's Major Piece of Work.

With the exception of the care of very young children, the major activity in the housewife's daily schedule is the preparation of meals. This consumes about one-third of all the time given to household duties. It has to be done every day in the week, and for 52 weeks in the year.

A study of 538 records of households in Oregon <sup>56</sup>—310 from farm, 72 from country but not on farms, 156 from villages, towns, and cities—shows that one-fourth of all the time given to the needs of the home was spent in preparing meals. The average time spent on this was the equivalent of one-third of the full time of one person in each household; in this study the households averaged between four and five persons in size.

A separate study of the task of clearing the table, washing dishes (not even including pots and pans), drying them by towel, and putting them in the cupboard, for a family of four, showed that the time required per day for this, when done three times daily and according to "present practice", was 38 minutes and 8 seconds a day.<sup>57</sup>

For over 15 years a homemaker who is the wife of a well-known economist has kept a scientific record showing what it costs to produce things for her family in her kitchen, which has all modern equipment.<sup>58</sup> She has proved to her satisfaction that the average woman who prepares meals, cans, preserves, bakes, and launders at home, for her own family, produces substantially the equal value of the man's economic contribution in industry. Records covering the

<sup>56</sup> Journal of Home Economics, January 1932, p. 10 ff.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., May 1930, p. 393 ff.

<sup>58</sup> Borsodi, Mrs. Ralph. 'The New Woman Goes Home.' In Scribner's, Feb. 1, 1937, p. 52. See also 'What Should the Home Contribute?' In Journal of Home Economics, June 1936, p. 365.

cost of raw materials, supplies, fuel, "overhead", and labor indicate that the housewife can earn the equivalent of from \$5 to \$20 a week, year in and year out, depending on the number of jobs taken back into the household from industry, the size of the family, and the family standard of living. Her records show for the purchase of food from the store in one month of 1936, compared with the cost of home-cooking such articles in the next month, that the following savings could be made:

Market price.....	\$21. 18
Home cost.....	10. 82
Earning if cooked at home.....	10. 36

The average amount of time spent in the kitchen for the month when all the cooking and baking was done outside the home is compared to the average amount of time spent on similar work in the home in the 5 months preceding:

	Average for 1 month when food was bought		Average for previous 5 months	
	Hours	Minutes	Hours	Minutes
Monthly labor time.....	65	37	82	40
Daily labor time.....	2	7	2	40

An earlier study of families in northern Michigan analyzed a 30-year record of a farm woman's labor.<sup>59</sup> In these 30 years, it was estimated, she prepared approximately 235,425 meals, for which labor at 15 cents a meal (a very cheap estimate) would reach more than \$35,000. This would run to about \$1,167 a year for meals, and if this represented a third of her services the money value of her work would run to over \$3,500 a year. This is based on very reasonable estimates of labor values, some of them being as follows:

	Number	Labor value per unit	Total labor value in 30 years
<b>For food preparation:</b>			
Loaves of bread.....	35, 400	\$0. 05	\$1, 770
Cakes.....	5, 930	. 10	593
Pies.....	7, 960	. 05	398
Bushels of vegetables prepared.....	1, 525	. 50	762
Jars of fruit canned.....	3, 625	. 25	906
<b>For other home services:</b>			
Garments made.....	3, 190	. 50	1, 595
Pieces of laundry washed.....	177, 525	. 03	5, 331
Hours of sweeping, dusting, cleaning....	35, 640	. 10	3, 564

Still another estimate of the value of household work was made several years ago<sup>60</sup> by a small club of homemakers who kept records and made studies of the duties they undertook, with the following results: Hourly earnings of more than one-half the women were 50 cents, several between \$2 and \$2.50; the family wash was worth about \$2 an hour for two women, while two others earned only half as much (different speeds of work were responsible for the contrast here, as all

<sup>59</sup> Newton, Julia. Farm Credit Administration. In speech at Farm Bureau Social and Economic Conference. News (Indianapolis, Ind.), Feb 25, 1937.

<sup>60</sup> U. S. Department of Agriculture. Yearbook of Agriculture, 1927, pp. 380-381.

four used similar equipment and similar laundering methods). In making a cotton house dress, the homemaker found that her time was worth only 30 cents an hour, for the ready-made equivalent would have cost little more than the price of materials. In a study of canning fruit, by this same group, a saving of only a few cents an hour appeared, due to the cost of supplies for the homemaker (who did not raise the fruit herself).

The household and the duties of its manager cannot be separated from the home and family for which it exists. No matter how careful the plan made for time schedules, emergency needs come when least expected, and personal tastes govern to a great degree the type of household management selected as best for that particular family. The flexibility of budget planning, child guidance, health measures, are household techniques that cannot be entirely surrendered to an outside agency. Though on a less extended scale, the homemaker's problems are as serious and responsible as those of the factory personnel manager. Her functions involve intangible factors not wholly measurable in economic terms; social usefulness, happy lives, and normal emotional ties give evidence of her skill in managing house and family.

## Chapter 2.—UNEMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

While even at the peak of prosperity in 1929 there were many persons out of work, it is a well-known fact that in manufacturing, for example, from that time on through 1930, 1931, and most of 1932 there was a rapid increase in unemployment. Naturally the overcrowding of the labor market resulted in hardship for women as well as men. In all occupations, many women lost jobs; large numbers could obtain employment only in less remunerative types of work than those in which they formerly had been engaged; others bore heavy cuts in pay for the same work they had done previously. Moreover, with income declines for families, many of whom already were existing at a comparatively low level, jobs were now sought by women who had not been at work recently, often by those who had never before been in gainful employment.

While no doubt there were plants in which the general financial retrenchment caused the employment of women because, in their increased need, employers found in women a cheap labor supply, on the other hand there was a marked tightening up in the acceptance of women's qualifications and a renewed focus on their position as gainful workers. Any qualifications of women that had come under scrutiny before were now examined with redoubled attention. Especially did employed married women suffer a singling out for public criticism and even loss of jobs.

Thus the various factors affecting women's employment situation were much confused, operating at cross purposes and in opposing directions with different effects in different places, so that a clear delineation of cause and effect is almost impossible.

Moreover, such figures as existed on unemployment in the entire country were incomplete, in many cases based on estimate, sometimes far from accurate and unavoidably so, and frequently not separately reported by sex.

### EXTENT OF WOMEN'S UNEMPLOYMENT

From Government figures and those of various special studies in many localities, it was conservatively estimated that at least 2 million women were out of work during the worst (though not necessarily at the very lowest point) of the depression. These studies ordinarily showed around one-fifth of all the women normally employed to be without jobs.<sup>1</sup>

The Government figures taken in the midst of the depression that are most indicative of the situation are those for 19 of the largest cities

<sup>1</sup> For fuller information as to the figures available for 1928 to 1931 from Government sources and from 21 special surveys, see the analysis of them made in Women's Bureau Bul. 113, *Employment Fluctuations and Unemployment of Women*. 1933.

in the United States, representing well over a fifth of all employed women in the country.<sup>2</sup> In these cities 26.2 percent of the men and 18.9 percent of the women normally in gainful work were unemployed in January 1931.

Other special surveys in various localities showed similar proportions of women out of jobs. In 1934 it was reported by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration that women who normally were employed formed about 30 percent of all persons on relief in towns and cities of over 2,500.

Though the total figures for these earlier depression surveys usually showed smaller proportions of women than of men out of work, yet even at that time there were important woman-employing industries in which larger proportions of women than of men were the sufferers, as, for example, electrical supply, woolen and worsted, and certain food industries.

Moreover, practically one-tenth of the jobless women in the country in 1930 were heads of families, and according to the definition used by the Bureau of the Census in reporting this group this means that these women had dependents for whose support they were responsible.<sup>3</sup> In October 1933 the Federal Emergency Relief Administration reported that 12 percent of the relief households in rural districts were headed by women.<sup>4</sup>

Later data are scattering and the most comprehensive result from counts made in certain large industrial States. On the whole they indicate that as reemployment progressed, though in some cases it still was true that smaller proportions of the women than of the men normally at work were unemployed, there were industrial areas in which women were the greater sufferers. This appears to be true, for example, from figures for Pennsylvania, a State having many large woman-employing industries, while in Michigan, where the industries are predominantly man-employing, men were relatively the greater sufferers. The data available for three States are as follows:<sup>5</sup>

	Massachusetts	Michigan	Pennsylvania
Percent women formed of total persons employable or normally employed.....	28.9	20.0	25.9
Percent women formed of total unemployed.....	24.5	15.3	28.2
Percent unemployed men formed of employable men.....	26.4	19.9	27.2
Percent unemployed women formed of employable women.....	21.1	14.5	30.6

The United States Employment Service recently has analyzed its figures as to persons newly applying to public employment offices for work in the 2 years ending June 30, 1936. The new women applicants

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census, 1930: Unemployment*, vol. II, p. 366.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Federal Emergency Relief Administration. *Unemployment Relief Census, October 1933*, p. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Basic data from: Massachusetts, Department of Labor and Industries. *Report on the Census of Unemployment in Massachusetts as of Jan. 2, 1934*. Labor bul. 171, p. 11; Michigan. *State Emergency Welfare Commission. Census of Population and Unemployment, First Series, July 1936*, p. 13; and Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration. *Census of Employable Workers in Urban and Rural Non-Farm Areas in Pennsylvania, 1934 (April), 1936*. Table 5, p. 6. Those employed only temporarily or on work relief are counted as unemployed.

throughout the period reported numbered nearly 3 million and formed 27 percent of all applicants.<sup>6</sup> It will be remembered that women form 22 percent of all persons gainfully employed, according to the 1930 census, hence their proportion among the unemployed who sought work through these agencies was greater than among those in gainful work.

**Normal Occupations of Unemployed Women.**

While the women on the active files of public employment offices do not represent all the unemployed, reports for July 1936 show that they formed practically 60 percent or more of the total unemployed as estimated by the National Industrial Conference Board and the American Federation of Labor, and their occupational distribution would be indicative of that of all unemployed women.<sup>7</sup> In July 1936, half the women seeking work through the public agencies were service workers, and two-thirds were seeking either clerical or service jobs. Of the men, however, nearly four-fifths were productive workers, skilled craftsmen, or laborers, the division among these three categories being fairly equal.

A larger proportion of the women out of work than of those normally employed were service workers, as the following shows:

<i>Normally employed, 1930 census</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Seeking employment, July 1936</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total.....	100.0	Total.....	100.0
Domestic and personal service..	29.6	Service workers.....	50.9
Clerical occupations.....	18.5	Clerical workers.....	15.5
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	17.5	Manufacturing and mechanical workers <sup>8</sup> .....	10.8
Professional service.....	14.2	Professional and kindred work- ers.....	5.6
Trade.....	9.0	Salespersons.....	4.8
Other (scattered).....	11.2	Other workers (scattered)....	12.3

<sup>8</sup> Production workers, craftsmen, and laborers in manufacturing and construction.

As service workers and in sales occupations, the proportions women formed of the total number seeking jobs were larger than the proportions they formed of the total number normally employed in the same types of occupation, as the following shows:

<i>Percent women formed of total employees, 1930</i>	<i>Percent women formed of those seeking work, July 1936</i>		
Domestic and personal service..	64.2	Service workers.....	65.4
Clerical occupations.....	49.4	Clerical workers.....	46.9
Professional service.....	46.9	Professional and kindred workers.....	28.8
Trade.....	15.8	Salespersons.....	27.6
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	13.4	Manufacturing and me- chanical workers <sup>9</sup> .....	4.2

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 8.

<sup>6</sup> U. S. Employment Service. *Filling 9 Million Jobs. An Analysis of Registrations and Placements Made by the U. S. Employment Service, July 1, 1934, to June 30, 1936.* By William H. Stead. 1937. p. 50.  
<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Who Are the Job Seekers? By William H. Stead. 1937. pp. 11, 56, 57, 58. Those on the rolls formed 53.4 percent of the unemployed estimated by the American Federation of Labor and 66.5 percent of those estimated by the National Industrial Conference Board.



Even when the proportions unemployed can be seen, this does not show the extent to which employed workers have taken jobs not in line with their usual occupations, in many cases even temporary or part-time jobs. Writing in 1932, an expert on this subject has vividly stated this as follows:

It must be remembered that comparison of unemployment rates for occupations does not show comparative occupational security, but only comparative likelihood of obtaining some work of whatever kind. In the census returns a man may be recorded as employed whether or not he is able to find work in his customary line. Thus there is much insecurity of occupation which is not reflected in unemployment rates. As general unemployment rises, there is occupational displacement from the more to the less skilled types of work. A recent study <sup>10</sup> has shown that among professional workers only half as many were unemployed as had been displaced from professional occupations and among skilled workers only three-fourths as many were unemployed as had been displaced, while among the ousted unskilled workers only a very few found work in higher grades and more than half of their unemployment was caused by entrance of workers from other occupational levels.<sup>11</sup>

#### **LESSEned EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN DUE TO CERTAIN INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS OR PRACTICES**

Employment may be diminished for the individual or made insecure by certain characteristic factors in our industrial organization at this time. These affect both sexes though not equally, and some of them bear with especial force on women, or have a more widespread application to women than to men, particularly in relation to certain industries. Examples lie in part-time jobs, in fluctuations in employment due to seasonal causes or to particular organization of an industry, and in the rapidity or the unplanned impact of technological change.

##### **Part-time Employment.**

Part-time work—that is, employment for less than the usual time worked by persons gainfully occupied—is of at least three types:

(1) Regular part-time work, consisting of regular employment for less than the usual number of hours in a day or on less than the usual number of days in a week, or both;

(2) Irregular part-time work, comprising that of extra workers on call, substitutes, or spare hands, and of persons available for the Christmas rush in stores and post offices, many other examples of which could be cited;

(3) Irregular employment, the result of fluctuations from a variety of causes, including among many others the nature of the industry (affected by seasonality, weather conditions, style changes), the labor supply, the flow of work in the plant, and a slackness or rush of orders.

Regular part-time employment exists in many or most stores, for example, where the "extras" come for work on certain days, or on parts

<sup>10</sup> Hogg, Margaret H. *The Incidence of Work Shortage. Report of a Survey by Sample of Families Made in New Haven, Conn., in May-June, 1931.* Russell Sage Foundation, New York. 1932.

<sup>11</sup> *Shifting Occupational Patterns.* By Ralph G. Hurlin and Meredith B. Givens. *In Social Trends*, vol. 1, pp. 317-318.

of days. Likewise in restaurant employment, many cashiers and waitresses have a schedule applying to only part of the working day or parts of certain days in the week, with the wage correspondingly low.<sup>12</sup> In most cases, such part-time employees are women. "Regular extras" as alteration hands in stores average only 12 to 14 weeks in the year, according to unpublished data secured by the Women's Trade Union League from union officials.

The term "part time" also is used where the full weekly schedule is not worked. The Pennsylvania unemployment survey early in 1934 showed that over 15 percent of all employable women and nearly 17 percent of the men were on part-time work.<sup>13</sup> A study of all gainful workers in a Connecticut city showed 1.5 percent of the women on part time.<sup>14</sup>

### Irregularity of Employment.

Another type of indication of part-time work is in the variation from full scheduled employment as shown in the change from week to week in numbers of persons on a pay roll. In many industries these changes are markedly seasonal in character, and it is a notable fact that those industries that tend to have an especially great seasonal fluctuation in employment also are likely to be the important woman-employers, as for example clothing manufacture and food processing. Many of these have a well-defined busy season at a similar time each year. In the canning of fruits and vegetables, for example, the peak season ordinarily is in August or September, though in some localities or for some products it is earlier or later. In candy making there is a peak prior to the Christmas season and another before Easter. In meat packing the peak comes roughly from January to March; in tobacco stemmeries an early spring peak is followed by another in midsummer. In department stores the pre-Christmas rush season is well known. All these and many other industries highly seasonal in character are large woman-employers.

Correspondence by the Women's Trade Union League with union officers in industries many of which employ largely women resulted in reports, in the fall of 1936, as to the number of full-time weeks ordinarily worked in the year, as follows:

	<i>Average full work- weeks in year</i>
Shoes.....	24 or 25.
Garments, ladies' dresses, coats and suits.....	26.
Gloves.....	35 to 40.
Hats, caps, and millinery.....	26 to 30.
Printing (Typographical Union).....	41½ approximately.
Textiles.....	27.

<sup>12</sup> The Women's Bureau has in progress a sample study of the extent of part time in stores, concerning which few data heretofore have been available. These employees ordinarily would not be covered under social security legislation. The great majority of them are women.

<sup>13</sup> Pennsylvania. State Emergency Relief Association. Census of Employable Workers in Urban and Rural Non-Farm Areas in Pennsylvania, 1934. 1936. p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Hogg, Margaret H., op. cit., p. 53

The same inquiry received reports that 25 to 35 percent of the bakery and confectionery workers are constantly unemployed. Officers of several other unions reported the following as the weeks worked in the year, but did not say how many of these were full weeks:

	<i>Weeks in the year in which some work was done</i>
Cigars.....	40 to 50 (for skilled workers).
Men's clothing.....	40 to 50.
Shirts.....	About 50.

The foregoing applies only to union members, and many workers not belonging to the union or in industries not organized, large numbers of them women, are likely to have even less steady work.

Indexes of employment show the changes from week to week through the year, though they do not show the extent to which the individual on the pay roll may have only part-time work in the week. Women's Bureau studies of four important woman-employing industries show how greatly women's employment fluctuates within the year. For the index in each industry that showed the widest range the highest and lowest points in the year are shown in the following:<sup>15</sup>

	<i>Employment index for—</i>	
	<i>Lowest week in year</i>	<i>Highest week in year</i>
Clothing industries (three branches), Connecticut, 1930-31.....	44	133
Three tobacco stemmeries, 1933-34.....	77	166
Meat packing in 5 cities, 1927-28.....	72	132
Laundries in 8 cities, 1934.....	85	115

The great variation that may occur in the employment of women in the year is apparent from these indexes. Such indexes in themselves show an even less extreme picture than that appearing from the actual numbers of women who are on the pay roll at one time but are not earning at some other time in the year. For example, in the meat-packing industry in the two cities with the largest numbers reported in the Women's Bureau study, the following numbers of women were affected:

	<i>St. Paul</i>	<i>Sioux City</i>
Largest number of women on pay roll any week in year....	517	374
Smallest number of women on pay roll any week in year....	351	204
Difference between largest and smallest numbers.....	166	170
Percent difference.....	32. 1	45. 5

In these two cities alone in this single industry more than 300 women were out of work at some time in the year due to seasonal fluctuations in the number of jobs available, and this was in a year of fairly normal activity, 1928.

In many important industries this variation in employment falls more heavily on women than on men. Take, for example, the making of radios. The Women's Bureau reported monthly data on numbers

<sup>15</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. The Employment of Women in Slaughtering and Meat Packing. Bul. 83. 1932. pp. 158-161; The Employment of Women in the Sewing Trades of Connecticut. Bul. 109. 1935. p. 14; Hours and Earnings in Tobacco Stemmeries. Bul. 127. 1934. pp. 23, 27, 29; Factor Affecting Wages in Power Laundries. Bul. 143. 1936. p. 47.

employed in 16 plants making receiving sets through the year 1929, generally thought of as the peak year of prosperity. That women's employment declined much more than men's is shown in the following:

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Largest number on pay roll in year-----	16, 439	14, 935
Smallest number on pay roll in year-----	6, 848	5, 169
Difference between largest and smallest numbers-----	9, 591	9, 766
Percent difference-----	58. 3	65. 4

Not only were more women than men out of jobs in the slack season, but these women who were losing earnings formed a much larger proportion of those on the pay roll at the year's peak than was the case with men.<sup>16</sup> The same was true in certain pineapple canneries in Hawaii surveyed by the Women's Bureau a number of years ago (1927), as the following shows:

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Largest number on pay roll in year-----	2, 640	2, 172
Smallest number on pay roll in year-----	988	479
Difference between largest and smallest numbers-----	1, 652	1, 693
Percent difference-----	62. 6	77. 9

The employment data for men and women in three large industrial States were examined by the Women's Bureau for the period 1928-31, which includes normal, peak, and depression years. Taken together these include employment in 34 different industries or occupations, 12 of them found in 2 or in all 3 States.<sup>17</sup>

In a considerable number of these important woman-employing industries in each State, women suffered from much greater variation in the numbers employed at different times within the year than men did; in one State this was true in most industries in nearly every year.

In the 12 industries that were reported in 2 or in all 3 of the States, with very few exceptions<sup>18</sup> the index of women's employment in the year had fluctuated more than had the index of men's employment—in many cases very considerably more. The industries in which this variation in women's employment ordinarily had exceeded men's included clothing, textiles, food, and others of the more important woman employers. They were as follows:

Candy.	Paper goods.
Bakery products.	Printing and publishing.
Clothing, men's.	Shoes.
Clothing, women's.	Stores (salespersons).
Knit goods.	Telephone.
Laundry and dry cleaning.	Tobacco.

### Technological Changes.

Much has been written on technological changes and their relation to employment, showing both the numbers of workers displaced by

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Fluctuation of Employment in the Radio Industry. Bul. 83 1931. p. 4; and The Employment of Women in the Pineapple Canners of Hawaii. Bul. 82. 1930. p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> See Women's Bureau Bul. 113, Employment Fluctuations and Unemployment of Women. 1933 Consult especially pp. 69, 94, and 119. See also an earlier analysis of Ohio figures by the same agency, in Bul. 73, Variations in Employment Trends of Women and Men. 1930.

<sup>18</sup> Only 19 exceptional instances out of a possible 111.

new inventions and the numbers added to employment rolls as the result of the demands of new processes or new machinery. In many cases women have lost jobs because machines were introduced to carry on processes they had been engaged on; in other cases skilled workers were replaced by machines and women were among those newly employed in the less skilled jobs of tending these machines; in still other cases new industries or new services have arisen, some of them employing large proportions of women.

An example of technological displacement of women on a considerable scale is in the cigar industry. The Women's Bureau interviewed well over 1,000 women who had lost jobs in cigar manufacture prior to 1930, and found that 96 percent of these were out of work because of closing of the factory in which they had been employed.<sup>19</sup> This was largely because improved equipment had been introduced into other factories, to which operations consequently were transferred. Nearly one-half of these women had been employed in the industry for 10 years or longer, practically a fifth of them for at least 20 years; well over a third of them never found reemployment in the cigar industry. An estimate of the Cigar Makers' International Union shows that in the period from 1919 to 1933 as many as 22,000 cigar workers lost their jobs because of technological changes and entirely aside from production declines.<sup>20</sup>

The Women's Bureau also has made a study of 250 technological changes in plants of various types that had employed many women.<sup>21</sup> These changes had occurred for the most part from 1927 to 1931, and included introduction of new machinery or of better tools, and more efficient plant routing or methods of use of man power. The operations reported on had employed more than 6,000 workers before the changes, but six months after the change this number had decreased by 44 percent, due entirely to the improved technology and not to lessened plant production.

Among the telling instances found were those in filling and wrapping packages in the case of certain goods now so widely sold in such form, such as cereals, soap flakes, and other products. In one such operation, work formerly employing 48 women required only 20 after the changes. Another example is of a machine that labeled and wrapped bottles, which was operated by 6 girls after the change though 15 formerly had been employed on the process, and at the same time the output with the fewer workers was more than 12 times as great as before.

In another instance a few women were given semimechanical jobs where none had been employed before, though total employment

<sup>19</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. *The Effects on Women of Changing Conditions in the Cigar and Cigarette Industries*. Bul. 100. 1932. pp. 38, 49, 52, 53.

<sup>20</sup> Address of I. M. Ornburn, President of the Cigar Makers' International Union, in Tampa, Fla., Mar. 19, 1934. *In Cigar Makers' Official Journal*, April 1934, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. *Technological Changes in Relation to Women's Employment*. Bul. 107. 1935. pp. 5, 11, 20, 28, 32.

declined by more than three-fourths. This was in the marking of stripes on automobiles, formerly a job employing 22 skilled men. With the introduction into the plant of a gun-like device for use in performing this process, only 5 persons now were needed—1 man and 4 young women.

Similar instances from other sources may be listed, all showing the tendency toward more efficient operation developed over a long period of years and profoundly affecting workers in many industries, men as well as women. A few of these that apply especially to women follow:

Manufacture of sewing needles—One girl now inspects as many as nine could before.

Paper-box making—Decrease 32 percent in employment in New York City, and increase 121 percent in output per wage earner, 1914 to 1925.

Telephone operation—Complete change to dial system in a large New England city cut the number of employees by one-half.

Wrapping cracker boxes—By hand, 3 girls wrapped 9 boxes of crackers a minute; now a machine with 2 girls wraps 55.

Packing cereal—Formerly 12 girls packed 17,000 boxes of cereal a day; with machines, 5 girls pack this number.

Laundry work—2 girls shook out the sheets by hand before putting them in the ironer; now the shaking is done by machine.

Typing—1 girl can operate 3 electrical typewriters.

Making automobile cushions—Hand work required women in the processes of marking, stitching, and stuffing cushions; now a machine can do all 3 processes.

These instances might be multiplied more or less indefinitely, but at the present time there are no data to show the full extent of decrease in woman-employment due to technological changes alone, aside from decline in production, nor to show the full extent to which women are among the semiskilled workers employed at machine tending as a result of such changes and of replacing skilled workers under the earlier processes.

The Women's Bureau technological study referred to indicates a decline of 42 percent in woman-employment due to this factor alone, but this applies to a limited number of plants or industries in which such changes had been introduced and the extent to which other new employments for women may have superseded these is practically an uncharted field. In the Bureau's study of the cigar industry, over 60 percent of the displaced women had had some work elsewhere, but only a little over a tenth of the entire number had found steady employment.

Surveys and estimates have given abundant proof that many women normally in gainful employment have been entirely out of work in recent years, while many are reemployed on a more or less permanent basis, but the distinction between those who have lost jobs because of changes in machinery, equipment, plant routing, or

other management factors and those unemployed because of declines in production, especially in some industries, is by no means clear cut.

### REPLACEMENT OF ONE SEX BY THE OTHER

The question as to whether women have replaced men in employment has been asked during the depression even more urgently than before. The primary answer to this is that ordinarily the jobs performed by the two sexes differ, and hence replacement as such usually does not occur.<sup>22</sup>

Such studies as afford scattered data on this particular subject reaffirm the statement that replacement of either sex by the other in exactly the same work does not occur to any considerable extent. Changed processes sometimes effect replacement of one sex by the other in the industry, but where women are the newcomers in these instances the reason ordinarily is that they may be paid lower wages. The advancement of women's wages and the fixing of an adequate minimum for these processes goes a considerable way to reduce shifts due to this cause.

In a special study of the replacement of men by women in New York State industries during the World War, when the process of replacement was particularly widespread, the bureau of women in industry of the State department of labor found that 80 percent of the employers in the plants investigated claimed that women were as satisfactory as or more satisfactory than the men whom they replaced. Nevertheless, even in the cases in which women's production exceeded that of men, women received lower wages than those of men doing the same work in the same plant.<sup>23</sup>

Where the new machines, new processes, and new organizations continually being introduced cause unemployment, the loss of jobs affects both sexes, sometimes women more so, sometimes men. The Pennsylvania unemployment survey in 1934 showed 31 percent of the women and only 27 percent of the men to be affected. New employment in new processes is confined neither to men nor to women.

In a study of women workers and the labor supply, the National Industrial Conference Board, research agency of large employing interests, made this statement: "There is no evidence in these data that would justify the conclusion that the employment of women workers contributed to increase unemployment among men during the depression."<sup>24</sup>

The Women's Bureau made an analysis of employment figures from three large industrial States—Illinois, New York, and Ohio—during the early depression years and those just preceding, 1928–1931.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See p. 19 in pt. I, ch. 1—Employment, and also p. 49 in pt. I, ch. 3—Compensation.

<sup>23</sup> New York. Department of Labor. Bureau of Women in Industry. *The Industrial Replacement of Men by Women in the State of New York*. Special Bul. 93, 1919. pp. 27–29.

<sup>24</sup> National Industrial Conference Board. *Women Workers and Labor Supply*. 1936. p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.* footnote 17.

These data gave no definite evidence indicating replacement of men by women on any appreciable scale in any industry or occupation group during the decline that occurred in most industries in this period.

Moreover, census figures indicate that it was not in the recent depression period that women formed the largest proportions of the total in certain of the most outstanding woman-employing industries and occupations.<sup>26</sup> The census years in which women formed the greatest proportions in important ones of these were as follows:

	<i>Year in which women formed largest proportion</i>	<i>Percent women formed of total (in year specified)</i>
All manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	1900	20.2
Servants and waitresses.....	1900	82.3
Cotton manufacture.....	1900	48.9
Knitting mills.....	1900	73.2
Textiles (total).....	1910	51.8
Paper and printing.....	1910	23.3
Electrical machinery and supplies (1900 not reported).....	1910	34.4
School teachers.....	1920	84.5

In trade and in glass works the proportion of women was the same in 1920 and 1930, 15.8 and 13.1, respectively. Those occupations in which the largest proportions of women were found in 1930 fall into three main groups:

	<i>Percent women formed of total in 1930</i>
Women long had predominated or been largely engaged:	
Clothing.....	70.1
Telephone.....	94.5
Laundry.....	73.8
Clerical.....	49.4
Fairly new as an organized occupation for women:	
Barbers and hairdressers.....	30.2
Women long engaged and standards declined markedly during depression:	
Shoes.....	37.8
Cigars and tobacco.....	59.9
Food industries.....	21.6

NOTE.—It was hoped to include at this point an analysis of material showing lessened employment of women due to such reasons as marital status and other factors that affect women with particular force, but it has not been possible to prepare such a section at this time.

<sup>26</sup> From unpublished data compiled by the Women's Bureau from census figures, 1900 to 1930.



### Chapter 3.—COMPENSATION OF WOMEN

The types of gainful occupation in which women in this country are most likely to be at work, the extent to which women's employment tends to be regular or irregular, and certain employment situations that particularly affect women, have been reviewed.

Of primary importance to the gainfully occupied woman is the amount of her compensation, since it usually measures the extent to which she can obtain the ordinary needs and satisfactions of life, indeed the actual standard of living that she can maintain, for the vast majority of employed women have little or no source of income but their own earnings.

Much evidence as to the actual amounts received by women can be amassed, although wage figures must be used with some relation to the general price data for the period or country under consideration. In order to understand the relative value of a given wage, questions that should be asked include, first, What is the relation of the levels of these wages to those of men? and second, What financial obligations do women have to meet with these wages? In other words, how do the standards of living made possible by women's earnings compare with the standards available for men? If the general levels of women's wages have been below those of men, are they now more nearly approaching the levels for men? How does the pay of men and women compare for essentially the same work? What costs do women have to meet with their earnings? How do the earnings of women compare with what the best authorities estimate are the needs for maintaining a decent or adequate living?

In connection with employment fluctuations and in other ways it already has been suggested that in many cases women constitute a marginal labor supply that is called upon to fill in where needed. Such labor usually tends to be low paid. Further, the great majority of women are not in gainful employment and many of these could be brought into the labor market if needed. The existence of this large supply of employable women tends to keep down the amounts paid those who are at work, since their places could so readily be filled.

Moreover, there is a powerful traditional factor that reinforces the situation as to the supply of woman labor in its tendency to keep women's wages down. It is the idea that has prevailed in the past that woman was to make a contribution to the economic life largely through the pursuance of household tasks, and for this she did not receive any money wage. This idea has persisted from an earlier economy in which both women and men followed their occupations for the most part within their own domain. There women wove the

cloth, made the family clothing, baked the bread, preserved the fruit and vegetables for winter use, and often carried on a considerable share in the work of curing the meat and tending the garden. No cash value was attached to this work and the services of the sex that performed it were not held at high money worth.

### POLICY OF GOVERNMENT TO MAINTAIN WOMEN'S WAGES

It has been the general policy of government of the United States, expressed in various official documents, to advocate the maintenance of women's wages at a level commensurate with that of men's.

The enactment in more than a third of the States of minimum-wage legislation for women—generally the lowest paid and most exploited workers—shows the policy of States to maintain wage levels for women on a par with those of men. That this also has been the effort of the Federal Government in cases under its jurisdiction is shown by a number of instances. For example, the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor, in its employment standards issued as early as 1918, upheld the policy of the same pay for women and men on the same jobs in the following words:

Wages should be established on the basis of occupation and not on the basis of sex or race.

In 1915 the Commission on Industrial Relations recommended "The recognition both by public opinion and in such legislation as may be enacted, of the principle that women should receive the same compensation as men for the same terms."<sup>1</sup>

The principles enunciated by the War Labor Conference Board in formulating a national labor program in 1918 included the following:

*Women in industry.*—If it shall become necessary to employ women on work ordinarily performed by men, they must be allowed equal pay for equal work and must not be allotted tasks disproportionate to their strength.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise the United States Railroad Administration in December 1918 made the following rule, restating in slightly different terms the General Order of May:

The pay for female employees, for the same class of work, shall be the same as that of men, and their working conditions must be healthful and fitted to their needs. The laws enacted for the government of their employment must be observed.<sup>3</sup>

And on November 5, 1919, the United States Civil Service Commission definitely ruled that all examinations were open to men and women alike.<sup>4</sup> More recently, the National Recovery Administration promulgated the following policy:

Female employees performing substantially the same work as male employees shall receive the same rate of pay as male employees.

<sup>1</sup> Final Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1916. [Reprinted from S. Doc. No. 415, 64th Cong.] p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review, May 1918, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Railroad Administration. General Order No. 27, Supplement No. 13, article VIII (a). 1918. See Monthly Labor Review, March 1919, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. The Status of Women in the Government Service in 1925. Bul. 53. 1926. p. 1.

During the life of the National Recovery Administration (1933-35) efforts were made to assure the same code rates for both sexes, and Government authorities supported this.

Although the pay for the two sexes is the same for the same grades in the civil service, it has not always been possible in other instances to carry out fully the policy of the Government for equal pay for women and men. In some cases the statement of principle has been chiefly an ideal to be striven toward. For example, despite the war policy to pay women as much as men on the same processes, the Women's Branch of the Ordnance Department found that of the hundreds of plants involved only 11 could be listed that reported having paid equal piece rates to men and women doing the same work.<sup>5</sup> Under the National Recovery Administration, almost 20 years later, in practically one-fourth of the codes—and frequently in those for industries employing many women—the rate was fixed lower for women than for men.<sup>6</sup>

#### EVIDENCES AS TO THE LEVELS OF WOMEN'S EARNINGS IN MAJOR WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

Five major occupation groups in which women are employed are domestic and personal service, clerical occupations, factory occupations, professional work, and trade. The usual levels of women's earnings are indicated by a general survey of the more recent material available from various sources, which shows that, in these five major occupation groups, women's median or average earnings range about as follows:<sup>7</sup>

##### Domestic and personal service:

Homes (cash wage), \$5.79 to \$14.65 a week.

Beauty shops, \$14.25 and \$14.54 a week.

Hotels and restaurants, \$5.75 to \$16.25 a week. The potential average for the year (based on 52 weeks), \$299 to \$845.

Laundries, \$6.67 to \$13.42 a week. The potential average for the year (based on 52 weeks), \$347 to \$698.

##### Clerical occupations:

\$16.15 (clerks) to \$28.65 (secretaries) a week; \$1,253 to \$1,881 a year. The potential average for the year (based on 52 weeks), in seven cities, \$1,188.

##### Manufacturing:

Recent figures for various industries, \$12.46 to \$20.29.

##### Professional service:

School teachers, \$999 to \$3,300 a year, the last for senior high-school teachers with M. A. degrees.

Trained nurses, \$1,620 to \$2,300 a year, the minimum and maximum civil-service entrance salaries.

Librarians, \$1,110 to \$1,957.50 a year, the last for branch librarians.

Trained social and welfare workers, \$1,650 to \$3,300 a year, the last for supervisors in largest agencies.

Home-economics extension workers, \$945 to \$3,950 a year.

<sup>5</sup> Van Kleeck, Mary. Women in Industry. In *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 15, p. 455.

<sup>6</sup> For fuller information on this subject see pt. II, p. 94, and also see Women's Bureau Bul. 130, *Employed Women Under N. R. A. Codes*. 1935.

<sup>7</sup> For more complete discussion of what constitutes these earnings and the sources from which they have been reported, see appendix A.

**Sales occupations:**

\$12 a week in limited-price stores to \$13.85 a week for regular workers in department stores; \$663 to \$932 a year.

**TWO BASIC QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO WOMEN'S WAGES**

The levels of women's wages show in general what they have to live on, and what employers adjudge their services to be worth in certain types of work.

When these levels are indicated, two questions immediately arise, and these are basic questions in the entire situation as to the amounts women are receiving:

Is their wage as much as it should be for the value of the work they perform if stated in terms of the wage paid men?

Is their wage sufficient if stated in terms of their family situation and responsibility for the support of others?

**DIFFERENCES IN OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN AND MEN**

In comparing the levels of men's and women's wages, attention should be paid to the types of employment most usual to the two sexes. By and large, the occupations or general types of work in which women are engaged differ somewhat from those of men. For example, the largest groups of women reported by the census are as follows:

	<i>Percent of total employed</i>
Domestic and personal service.....	29. 6
Clerical occupations.....	18. 5
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	17. 5
Professional service.....	14. 2
Trade.....	9. 0
Agriculture.....	8. 5

The largest groups of men, however, are as follows:

	<i>Percent of total employed</i>
Manufacturing and mechanical industries.....	32. 1
Agriculture.....	25. 1
Trade.....	13. 4
Transportation and communication.....	9. 4
Clerical occupations.....	5. 4
Domestic and personal service.....	4. 7
Professional service.....	4. 5

Carrying this analysis into the manufacturing and other productive industries, it is found that there again women and men are differently engaged.

Women operatives are at work in the largest numbers in the manufacture of cotton and knit goods and other textiles, in shoemaking, in clothing manufacture, in cigar and tobacco factories, in various food industries, and in the making of electrical machinery and supplies. These are the great woman-employers, though of course many men also work in these industries.

Men, on the other hand, are engaged in large numbers in the heavy metal industries, in automobile manufacture, in shoemaking, in the lumber, wood, and chemical industries, in the making of clay, stone, and glass products, in petroleum refining, and as laborers in the building trades. This does not mean that no women are employed in these industries, but by and large they have been the field of men.

### Wage Levels in Woman-Employing and in Man-Employing Industries.

How do the general wage levels in the woman-employing industries compare with those in the man-employers? Wage data for a recent month (November 1936) as reported by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>8</sup> indicate that in these woman-employing industries the average weekly wage for all employees is in most cases below \$20, while in the man-employers it is in all cases above \$20 and runs above \$30. The figures are as follows:

	<i>Average weekly earnings, all employees</i>
Important woman-employing industries:	
Chief textile industries.....	\$14. 02-\$16. 54
Wearing apparel.....	17. 39
Confectionery.....	16. 69
Boots and shoes.....	15. 90
Tobacco manufactures.....	15. 21
Electrical machinery, apparatus, and supplies.....	25. 97
Important man-employing industries:	
Blast furnaces, steel works, and rolling mills.....	29. 13
Automobiles.....	32. 27
Lumber and allied products.....	20. 12
Petroleum refinery.....	30. 43
Stone, clay, and glass products.....	23. 23
Building construction.....	28. 89

Annual earnings likewise show that woman-employing industries pay less than man-employing. From reports now becoming available from the 1935 Census of Manufactures, in all but 2 of 9 industries employing large proportions of women, less than \$1,000 was the average year's earnings. The exceptions are clock and watch making and jewelry, and for these industries the earnings were but slightly more than \$1,000. Of 15 industries very largely employing men, however, the annual earnings averaged over \$1,000, except for 3 in which much unskilled work is required, clay products, pulp, and furniture.

An interesting sidelight on the ingenious methods undertaken by women to supplement their pitifully low wages is shown in a report of the monthly budgets of a small group of business girls reported by the Young Women's Christian Association in the depression years 1931 and 1932.<sup>9</sup> These girls rented rooms, did outside typing, worked overtime, sold crackers, underwear, stockings, soap, writing paper, the extra energy spent in these pursuits outside the regular job exacting a considerable toll of their physical strength. Even in so doing they averaged extra income of only \$1.68 a week in 1932.

<sup>8</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review, February 1937, pp. 455-459. The Monthly Labor Review publishes such reports each month (not separated by sex).

<sup>9</sup> Harper, Elsie D. From Pay Day to Pay Day. 1934. pp. 8, 9.

### Women Provide Products Traditionally Attributed to Them at Low Pay.

In addition to the wide range of service occupations that ordinarily are thought of as appropriately engaging women, it is apparent that many of the manufacturing industries in which employed women are so largely massed are those that produce the commodities for the provision of which the human race has been accustomed to depend upon women—for example, the making of textile fabrics and of clothing and the preparation of foods.

According to the traditional ideas of an earlier age, making these things available was "women's work", done within the four walls of the home and *not paid for in cash*. The man was at that time the member of the family responsible for handling its moneys; he was its wage earner and financial provider.

Thus a low money value was accorded to the household tasks involved in the making of these necessities. But when, in a more complex economic age, the family had to buy these things at a cash value and had to depend on the wage of their employed women for help in buying them, and women thus were called on to furnish these same services by going outside the home and learning new ways of doing them, the traditional idea of the low money value of the tasks involved still clung to the great woman-employing industries.

The family, having been accustomed to receive these goods without cash expenditure, expected to pay little for them. The manufacturer, using women largely for his labor supply, expected to pay a low wage for their services. Both tradition and the requirements of the economic system thus tended to keep women's earnings at a very low level. Indeed, a revision of the older ideas that formed a basis for the low wage scales in certain of our industries is long overdue in the newer social economy.

The traditional idea of the low value of woman's work and the manufacturer's consequent use of her labor to keep down his own costs have been important factors in keeping the entire level of earnings low for men as well as women. For example, the cotton textile industry, which always has been a large woman-employer, has had wages low in relation to those in most other industries whose processes, though they could not be accounted more skilled, ordinarily were performed by men whose services were at a premium.

An instance of the prevalence of the traditional idea of low pay for women's work is in the wage set in the code for the saddlery industry during the National Recovery Administration. The minimum for unskilled labor was 35 cents an hour (except in certain States where it was 32½ cents), and skilled labor was to be paid 20 cents more than this, but for "women making pads used under collars, harness, or saddles, or making canvas stitched back bands, or open-bottom cotton

fiber stuffed cotton collars, or flynets, or horse covers" (in other words, most sewing occupations except on leather) the pay was to be 2½ cents below that of unskilled labor.<sup>10</sup>

### The Question of Skill.

The evaluation of skill is a very difficult problem, and while efforts have been made in this direction by educators, employers, employment agency authorities, and others, some of them would be the first to say that this still is—at least, within very large areas—an almost uncharted sea. An outstanding woman engineer has said that it is "astonishingly true that no two people seem to agree on what skill is." She defines it as "Dexterity, plus knowledge which can adapt itself to changing situations and is capable of improvement."<sup>11</sup>

Though the skills of the two sexes may differ somewhat, there is no evidence that women are less skilled than men. In fact, classification of census data by social-economic groups indicates that women are found much more generally in semiskilled than in unskilled work, their proportions being as follows:<sup>12</sup>

	Percent women formed of total in—	
	All industries	Manufacturing
Unskilled.....	22. 2	3. 9
Semiskilled.....	31. 7	36. 8

A more recent analysis along a somewhat different line, made for the Social Security Board, makes the following strikingly similar showing as to the small proportions women formed of the unskilled:<sup>13</sup>

	Percent women formed of total in—	
	All industries	Manufacturing
Unskilled.....	4. 3	5. 3
Semiskilled.....	25. 9	36. 8

The percents women formed in other classifications in the last-named study were as follows:

Service workers.....	62. 5
Professional persons.....	49. 0
Salaried employees.....	37. 0
Unpaid family workers.....	28. 6
Employers and self employed.....	8. 3
Skilled.....	1. 7

It is common to hear it stated that women in manufacturing industries are on "light work" or "light repetitive jobs", while men are doing the "heavier" operations, the implication being that the former are worth only a low cash wage. But many of the "light" jobs performed by women require a delicate and careful touch, a unique type of skill, manual dexterity, and quickness of hand and brain. The repetitive jobs call for a large degree of concentration or

<sup>10</sup> See Women's Bureau Bul. 130. Employed Women Under N. R. A. Codes. 1935. p. 31.

<sup>11</sup> Gilbreth, Lillian M. Skills and Satisfaction. In Trained Men, autumn of 1930, vol. x, p. 99.

<sup>12</sup> Edwards, Alba M. A Social-Economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States. In Journal of the American Statistical Association, December 1933, pp. 381, 382.

<sup>13</sup> Work of W. B. Woytinsky of the Social Science Research Council, furnished the Women's Bureau in a preliminary unpublished form.

continuous application, failure of which may mean physical disaster to the worker as well as ruin to the product.

Of such occupations as the assembling of watches, typewriters, or scientific instruments; the tending of a number of looms; the rapid sewing of collars or parts of gloves or dresses on power machines, while keeping edges even or pattern true; the operation of a press stamping out metal parts; the process of looping hosiery; the final inspecting of a commodity as fast as a machine turns it out; or the task of keeping up with an automatic assembly line—though a number of these might be designated as “light” jobs, it scarcely could be said that they exact less from the worker or contribute less to the final product than is the case with such “heavy” jobs as carrying lots of yarn or bundles of work in a hosiery or clothing factory, tying up bundles of paper, packing large boxes, or operating a heavy power machine. Yet in some of these jobs women are paid less than unskilled men. Moreover, many repetitive jobs performed by women are by no means light. For example, in visits to 27 farm-implement plants before the N. R. A., agents of the Women’s Bureau found women doing spot welding, riveting, punch-press operating, and work requiring skill in core rooms and in assembling. In some of these, women had replaced men at lower pay though production was practically unchanged.<sup>14</sup>

An interesting example of the different duties of a man and a woman on the same machine, where each contributes to the work in about the same degree though a woman performs the “light” and a man the “heavy” operation, is a machine process in a glassine bag factory. At one end of the machine a man lifts the heavy roll of glassine paper and places it in the machine, a job requiring chiefly strength; at the other end, a woman deftly takes off the small bags, finished and counted by the machine, gives them a rapid double inspection, eliminates any that may be imperfect, and packs them into a box so evenly as to make a tight fill, a job requiring speed, dexterity, care, and accuracy.

#### **GENERAL LEVELS OF WOMEN’S AND MEN’S WAGES IN MANUFACTURING**<sup>15</sup>

As the earnings levels in occupation groups and industries employing largely men tend to be higher than those in industries where women find their chief work, likewise men’s are largely found to be above women’s levels where the total manufacturing wage is reported.

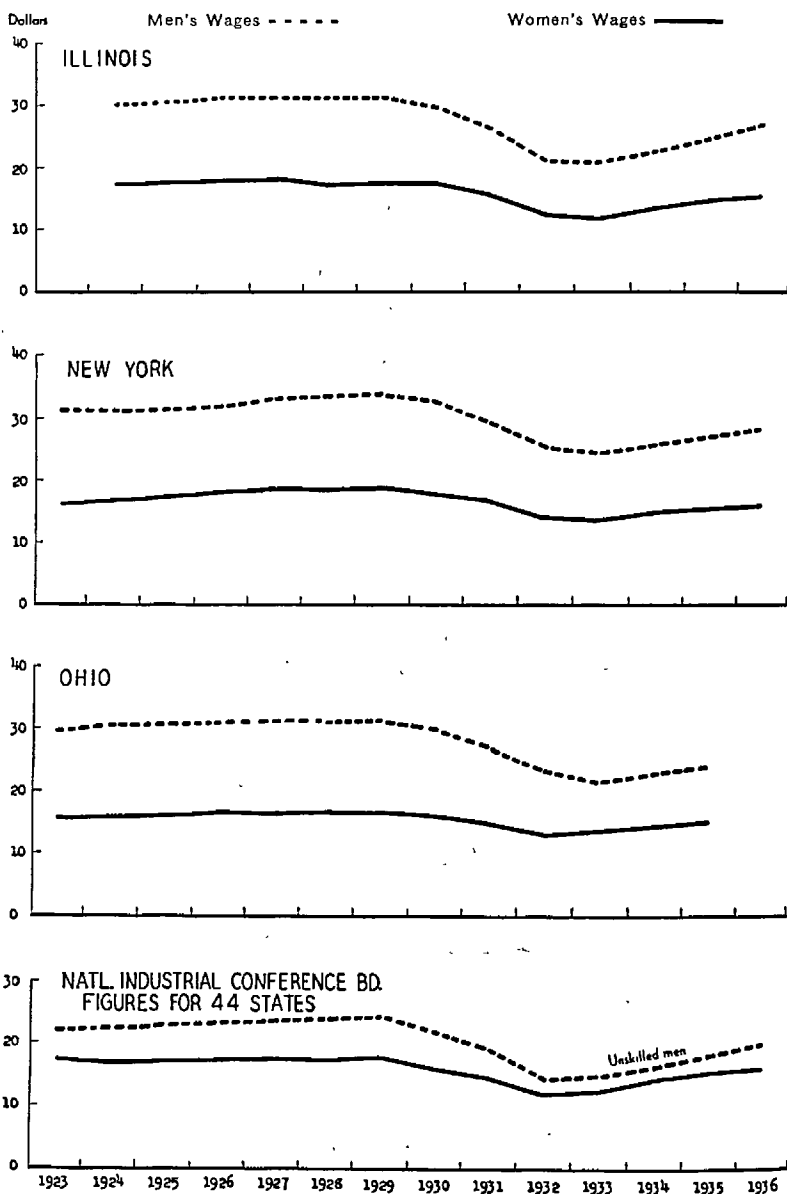
The average weekly wages of both women and men have been reported regularly in manufacturing industries for more than 10 years by State authorities in three large industrial States—Illinois, New

<sup>14</sup> Testimony of Mary Anderson, Director of the Women’s Bureau, at hearing on proposed N. R. A. code for the farm equipment industry, Sept. 20, 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Note that the discussion at this point applies to general levels of earnings or rates. Comparisons for specific occupations are made later, on p. 60.



AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES, 1923-1936



York, and Ohio. These data show that throughout this period women's weekly wages were only from 50 to about 60 percent as high as men's, 63 percent in Ohio in 1933 when men's wages were very low, having fallen nearly a third below their 1929 peak. The proportions women's average weekly earnings formed of men's average throughout the series of years in these three States ranged as follows:

	<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
Illinois.....	55.5 to 60.2
Ohio.....	52.7 to 63.4
New York.....	51.9 to 58.2

The average weekly earnings in the latest years for which the figures are immediately available were as follows:

	<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
Illinois, 1936.....	\$26.61	\$15.12	56.8
Ohio, 1935.....	24.77	15.33	61.9
New York, 1936.....	28.37	15.83	55.8

These figures show also that women's average wages are slightly nearer to men's than was the case before the depression, and the indications are that women's wages have recovered from the depression somewhat more rapidly than men's. Since the country still is not suffering from labor shortage, and since women still are used to cut labor costs, it is quite likely that this more rapid increase in their wages as compared to men's is very largely due to a better public acquaintance with the fact that in the past women's wages have been so far below men's, and the consequent special efforts made to pull women's wages up, as, for example, in several States through minimum-wage legislation applying to women, and by other types of effort. The percent women's average formed of men's before the depression and in the latest year was as follows:

	<i>Percent women's average is of men's in—</i>	
	<i>1928</i>	<i>1936</i>
Illinois.....	55.5	56.8
Ohio.....	53.1	<sup>10</sup> 61.9
New York.....	55.2	55.8

<sup>10</sup> Figure for 1935.

In two States surveyed in 1935 or 1936 by the Women's Bureau, representative samples were taken of men's as well as women's wages, though the women's sample was considerably larger. The average week's earnings of women and men in manufacturing industries in these States, as shown from the representative samples taken, were as follows:

	<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
Arkansas, 1936:			
White.....	\$14.80	\$9.50	64.2
Negro.....	12.00	7.40	61.7
Tennessee, 1935:			
White.....	15.80	12.00	75.9
Negro.....	12.45	6.75	54.2

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### Levels of Men's and Women's Wages in Particular Manufacturing Industries.

If particular manufacturing industries be considered, much the same showing is made as for all manufacturing—that is, women's wages fall far below men's—though the degree in which this is the case differs considerably in different industries, nor does it always vary directly with the proportion of women employed. The pages following will summarize a mass of evidence that illustrates this.

The average weekly earnings in important woman-employing manufacturing industries as reported in recent years for the two sexes in three States affording such data periodically, and the proportions women's averages have formed of men's over a long series of years, are as follows:

	Average weekly earnings of—		Percent women's average is of men's over a period of years
	Men (1936)	Women (1936)	
<i>Illinois</i>			
Electrical apparatus.....	\$28. 08	\$17. 50	59. 6 to 68. 0
Boots and shoes.....	20. 78	13. 83	60. 4 to 69. 8
Men's clothing.....	26. 89	16. 53	60. 6 to 66. 0
Women's clothing.....	28. 87	12. 70	34. 3 to 52. 5
Confectionery.....	25. 43	14. 30	48. 9 to 62. 2
Watches and jewelry.....	26. 48	15. 33	44. 9 to 60. 9
Job printing.....	32. 57	15. 38	46. 4 to 51. 7
Paper boxes, bags, and tubes.....	24. 27	14. 04	49. 1 to 62. 9
<i>New York</i>			
Shoes.....	\$22. 04	\$14. 31	55. 3 to 64. 9
Women's clothing.....	36. 34	20. 98	53. 6 to 59. 6
Knit goods (except silk).....	22. 18	13. 50	50. 3 to 62. 2
Candy.....	24. 43	13. 34	50. 0 to 58. 3
Paper boxes and tubes.....	25. 34	14. 60	49. 8 to 60. 8
<i>Ohio</i> <sup>17</sup>			
Rubber.....	\$29. 48	\$17. 09	55. 2 to 58. 9
Men's clothing.....	27. 86	16. 54	51. 9 to 61. 0
Women's clothing.....	36. 00	14. 96	33. 9 to 50. 0
Hosiery and knit goods.....	19. 39	15. 73	63. 2 to 83. 8
Electrical machinery.....	25. 25	17. 56	57. 3 to 69. 5
Tobacco.....	18. 99	12. 92	61. 0 to 70. 0
Boots and shoes.....	22. 37	15. 12	57. 8 to 72. 3
Metal and metal products.....	23. 13	15. 53	57. 2 to 69. 4
Stone, clay, and glass.....	21. 82	14. 52	54. 8 to 69. 9

<sup>17</sup> Latest figures immediately available by sex, 1935. Computations have been made by the Women's Bureau, for the first 4 selected industries, from 1914 to 1935, for the others, from 1928 to 1935.

In special studies made by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry in 1928 or 1929, the average full-time weekly earnings of men and women were as follows:

	Average weekly earnings of—		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men	Women	
Silk—Weaving.....	\$28. 98	\$22. 21	76. 6
Throwing.....	17. 50	14. 55	83. 1
Hosiery—Full fashioned <sup>18</sup> .....	27. 12	20. 40	75. 2
Seamless <sup>18</sup> .....	28. 67	16. 71	58. 3
Knit goods.....	25. 61	16. 22	63. 3

<sup>18</sup> These earnings were for a 48-hour week, since full time was not shown.

In manufacturing industries in Tennessee as surveyed by the Women's Bureau in 1935, while the men's earnings in certain industries were below those in the other States listed here, and women's earnings somewhat more nearly approached men's than elsewhere, yet women still received considerably less than did men. The representative week's earnings reported for white women and men in these various Tennessee industries were as follows:

	Average weekly earnings of—		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men	Women	
Hosiery—Seamless.....	\$12.65	\$10.20	80.6
Full-fashioned.....	25.55	13.40	52.4
Cotton mills.....	13.25	12.50	94.3
Knit underwear.....	14.40	12.10	84.0
Men's suits and overcoats.....	22.05	13.25	60.1
Men's work clothes and shirts.....	14.15	9.55	67.5
Shoes.....	20.45	14.15	69.2

Studies of particular industries made in 1934 or 1935 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor show average weekly earnings of women less than three-fourths of men's in most instances. These average weekly earnings are as follows:

	Average weekly earnings of—		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men	Women	
Textiles and clothing:			
Cotton:			
North.....	\$14.48	\$12.18	84.1
South.....	10.29	9.19	89.3
Dyeing and finishing:			
Cotton.....	17.32	12.46	71.9
Silk and rayon.....	20.01	14.05	70.2
Woolen and worsted.....	17.58	11.94	67.9
Women's neckwear and scarfs.....	33.74	21.12	62.6
Motor vehicles:			
Cars.....	28.45	19.16	67.3
Parts.....	24.68	15.30	62.0
Tobacco—Cigarettes, snuff, chewing, smoking:			
White.....	19.48	13.16	67.6
Negro.....	13.13	10.30	78.4
Shipping containers (corrugated and solid fiber):			
North.....	22.84	15.28	66.9
South.....	17.64	11.90	67.5
Paper boxes:			
Folding:			
North.....	23.68	14.86	62.8
South.....	17.52	11.44	65.3
Set-up:			
North.....	22.58	14.15	62.7
South.....	16.98	11.85	69.8

Several other recent studies, made chiefly by the Women's Bureau, have reported the wages of women and men, and all of these reinforce the evidence presented to the effect that the level of women's wages

is much below that of men's. The average weekly earnings reported in these are as follows:

	Average weekly earnings of—		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men	Women	
Jewelry (Rhode Island), 1936 <sup>19</sup> -----	\$19. 37	\$12. 67	65. 4
Leather gloves (New York), 1933-----	23. 45	12. 65	53. 9
Men's clothing, 1936:			
Shirts—Dress (11 States)-----	18. 35	13. 50	73. 6
Work (8 States)-----	15. 55	9. 85	63. 3
Underwear—Cotton (9 States)-----	16. 70	11. 40	68. 3
Knit (12 States)-----	18. 10	12. 85	71. 0
Work clothing (17 States)-----	17. 25	12. 50	72. 5
Shoes (New Hampshire), 1933:			
Welt (highest plant average)-----	23. 75	17. 40	73. 3
McKay (highest plant average)-----	27. 55	13. 25	48. 1

<sup>19</sup> Study made by the Rhode Island Department of Labor, Division of Women and Children.

### Piece-Work Pay a Large Factor in Women's Wages.

Many manufacturing industries make wide use of some system of pay by the piece or amount produced rather than by the time worked. That this tends to be more generally the case in the large woman-employing than in the great man-employing industries is indicated from a recent study by the National Industrial Conference Board, organization of large employing interests. This showed that some 60 to 80 percent of the workers were paid by time worked in the iron and steel, automotive, chemical, and machine and machine-tool industries, large man-employers, while the outstanding woman-employers had much smaller proportions of time workers, as follows: Textiles, 45 percent; leather, 39 percent; clothing, 16 percent.<sup>20</sup>

For the wage to be obtained on a piece-rate basis of pay, the crucial question lies in the method of fixing the piece rate. In spite of elaborate systems worked out for this purpose and many successful efforts to establish a reasonable rate, in the final analysis the piece rate is fixed on the basis of the time rate in the same or similar jobs, upon what the management considers the worker should earn in that job. And it has been the custom to place at a low value many jobs performed by large numbers of women without sufficient regard for the careful workmanship and expertness such jobs require. There are many examples to show that when the management feels that the worker is earning too much, moves are made to lower the piece rate.

The piece rate may be worked out by scientific study, or it may be based on the considered judgment of a foreman. In the National Industrial Conference Board study referred to, it was found that in practically one-tenth of the plants reported piece rates were set by the foreman on his own responsibility, and in about one-half as many plants by the foreman with approval by a higher authority (not a time-study specialist), or by a plant executive. The plants reported on in this instance were large, for the most part; for example, the

<sup>20</sup> National Industrial Conference Board. *Financial Incentives*. 1935. pp. 19, 23.

clothing companies included averaged over 800 workers, the textile mills more than 1,000.

In smaller plants, and consequently where many women are employed, as in small textile and clothing establishments, the management can ill afford a time-study specialist and must depend more generally on itself and its foremen to determine women's rates. Moreover, even where the newer methods are used they do not, in the absence of minimum-wage laws, provide adequate means of protecting the worker against the fixing of a rate so low as to result in too small a wage, and this is especially true in the case of women, since tradition has held their work of low money worth.

Additional evidence of the fact that piece rates very often may be based largely on traditional practice or opinion in plants where many women are employed is found in a Women's Bureau survey of the shoe industry in New Hampshire,<sup>21</sup> in which typical plant statements as to the way in which such rates were determined are as follows:

Forelady sets them according to prevailing prices in the city, and goes over them with foreman.

When designs change we experiment and set up in our own minds fair returns for days or weeks worked, and piece rates are computed from basic hourly rates.

The chaotic condition of piece-rate fixing is indicated still further in the wide variation from plant to plant found in women's earnings in five occupations in nine laundry plants in one State. These data were taken in May 1933 and analyzed by the Women's Bureau.<sup>22</sup> The range in the median pay for the same occupation in these nine plants was as follows:

	<i>Cents per hour</i>
Flat ironers.....	16½ to 27
Finishers.....	11½ to 34
Press operators.....	12½ to 28
Sorters.....	13 to 24
Markers.....	15½ to 32

With the wide variation in methods of fixing piece rates, and with their basis influenced largely by the custom of low pay in jobs performed by many women, the low earnings of women on piece-work jobs cannot be attributed to any less efficiency on their part, especially since jobs are found where many women are paid less than men but some women earn more than any man. For example, in a recent Women's Bureau survey including wage information on men and women as loopers and knitters in hosiery mills and as machine operators in men's work clothes plants, the figures show that in these occupations paid by piece work a fairly large proportion of women but few men earned less than 25 cents an hour, but also few or no men but appreciable numbers of women earned 45 cents or more an hour. Moreover, variations in the run of material, in the coarseness, fine-

<sup>21</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. A Survey of the Shoe Industry in New Hampshire. Bul. 121. 1935. pp. 80, 81.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Variations in Wage Rates Under Corresponding Conditions. Bul. 122. 1935 p. 7.

ness, or other attribute of the product worked upon, may make great differences in the rapidity with which the job can be done and consequently in the pay received.

A telling bit of evidence of the superior productive power of women is found in a survey made under wartime industrial conditions, where many women were employed in plants and on processes to which they had not been accustomed.<sup>23</sup> In well over one-fourth of the plants reported, the output of women and girls was found to be greater than that of men and boys. (Women were said to be more productive than men by 64 percent of the production managers reporting for the metal industries and by 20 percent of those reporting for the clothing industries.) In a study of women employed in the metal trades made at about the same time by the National Industrial Conference Board,<sup>24</sup> two-thirds of the employers reporting on production stated that women's output was equal to or greater than that of men.

### **Wages of Women and Men in Special Manufacturing Occupations.**

The relation of men's and women's wages may be shown where workers of both sexes are engaged in certain characteristic occupations in important woman-employing industries, bearing in mind the foregoing explanation of some of the effects of the piece-work system on women's pay and its indications that women's output is effectively maintained. Though earnings of women vary less from men's in an occupation than in an industry as a whole, yet these occupational data show women's earnings levels consistently well below men's.

Up to this point the discussion has dealt with the differences in the levels of women's and men's weekly earnings—or yearly earnings where they could be obtained—the amounts they had to live on in the period under consideration. In discussing the particular occupations in manufacturing industries in which men and women are engaged, their hourly earnings will be used where possible, to eliminate any discrepancies in time worked.

It is an exceedingly difficult thing to find exactly comparable occupations. Some years ago, a British report by Beatrice Webb stated:

It is extremely rare in industry to find men and women performing exactly the same operations, making identical things by the same processes, or doing the whole of each other's jobs. Even where women are substituted for men, there is, practically always, some alteration in the process, or in the machinery employed, or in the arrangement of the tasks of the operatives, or in the way in which the labor is divided.<sup>25</sup>

With increasing mechanization of industry, minute subdivisions of tasks, and multiplication of processes, this statement is even more true

<sup>23</sup> Cleveland Chamber of Commerce. Committee on Industrial Welfare. *The Substitution of Woman for Man Power in Industry*. July 1918. pp. 13-14, 25-26

<sup>24</sup> National Industrial Conference Board. *War Time Employment of Women in the Metal Trades*. July 1918. p. 30.

<sup>25</sup> Webb, Mrs. Sidney. *The Relation Between Men's and Women's Wages*. Minority Report of Great Britain's War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry. 1919. p. 270.

today than when it was written. Moreover, even though the process were the same, variation in the coarseness or fineness, heaviness or lightness of the product worked upon, and other factors affecting the raw material or the flow of work, make differences even in the same job at different times.

Recognizing this, the Women's Bureau examined the pay in occupations in a large number of plants making paper products, and found the following essentially identical processes performed in each case by a woman and a man, or by women and men.<sup>26</sup>

Great care has been taken in matching these occupations. For example, where material was brought up for one sex it also was for the other; machines were not set up by the operator in any of these cases. In almost every case, the men were paid 40 cents or more an hour, the women 35 to 38 cents. Moreover, 40 cents was the usual minimum for the more unskilled jobs of men and boys in the plants. The average hourly wage of the person or persons doing this work was as follows:

Plant product	Occupation or process	Average hourly wage of—	
		Men (cents)	Women (cents)
Collapsible tubes---	Feeding metal into a form which shaped the tube when worker pressed treadle.	40	37½-40
Food dishes-----	Pounding out sections from piles of die-cut boxes.	40	35
Gummed labels----	Gluing paper for sides of cups-----	43	35-37
Gummed tape-----	Seal-press operating-----	40	38
	Hand-wrapping rolls of tape and sealing ends.	40-43	35
Loose-leaf and blank books.	Gold stamping (a press operation)-----	48	48
	General work; including inspection and operating punch presses.	35	30
Paper bags-----	Platen-press operating-----	40	35

Earnings for August 1935 reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in a study of the folding-paper-box industry further confirm these findings. In six characteristic occupations employing numbers of both sexes, men's average hourly earnings were above 40 cents, women's below that amount in all cases. These averages are as follows:<sup>27</sup>

	Average hourly earnings of—		
	Men (cents)	Women (cents)	Percent women's average is of men's
Press feeders-----	50.6	38.4	75.9
Strippers-----	48.3	37.6	77.8
Automatic gluing- and folding-machine feeders-----	44.2	38.6	87.3
Machine helpers-----	45.3	36.9	81.5
Bundlers and packers-----	49.2	38.1	77.4
Machine feeders-----	46.6	38.5	82.6

These figures illustrate another fact that frequently is found in connection with wages of the two sexes, namely, that while men's wages at the lowest are above women's, yet men's wages in the different

<sup>26</sup> For a fuller description of these processes, see Women's Bureau Bul. 152, Differences in the Earnings of Women and Men. In press.

<sup>27</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review, June 1936, pp. 15, 97.



occupations in an industry vary more widely than do women's. In other words, women's wages in many manufacturing industries do not deviate widely from a consistent low level, with some variation below this; men's are at a higher level, and they vary more above that level.

The pay in occupations of men and women has been reported in a recent study made by the Division of Women and Children in the Rhode Island Department of Labor of the jewelry industry, in which employment is fairly well divided between the sexes (men 41 percent, women 59 percent). The average hourly earnings of the men and women in characteristic productive occupations employing considerable numbers of both sexes were as follows:<sup>28</sup>

	Average hourly earnings of--		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men (cents)	Women (cents)	
Bench hands.....	42.8	32.3	75.5
Power-press operators.....	41.8	30.7	73.4
Foot- and hand-press operators.....	37.3	31.9	85.5
Colorers.....	42.5	28.1	66.1
Stonesetters.....	63.5	32.6	51.3
Solderers.....	47.2	35.5	75.2

Studies of various textile industries made in 1934 or later by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics give further occupational data, showing women's earnings consistently below men's. The average hourly earnings reported in these are as follows:<sup>29</sup>

	Average hourly earnings of--		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men (cents)	Women (cents)	
Cotton (North), August 1934:			
Weavers.....	44.2	43.5	98.4
Speeder tenders.....	45.4	40.2	88.5
Frame spinners.....	44.5	37.8	84.9
Filling hands.....	34.3	33.5	97.7
Silk and rayon:			
Weavers.....	48.2	43.3	89.8
Spinners.....	45.6	35.6	78.1
Warpers.....	62.0	49.9	80.5
Woolen and worsted:			
Weavers.....	56.2	51.5	91.6
Spinners, frame.....	53.4	41.2	77.2
Drawing-frame tenders.....	39.3	37.8	96.2
Gill-box tenders.....	38.9	37.5	96.4

The various parts sewed by machine operators on coats are shown from an earlier study of the men's clothing industry by the same agency. The average hourly earnings reported in these occupations are as follows:<sup>30</sup>

	Average hourly earnings of--		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men (cents)	Women (cents)	
Pocket makers.....	73.7	43.1	58.5
Sleeve seamers.....	59.2	42.7	72.1
Lining makers.....	63.6	41.9	65.9
Joiners, side and back seams.....	70.2	41.6	59.3

<sup>28</sup> Rhode Island. Department of Labor. Division of Women and Children. Survey of Hours, Wages, and Other Conditions of Employment in the Jewelry Industry in the State of Rhode Island, December 1936. pp. 43, 44.

<sup>29</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Textile Report, parts I, II, and III. 1935. pp. 23, 38, and 41 and unpublished data.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Wages and Hours of Labor in the Men's Clothing Industry. Bul. 594. 1932. pp. 29, 30, 31.

In Pennsylvania, an important State in the manufacture of certain types of clothing and textiles, a comprehensive study of the State's employables was made by the Emergency Relief Administration in 1934. For certain characteristic manufacturing occupations in each of which at least 1,000 workers of each sex were reported, much larger proportions of the women than of the men on full time received less than \$12.50 a week, as the following shows: <sup>31</sup>

	<i>Percent receiving less than \$12.50</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Textile manufacturing:		
Weavers.....	9.4	21.2
Inspectors and examiners.....	3.1	38.6
Knitters (hosiery).....	8.1	24.1
Clothing manufacturing:		
Sewing-machine operators.....	44.2	79.1
Pressers.....	26.3	58.7
Finishers.....	11.0	47.7

One further illustration of the low earnings of women as compared with men will be sufficient to quote here, that of the shoe industry, a large woman-employer in which much of women's work is considerably skilled. A survey made in New Hampshire by the Women's Bureau in 1933 showed the following average weekly earnings: <sup>32</sup>

	<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
Welt shoes:			
Stitching.....	\$15.15	\$10.70	70.6
Finishing and packing.....	15.80	13.10	82.9
McKay shoes:			
Stitching.....	9.75	9.00	92.3
Making, lasting.....	16.60	9.00	54.2

In the preceding year, hourly earnings in this industry reported by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics showed an even greater discrepancy between women's and men's wages. Their average hourly earnings in characteristic occupations requiring skill were as follows: <sup>33</sup>

	<i>Average hourly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men (cents)</i>	<i>Women (cents)</i>	
Vampers.....	56.9	35.5	62.4
Top stitchers.....	60.3	33.8	56.1
Skivers.....	53.7	35.4	65.9
Trees.....	43.3	30.5	70.4

### Wages of Women and of Unskilled Men.

Not only do the levels of women's wages ordinarily fall below those of men in the same industries and occupations, but in many important woman-employing industries women average lower earnings than men who are engaged in unskilled jobs. From reports in a Women's Bureau survey of the industries in one State made in 1935, the hourly wages of men in entirely unskilled occupations have been ascertained

<sup>31</sup> Pennsylvania. State Emergency Relief Administration. Census of Employable Workers in Urban and Rural Non-Farm Areas in Pennsylvania, 1934. 1936. p. 67.

<sup>32</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. A Survey of the Shoe Industry in New Hampshire. Bul. 121. 1935. p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wages and Hours of Labor in the Boot and Shoe Industry, 1910 to 1932. Bul. 579. 1933. p. 24 ff.

in relation to the wages of all women in the same industry. These comparisons are as follows:

<i>Usual average hourly wage of men on unskilled jobs specified</i>	<i>Percent of women in same industry receiving less than 30 cents an hour</i>	<i>Median hourly earnings of women</i>
<b>Seamless hosiery:</b>		
Carrying lots (of yarn) or bundles of work, or helpers..... 30	All..... 33 Knitter..... 40 Looper..... 28	(cents) 32. 0 31. 5 33. 5
<b>Men's work clothes and shirts:</b>		
Bundle carrier, belt boy, cutter's helper, miscellaneous and shipping clerk..... 30	All..... 70 Sewing-machine operator..... 63	26. 0 27. 8
<b>Men's suits and overcoats:</b>		
Bundle carrier, general utility helper..... 45 or over	All..... 15 Sewing-machine operator..... 19	38. 0 39. 1
<b>Knit underwear:</b>		
Carrying work or bundles, giving out work, belt boy, "general", helper..... 30-35	All..... 26 Sewing-machine operator..... 25	32. 0 32. 8
<b>Paper boxes:</b>		
Tying bundles, machine helping, hand wrapping..... 35-40	All..... 28	32. 0
<b>Candy:</b>		
Unskilled..... 32. 5	All..... 81 Packer..... 77	28. 0 28. 1
<b>Bakery:</b>		
Greasing and cleaning pans, dumping cakes, helping, putting in and taking out of oven..... 35-40	All..... 32 Wrapper and packer..... 9	32. 0 37. 1

Another source of information on the wages of women compared with those of unskilled men is in the periodic wage reports of the National Industrial Conference Board, organization of large employing interests. Over a period of years extending regularly back to 1920, this agency has reported the average weekly earnings of skilled and semiskilled men, unskilled men, and women, monthly and also with an average for the year. For the most part, the average received by women has been only about three-fourths as much as that of *unskilled* men, running to larger proportions, however, in the depression years when men's wages were very low. The proportions women's averages formed of those of unskilled men in the various years were as follows:<sup>34</sup>

<i>Percent women's average is of unskilled men's</i>	<i>Percent women's average is of unskilled men's</i>
1920 (average for 7 months)..... 68. 0	1928..... 71. 8
1921..... 77. 1	1929..... 72. 2
1922 (average for 6 months)..... 78. 0	1930..... 73. 0
1923..... 77. 4	1931..... 76. 6
1924..... 74. 7	1932..... 81. 0
1925..... 74. 9	1933..... 82. 8
1926..... 74. 4	1934..... 87. 9
1927..... 73. 8	1935..... 83. 6

<sup>34</sup> National Industrial Conference Board. Wages, Hours, and Employment in the United States, 1914-193. p. 43.

These figures include more workers from the large man-employing industries, such as steel, automobiles, building construction, and the heavier metal industries, than from the more outstanding woman-employers. When the data for separate industries are taken, and the more important of the woman-employers reported are considered, it is found that in only two out of eight—the boot and shoe and the hosiery and knit-wear industries, in both of which women perform jobs of considerable skill at piece rates—did women earn more than *unskilled* men, and even in these cases women still received much less than all men together. These figures for a late month (November 1936) are as follows:

	Percent women's average earnings are of unskilled men's		Percent women's average earnings are of unskilled men's
Boots and shoes.....	113. 6	Meat packing.....	80. 1
Cotton (North).....	80. 6	Paper products.....	75. 1
Electrical manufacturing..	79. 6	Silk.....	65. 5
Hosiery and knit goods....	102. 8	Wool.....	90. 0

That women's earnings in factories are below the entrance rates of common labor on new construction, repair, and cleaning for street and sewer work is shown in a comparison of women's earnings reported by the Women's Bureau in 1935 or 1936 with common labor entrance rates in September 1935. The latter are the rates paid adult males when first hired to "perform physical or manual labor of general character, requiring little skill or training", workers "having no specific productive jobs or occupations", "thus excluding machine operators and semiskilled employees" (whose pay would be presumed to be somewhat more).<sup>35</sup>

Of the street and sewer laborers reported, more than half in the South and nearly all in the North had entrance rates of 32½ cents an hour or more. Comparisons of the earnings of these street and sewer laborers with those of white women in manufacturing industries reported in the same States, as surveyed by the Women's Bureau, show that the earnings level of these women was definitely lower than that of unskilled men when first hired, as follows:

	Percent of women earning less than 50 cents an hour	Average hourly earnings of women (cents)	Average hourly entrance rates of adult male com- mon labor (cents)
Arkansas.....	<sup>35</sup> 74. 9	<sup>36</sup> 23. 1	24. 6
Delaware.....	39. 4	33. 6	33. 6
West Virginia.....	21. 8	34. 5	39. 5
Tennessee.....	<sup>34</sup> 31. 7	<sup>36</sup> 32. 3	32. 2

<sup>35</sup> White women.

Though the entrance rate for common labor in Tennessee was 32.2 cents, it is a striking fact that the average was almost as low or was much lower in a number of important woman-employing industries,

<sup>35</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review, December 1932, p. 1452, and March 1936, p. 699.

some of which include relatively skilled operations. These were as follows:

	Percent of women earning less than 30 cents an hour	Average hourly earnings of women (cents)
Seamless hosiery.....	32.9	31.5
Men's work clothes and shirts.....	69.6	25.8
Cotton mills.....	5.7	32.8
Department stores.....	77.8	26.9
Laundries.....	96.4	17.4

In the electrical supply industry,<sup>37</sup> in which women perform semi-skilled work requiring a high degree of dexterity and close application, the average entrance rate of adult male common labor as reported by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for the East North Central District compares as follows with women's average earnings as reported by two States in the same district:

	Average weekly earnings of women <sup>38</sup>		Average entrance rates of male common labor <sup>39</sup>
	Ohio	Illinois	
1929.....	\$19.00	\$21.06	\$22.84
1934.....	15.00	14.85	14.73

<sup>37</sup> Illinois figures are for July, the month for which the common labor entrance rates are reported. The Ohio figures are reported once a year, for the week of peak employment.

<sup>38</sup> The weekly figure was obtained by use of the average hourly rate (48.4 cents in July 1929 and 43.7 cents in July 1934) and the average actual hours worked in the industry (47.2 hours in 1929 and 33.7 in 1934).

### Industrial Home Work a Factor in Depressing Women's Wages.<sup>40</sup>

One of the influences that tend to keep down wages in certain industries is the giving out from the factory, either directly or through contractors or even by mail, of articles to be made in whole or in part or of processes to be done in homes.

The theory advanced to support industrial home work is that it gives opportunity for women at home to earn in their leisure time. What actually happens, however, is that it is not merely a use of leisure time. All investigations of the situation have shown that in the majority of such cases home workers, including several members of the family and frequently small children, work incessantly for long hours at these processes—often for much longer than would be allowed in the factory. The nervous strain and other effects on health thus may be quite as serious as those resulting from factory work for excessive hours or under unsuitable conditions. The "money in leisure time" theory is wholly untenable. A study made by the Women's Bureau and the Children's Bureau in 1934 found two-fifths of the chief home workers in the family working 40 hours a week or more; a fourth of them worked 50 hours or longer and some had worked more than 70 hours.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For additional discussion and comparisons for other industries, see Women's Bureau Bul. 152, Differences in the Earnings of Women and Men. In press.

<sup>40</sup> This discussion on home work, pp. 66 to 70, based on Women's Bureau Bul. 130, pp. 62-64, 136-138, and Bul. 135, pp. 15, 26, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>41</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Children's Bureau. Industrial Home Work Under the National Recovery Administration. Publication No. 234. 1936. p. 12.

It is even more difficult for the industrial home worker than for the factory worker to seek to obtain a better wage. The home worker comes alone to the employer's shop, or to his subcontractor, seeking work. The course of her work does not bring her into contact with her fellow employees. She cannot judge from her own experience whether her skill, speed, or other aptitude is as good as the average or not. She may need work badly, and she has no adequate measure of what the work handed out to her should be worth.

The method of industrial home work is applied to unskilled and semiskilled hand work as well as to skilled hand crafts that customarily have been performed by women. It has been estimated that such work is done in more than 75,000 American homes. The clothing industries lend themselves especially to such a system, since many of their processes now done in factories formerly were done in the individual home,<sup>42</sup> and tradition attributes these types of work to women and thus associates them with low pay. In New York in 1934 about three-fourths of the home workers reported were at work on clothing.

Besides embroidery and clothing, home-work occupations include stringing tags (now being eliminated); carding buttons, hooks and eyes, bobby pins, or safety pins; shelling nuts; addressing envelopes; hooking rugs; knitting and crocheting; decorating post cards; preparing meat balls, rice cakes, and tea balls for restaurants; making garters; and work on cheap jewelry, lamp shades, powder puffs, paper boxes and bags, carpet rags, and toys.

The actual pay for the industrial processes when done in the home is far below what they are paid within the factory, and it frequently is true that several members of the family, including small children, must work to obtain these earnings. In two studies reporting the pay for skilled needlework done in the home on handkerchiefs and candlewick spreads, half the workers had received less than \$3 in the week.

New York reports show that even during prosperous years such work brought an average wage as low as \$6, \$5, and even \$4 for a week's work in typical home-work industries. More recent wage reports include such statements as "20 cents an hour for a dozen dolls' dresses" that take 4 hours to make, or "14 cents an hour for expert crochet beading"; a recent Women's Bureau survey showed Georgia women receiving 2 to 14 cents an hour for making a candlewick bedspread. In general, wages for long hours of work in the home, often for highly skilled sewing and hand work, ordinarily have been below the worst factory payments for unskilled labor.<sup>43</sup>

While industrial home work is in the first instance a question of woman employment, the fact is that it involves as well many children

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, the account of the large-scale manufacture of straw hats and the covering of buttons in the home early in the nineteenth century in *Women in Industry* by Edith Abbott. 1924. p. 71 ff.

<sup>43</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. *Employed Women Under N. R. A. Codes*. Bul. 130. 1935. p. 62.

in the homes affected. For this reason the Women's Bureau and the Children's Bureau jointly made a study in 1934 of more than 2,300 home workers in 28 industries in seven States, including more than 24 home-work operations. It was found that over 80 percent of the chief home workers in the family had earned only 20 cents an hour or less. Where both hours and earnings were reported, more than 60 percent of those that had worked 40 hours or more in the week had received less than \$5 for their labor.<sup>44</sup>

In a survey in Texas made by the Women's Bureau only 1 of 107 women had earned as much as \$5 in the week for steady and regular work on fine dresses for children. Examples are as follows:

A skilled worker on embroidered and lace-trimmed children's dresses worked steadily 8½ hours for 4 days to make a dozen dresses at \$1.75 the dozen.

Two sisters by steady work made in a week 20 machine-stitched dresses with hand fagoting, and for this received together only \$3.

Work at such prices, done in places remote from the centers of industry, competes with that in factories located elsewhere and undoubtedly causes low wages in New York, Connecticut, and other States.<sup>45</sup>

In a study by the Women's Bureau of industrial home workers making lace in Rhode Island, almost three-fourths of all home workers reported earnings of less than \$10 for the week.<sup>46</sup> In a similar study made by the Minimum Wage Division in Connecticut median weekly earnings of families doing home work ranged for 4 weeks from \$3.38 to \$4.20.<sup>47</sup>

In a study of families doing industrial home work made by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, half of the home-work families reporting weekly earnings in 1934 made \$3.54 or less, although these wages sometimes represented the work of several members of the family. Only 11 percent of the families visited had earned as much as \$8 a week from home work at a time when the State Emergency Relief Board set \$8.25 a week as the relief allowance for food and clothes alone for a family of five having no other resources. Five was the size of the average home-work family.<sup>48</sup>

A typical case showing standards of pay for industrial home work for highly skilled craftsmanship was reported from Philadelphia by a Women's Bureau agent. The home worker visited was knitting a three-piece suit; for the skirt she was to get \$7.75, for the blouse \$8, for the coat \$7. This represented a month's work at 66 hours a week, and thus would yield less than \$6 a week. Her total month's pay would

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* Children's Bureau. *Industrial Home Work Under the National Recovery Administration* Publication No. 234. 1936. pp. 2, 8, 14, 18.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Women's Bureau. *Employed Women Under N. R. A. Codes.* Bul. 130. 1935. p. 52.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* Industrial Home Work in Rhode Island. Bul. 131. 1935. p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Connecticut. Department of Labor. Minimum Wage Division. *Home Work in the Connecticut Lace Industry.* 1933. p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Pennsylvania. Department of Labor and Industry. Bureau of Women and Children. *Industrial Home Work in Pennsylvania Under the N. R. A.* March 1935. pp. 1, 4.

be \$22.75 on a suit to be sold at retail for \$100.<sup>49</sup> The factory wage for the least skilled type of knitwear (seamless hosiery) in a southern State averaged \$10.20 a week.<sup>50</sup>

In certain territorial quarters the pay for industrial home work is even lower than on the mainland. For example, in a survey of women's occupations in Puerto Rico made by the Women's Bureau in 1933-34, well over half the women who had done a week's work on fine embroidery had received less than \$1.<sup>51</sup>

Earnings for industrial home work not only are low in themselves, but they tend to lower factory wage standards. They oblige the factory employer to cut costs to meet the competition of the low-selling home-work product, and at the same time the home-work manufacturer is seriously exploiting the home. For under the industrial home-work system the manufacturer passes on to the individual home many of his overhead expenses, such as rent, heat, light, and other normal work requirements, even machinery—as, for example, in the sewing processes where the worker furnishes her own sewing machine; in knitting, her own needles. Furthermore, the home worker usually is responsible for getting and returning the work, or has to pay for such delivery from her meager receipts. She is responsible for spoiled work and either has to pay cash for spoiled materials or has to make corrections without pay. Often she must make an initial cash deposit to cover cost of all material until she is paid for the work. Frequently she must make several samples of a pattern at her own expense before she can begin on paid work. In these ways the manufacturer keeps his costs so low as to give him an unfair competitive advantage, so that he can undersell the man who maintains an establishment and pays the normal overhead costs.

In still another way industrial work done in the home tends to depress factory wages, for it is highly seasonal and often is used to help carry peak loads. The manufacturer takes no responsibility for maintaining an employment level for even a small group of workers. This discourages the development of greater regularity in factory employment and thus affects the regularity of factory wages. In a variety of ways, industrial home work forms a constant force tending to undermine labor standards that always are built up with so much difficulty.

Finally, the amounts received for the industrial work done in the home, even with several members of the family so employed, often are so low that the family is unable to maintain itself and has to be given relief. Thus the manufacturing interest involved not only pays a low wage, tends to force down factory wages, and so exploits the home, but also is, in a very real sense, subsidized by the community.

<sup>49</sup> See Women's Bureau Bul. 130, *Employed Women Under N. R. A. Codes*. 1935. p. 133.

<sup>50</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. *Employment of Women in Tennessee Industries*. Bul. 149. 1937. p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* *The Employment of Women in Puerto Rico*. Bul. 118. 1934. p. 8.



In the study of Connecticut lace makers referred to, one-fourth of the families where such work was done were on the relief rolls. In January 1935, one-fourth of the Philadelphia home workers reported by manufacturers of infants' and children's wear were from families receiving relief, according to a check made with relief agencies.

### GENERAL LEVELS OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S WAGES IN DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL SERVICE

In domestic and personal service the occupations of the two sexes usually differ considerably, but the variations in pay are even wider and there are great differences in pay even when the job requirements would seem to be similar. In a survey of household employees in Philadelphia in 1926, the average monthly wages for members of the two sexes who lived in the homes of their employers and hence were furnished with room and board follow: <sup>52</sup>

<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
Butlers.....	\$90. 00	Cooks.....	\$75. 00
Housemen.....	72. 50	Chambermaids.....	69. 55
		Waitresses.....	71. 65

A more recent survey in Pennsylvania is that of the State's employables in 1934 by the State Emergency Relief Administration. Though the following include both household employees and those in restaurants, a strikingly larger proportion of women than of men received less than \$12.50 a week for full-time work, as follows:

	<i>Percent receiving under \$12.50</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Cooks.....	33. 2	64. 6
Waiters.....	46. 0	77. 6
Domestic servants not elsewhere classified..	69. 7	92. 1

Available information as to beauty parlors shows the average weekly wages of men and women as follows:

	<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
Women's Bureau report, 1933 (four cities)..	\$22. 50	\$14. 25	63. 3

In a survey of laundries made by the Women's Bureau in 1934, the ranges in the average weekly earnings of the two sexes in productive labor operations in 21 cities were as follows:

	<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
White.....	\$12. 50 to \$21. 45	\$6. 67 to \$13. 05
Negro <sup>53</sup> .....	9. 66 to 16. 23	5. 01 to 11. 77

<sup>53</sup> 16 cities.

The averages of white women in the various cities ranged from 33.2 to 67.8 percent of those of white men, and in 14 of the 21 cities women averaged less than 60 percent as much as men.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Household Employment in Philadelphia. Bul. 93. 1932. pp. 40, 41.

Others of the largest woman-employers in domestic and personal service are hotels and restaurants. Late figures (November 1936) from the one State (Illinois) regularly reporting such data by sex show the average weekly earnings of women considerably below those of men, as follows:

	Average weekly earnings of—		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men	Women	
Hotels.....	\$18. 73	\$13. 76	73. 5
Restaurants.....	15. 81	12. 81	81. 0

In a survey of these industries, made by the Women's Bureau in the spring of 1934, data for New York show that in both hotels and restaurants, and in both service and nonservice occupations, a considerably larger proportion of men than of women earned as much as \$15.

#### GENERAL LEVELS OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S WAGES IN CLERICAL OCCUPATIONS

Next to domestic and personal service, clerical occupations employ more women than any other general type of work. This work usually is paid by time, and hence the amounts received form a clear picture of the differences in the levels of pay for men and women. They indicate that with but rare exceptions these levels for men are well above those for women.

In a study of clerical workers' earnings in several cities in 1931-32, the Women's Bureau reported data on men's as well as women's earnings for one city—Chicago.<sup>54</sup> These showed, for all occupations combined, rates of women averaging only about three-fourths as much as men. The median monthly rates in the various clerical occupations reported were as follows:

	Median monthly rate of—		Percent women's average is of men's
	Men	Women	
All occupations.....	\$135	\$99	73. 3
File clerks.....	80	80	100. 0
Hand bookkeepers.....	162	122	75. 3
General clerks.....	115	90	78. 3
Machine operators:			
Bookkeeping or billing.....	98	108	110. 2
Calculating.....	98	95	96. 9
Messengers.....	65	56	86. 2
Supervisors.....	241	153	63. 5
Merchandising (mail order).....	97	67	69. 1

In Pennsylvania, the survey of employables made in 1934 by the State Emergency Relief Administration shows that in most clerical occupations reported from more than a tenth to nearly a fifth of the women received less than \$12.50 a week for full-time work, but in

<sup>54</sup> For fuller data, including differences in earnings by type of establishment, see Women's Bureau Bul. 120, The Employment of Women in Offices. 1934.

every case a much smaller proportion of the men were paid so little. The figures are as follows:

	<i>Percent receiving less than \$12.50</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Clerks:		
Filing.....	5. 9	16. 7
Office.....	5. 7	17. 8
Other.....	8. 2	19. 4
Bookkeepers.....	4. 3	14. 9
Typists.....	9. 4	16. 3
Stenographers.....	5. 9	12. 4
Secretaries.....	2. 7	7. 9

In industries surveyed in 1934 and 1935, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reported the following average weekly wages of workers in the offices of manufacturing plants:

	<i>Average weekly wage of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
Automobile plants:			
Cars.....	\$26. 25	\$20. 40	77. 7
Parts.....	24. 24	20. 06	82. 8
Paper-box plants:			
Folding.....	24. 88	20. 10	80. 8
Set-up.....	22. 58	14. 15	62. 7
Textile dyeing and finishing:			
Cotton.....	19. 38	15. 00	77. 4
Silk and rayon.....	23. 84	16. 73	70. 2

Two States, New York and Ohio, have reported the earnings of clerical workers regularly over a considerable period of years. New York reports for October of every year the earnings of office employees in the manufacturing plants that report factory wages each month. Ohio's reports are for bookkeepers, stenographers, and office clerks, whether in factories or other types of establishments, and the earnings are reported by the employer for the peak employment week of the year. The average weekly earnings in the latest year available follow:

	<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
New York, 1936.....	\$42. 67	\$21. 31	49. 9
Ohio, 1935.....	32. 75	18. 80	57. 4

The proportions women's averages formed of men's in the various years from 1923 on have varied little from year to year and range as follows:

	<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
New York.....	48.6 to 51.5
Ohio.....	57.4 to 59.4

### GENERAL LEVELS OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S WAGES IN SALES OCCUPATIONS

The occupation of salespersons where based on time-work pay forms another illustration of the wage levels of men and women, and these show men, on the whole, having a wage very much above that of women. For example, in a recent survey by the Women's Bureau, salesmen in department stores were found to be receiving considerably

more than saleswomen, though the pay of the two sexes compared more favorably when selling was combined with other work considered more responsible. The levels of men's and women's wages are indicated by the following data as to their hourly earnings:

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Median hourly earnings.....	36.7 cents	28.4 cents
Percent receiving less than 30 cents.....	34.6	70.5
Percent receiving 50 cents or more.....	26.0	2.8

Many of these saleswomen in department stores received even less than men in unskilled jobs in these stores. Of the men reported as general utility workers, packers, cleaners, and parcel-check boys, practically a third earned more than 30 cents an hour, though more than seven-tenths of the women reported were paid less than 30 cents.

Further sources of information on employees in department stores are certain State figures. In Illinois the average weekly earnings for the two sexes in November 1936 were as follows:

<i>Average weekly earnings of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
\$22.79	\$11.73	51.5

Ohio figures on salespersons in stores (not traveling) have been reported in every year since 1914, and show that in most of these years the average weekly rates of women have been less than half those of men. The latest figures immediately available, those for 1935, show the following average weekly rates:

<i>Average weekly rates of—</i>		<i>Percent women's average is of men's</i>
<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	
\$19.87	\$13.54	68.1

In the survey of employables made by the Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration in 1934, while 21.6 percent of the salesmen received less than \$12.50 for a full week's work, the proportion of saleswomen so low paid was more than twice as great—46.7 percent.

#### **GENERAL LEVELS OF MEN'S AND WOMEN'S EARNINGS IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

In the professions, as well as in the other types of employment discussed, women often are found receiving less than men for work requiring the same responsibility. For the occupation in which the largest group of professional women is engaged, that of teaching, data are available on the salaries of the two sexes, both from periodic surveys by the National Education Association and from the Federal reports of the Office of Education.<sup>55</sup> According to the 1930 census, practically four-fifths of the school teachers are women,<sup>56</sup> though it is

<sup>55</sup> For most other women's professional occupations, no data by sex are at hand. For data as to women's earnings alone, see appendix A.

<sup>56</sup> This is true from census figures. It also is the case with figures reported chiefly for public and elementary schools by the Office of Education in its biennial reports.

common knowledge that men usually predominate greatly in positions of educational authority, such as board memberships, school principalships, in teaching positions in the higher ranks, or even as executive officers of teachers' organizations.

In 1930, 10 of the 48 States and the District of Columbia had laws requiring equal pay for men and women teachers.<sup>57</sup> Reports to the National Education Association as to the salary schedules in 1934-35 for teachers in the public schools of 78 cities of over 100,000 in population show that 63 of these schedules in cities in 29 States<sup>58</sup> and the District of Columbia made no difference in pay to the two sexes. The schedules in the other 15 cities, scattered in 8 States,<sup>59</sup> provided for the minimum salaries of men to be from \$100 to \$768 more than those for women in similar positions. Men's maximum salaries were to be from \$200 to \$1,200 more than those of women in the same classes of work.

A recent report of the National Education Association included 150 salary schedules adopted in cities of various sizes.<sup>60</sup> About one-fourth of these provided for differences in the pay of women and men. This was more frequently the case in the schedules for the smaller cities, while it was more usual for those for the larger places to provide a uniform schedule for the two sexes.

The National Education Association has repeatedly gone on record for equal pay for men and women, its first expression being as follows in 1914:<sup>61</sup>

The Association regards efficiency and merit, rather than sex, as the principle on which appointments and selections should be made, and therefore declares itself in favor of the political equality of the sexes and equal pay for equal services.

The Research Bulletin of this agency<sup>62</sup> reports the results of 22 studies of teachers' salaries, 20 of which recommended equal pay for equal work. Brief statements from three of these represent typical attitudes on this subject that would apply as well to occupations other than teaching. These are as follows:

Discussing the report from Springfield, Mass.:<sup>63</sup>

The report mentions on one side the economic argument—competition with other occupations and high cost of paying the women teachers salaries high enough to attract men teachers; and on the other side the social argu-

<sup>57</sup> California, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming. Summaries of school laws make no reference to any such legislation of later date. See Elsbree, Willard S. *Teachers' Salaries*. 1931. p. 45. In *Research Bulletin of National Education Association*, March 1936, p. 73, footnote.

<sup>58</sup> Alabama, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. Unpublished data furnished the Women's Bureau by the Research Division of the National Education Association.

<sup>59</sup> Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. In one city, Elizabeth, N. J., the salary schedules reported antedated the law prohibiting discrimination, which is said to be not retroactive.

<sup>60</sup> National Education Association. *The Preparation of Teachers' Salary Schedules*. *Research Bulletin*, March 1936, p. 75 ff.

<sup>61</sup> *Research Bulletin*, cit., and *Bulletin of the National Education Association*, September 1914, p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Issue cit., March 1936.

<sup>63</sup> Issue cit., March 1936, p. 77.

ment—the decline in morale when women are required to do the same kind of work at a decidedly lower salary than men receive for similar work.

Quoting from a report from San Francisco:<sup>64</sup>

Two reasons have sustained the practice of paying men teachers higher salaries than women teachers; one, the fact that men as a rule have been in positions of authority as board members and executives; the other, an indirect operation of the law of supply and demand. It is an indisputable fact that women teachers of equivalent training can be had for less money than men. The range of openings in commerce, industry, and business has, until very recently, been very much more restricted for women than men. This situation is rapidly changing and promises fair to alter this play of supply and demand in teaching. It is no longer seriously contended that men are better teachers merely by virtue of being men, and therefore deserving of higher salaries.

Quoting from the writings of a man who holds strongly that because of the law of supply and demand women must be paid less than men:<sup>65</sup>

We believe that there is no sound argument, professional or educational, in favor of paying men teachers higher salaries than women. Men are not better teachers; they do not render more valuable service.

A report of the Office of Education shows the salaries of 5,822 men and 1,068 women faculty members in 50 land-grant universities and colleges in 1927-28.<sup>66</sup> More than one-third of the men but only about one-tenth of the women were full professors; at the other end of the scale, instructorships accounted for only one-fourth of the men but for well over two-fifths of the women. The women's salaries were more nearly those of men as instructors than in the higher ranks. The median salaries for the various ranks were as follows:

	Median salaries of—		Percent women's average is (of men's
	Men	Women	
All ranks.....	\$3, 169	\$2, 309	72. 9
Dean.....	5, 635	4, 375	77. 6
Professor.....	4, 139	3, 581	86. 5
Associate professor.....	3, 284	2, 882	87. 8
Assistant professor.....	2, 794	2, 530	90. 6
Instructor.....	2, 087	2, 016	96. 6

The report summarizes the situation as follows:

Salaries of women staff members are lower than those of men. This situation prevails when comparisons are made upon a basis of the salaries of total teachers for all fields combined, upon a basis of major divisions, and upon a basis of arts and sciences departments. The median salary for women teachers as a whole including all fields is \$860 less than that of men. Comparing the median salaries of the two sexes within each of the major divisions, it is disclosed that women staff members are paid from \$886 to \$1,376 less than men teachers in the same fields. Similar differences exist in the median salaries of men and women staff members in the arts and sciences departments. The largest difference is found in the case of the department of history

<sup>64</sup> Issue cit., March 1936, pp. 77-78.

<sup>65</sup> McGaughy, J. R. *The Movement Toward Scientific Salary Schedules.* In *Teachers College Record*, May 1929, pp. 752-759.

<sup>66</sup> U. S. Department of the Interior. *Office of Education Salaries in Land-Grant Universities and Colleges.* By John H. McNeely. November 1931. pp. 2, 3, 9, 10.

and political science, where the median salary of women is \$1,026 lower than that of men, while the smallest is in the department of chemistry, where women have a median salary \$161 less than that of men. Moreover, in the distribution of academic ranks the larger percentages of women teachers are found holding the lower ranks while the larger percentages of men occupy the higher ranks.

Additional information is afforded by the survey of employables made in 1934 by the Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration. Though nearly three times as many women teachers as men were reported, 6.6 percent of the women but only 1.8 percent of the men had received less than \$12.50 for a full week's work. This shockingly low pay was made to more than 2,000 women.

#### WAGE RATES IN UNION AGREEMENTS AS APPLIED TO WOMEN

The tradition of paying women less than men is followed in some cases in the agreements made by trade unions with manufacturers. This is easily understood when it is realized that such agreements are reached by the process of bargaining and it becomes necessary for each party to concede some points they would like to carry, and that the payment of low wages for women has had such a powerful foundation in custom and hence may be the more insisted upon by employers. However, it illustrates the fact that at its present stage union action alone cannot provide fully for the needs of women but must sometimes be supplemented by legislation to take particular care of women's interests.

For example, a union agreement fixing piece rates for occupations in the New York cloak and suit industry, effective for 1935-37, while it provides average piece rates and the equivalent minimum weekly rates alike for the two sexes, continues the small differences in the minimum piece rates that were allowed under the N. R. A. code and under former agreements, as follows: <sup>67</sup>

	<i>Minimum piece rate</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Jacket, coat, reefer, and dress operators.....	\$1. 00	\$0. 90
Skirt operators.....	. 90	. 80

The agreement for the textile dyeing and finishing industry for 1936-38, continuing for the most part earlier rates, fixes the following hourly minima: <sup>68</sup>

	<i>Cents per hour</i>
Men.....	66
Women.....	48

This wage difference seems far too large to correspond to differences in the occupations of the two sexes, especially when it is considered that 75 cents is the minimum for the helpers of maintenance men.

A clear indication of a sex differential in rates for clerical workers is provided in the fact that a wage agreement in these occupations in

<sup>67</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review, July 1936, pp. 25, 33.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, October 1936, pp. 919, 920.

Butte, Mont., in 1927, required that overtime for men should be paid at 70 cents an hour and overtime for women at only 50 cents.<sup>69</sup>

An iron workers' union agreement in Ohio that was effective in January 1934 provided a 5 percent wage increase for men and an additional 10 percent increase over the wage in effect on a date several weeks later, but the only arrangement made for women was that their minimum wage should be 38 cents an hour.<sup>70</sup>

An agreement providing for borax workers on the Pacific coast, effective in February 1935, provided a minimum wage rate of 46 cents an hour for women as bag stencilers and in the package department. The lowest for men was more than a fourth above this, 58½ cents an hour for those sealing cases of borax packages, for vat men, and for truckers, watchmen, sweepers, and helpers. While these are somewhat heavier jobs, the women's jobs are as exacting of the worker's energy and as important to the final commercial article. A minimum of from 60 to 71 cents was fixed for men in many other jobs.<sup>71</sup>

*Agreements for laundry workers.*—Three agreements for the laundry industry in effect in 1933 show standards for men above those for women.<sup>72</sup> This is an industry that employs practically twice as many women as men (1930 census figures). The occupations of the two sexes differ, practically all routemen (delivery) and almost three-fifths of the laborers and of the foremen and overseers being men. In the wash-house men predominate. There are three times as many women as men operatives, women being more usual in the ironing occupations. A day's ironing is not a light job, especially with some supervision thrown in. Moreover, women may be tending two or even three presses at a time. In two of three union agreements reported in 1933, the lowest rates fixed for any man's occupation were well above the highest for any woman's occupation, and were as follows:

	<i>Lowest rate for men (cents)</i>	<i>Highest rate for women (cents)</i>
Butte..... Head markers....	62. 5	Head markers' assistants... 54. 2
San Francisco.. Head starchers....	50. 6	Shirt finishers..... 48. 8

Though in San Francisco head starchers were accorded the lowest rate for any man's job, 50.6 cents, in Butte and Seattle, where women were so employed, the rates fixed were very much lower, 42.7 and 31.8 cents, respectively.

In the third agreement (Seattle) the rate fixed for both women and men as head markers and sorters was the same, but it was only 39.6 cents. No other rate for women's occupations was so high, none for men's so low, except for elevator boys and bundle boys. The latter

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* Trade Agreements, 1927. Bul. 468. 1928. p. 60.

<sup>70</sup> American Federationist, April 1934, p. 387.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1935, pp. 613-614.

<sup>72</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Union Scales of Wages and Hours of Labor, May 15, 1933. Bul. 600. 1934. pp. 93-94.



had a rate of 32.3 cents an hour, but this agreement fixed a lower rate for women in a wide variety of the laundry occupations, including head starchers and polishers, head collar girls, flat-work head feeders, and garment press operators. In all these agreements differences in men's and women's weekly rates corresponded to the hourly differences.

In the San Francisco agreement the rate fixed for men as wash-house helpers was 54.4 cents an hour, but rates were fixed below this for all women's occupations, including shirt finishers, polishers or shirt operators, head collar ironers, and other women ironers, even after 6 months' experience.

In Butte the union rate fixed was much higher for men than for women in overseeing jobs, and in fact the lowest weekly rate for men was a fifth above the highest for women. The hourly differences are shown in the following:

Men	Cents per hour	Women	Cents per hour
Head markers.....	62.5	Head markers on rough dry..	52.1
Head washers.....	72.9	Head mangle girls.....	44.8
		Head starchers.....	42.7
		Head collar girls.....	41.7

*Agreements for book and job printers.*—Union agreements in effect in 1933 in the book and job printing industry were reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 66 cities.<sup>73</sup> No difference by sex was shown in the rates fixed for assistants and feeders on platen and cylinder presses in most of the 53 cities where such rates were reported. In some cases this may have meant that women were not so employed, in others that if they were doing such work their rate was the same as for men. However, there were several cities in which the rates differed markedly for the two sexes. These were as follows:

	Cents per hour for—	
	Men	Women
Feeders, platen presses:		
Memphis.....	47.7	43.2
Pittsburgh.....	50.2	44.4
Feeders, cylinder presses:		
Atlanta.....	51.1	48.1
Pittsburgh.....	61.8	52.2
San Francisco.....	84.1	77.3
Springfield, Mass.....	68.2	54.5

The lowest rate of all for cylinder press feeding was 41.9 cents an hour, in Nashville, where only a women's rate was reported.

The same information was reported for 1924 for 55 cities,<sup>74</sup> and by 1933 fewer cities showed sex differences in the wage than was the case in the earlier year. However, the data do not indicate whether this means that at the latter time the women's rate had been drawn up to the men's, or merely that the women were no longer employed there in these processes.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. pp. 97-120. Also Bul. 631, reporting for May 1936, shows similar sex differences in hourly rates in the printing industry for a few cities. See pp. 30-32.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. Union Scales of Wages and Hours of Labor, May 15, 1924. Bul. 388. 1925, pp. 185-190.

## Chapter 4.—RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYED WOMEN FOR THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS<sup>1</sup>

While there are employed women as well as employed men who are not responsible for the support of others, very many women at work have persons dependent upon them for a livelihood. These may be children of their own or of others; young sisters or brothers; parents or other elderly relatives; husbands ill or unable to get jobs. Information on the extent to which this is the case is scattering, but such as exists indicates that the situation is widespread among gainfully occupied women, whether in industrial, professional, or other work of whatever type.

The Women's Bureau, in addition to 22 studies it summarized at an earlier date,<sup>2</sup> recently has examined 50 reports published in 1929 or thereafter, and the findings discussed in the following are the result of selections of the more outstanding data presented by these 72 reports. They will be analyzed here to give indications as to the following:

Extent to which women are the sole support of their families.

Size of the families dependent for support on a woman.

Occupations of women who are supporting their families.

Women with dependents (but not sole family support).

Having full dependents.

Contributing to dependents, and number of these dependents.

Extent to which employed women contribute earnings to family expenses.

Women as heads of families.

Families with no men wage earners (but not necessarily with only one woman wage earner).

### Women Who Are the Sole Support of Their Families.

Very many women in this country are solely responsible for the entire support of their families. The results of 10 important studies, most of them made in the period from 1930 to the present, a few earlier, and several of them giving information for very large numbers, include reports for nearly 370,000 employed women, and show that more than one-eighth of these—12.7 percent, or nearly 47,000 women—were reported to be the sole support of families including at least one person besides themselves.<sup>3</sup> In half these studies, a fifth or more of the women reporting were the sole family support, and in some of them the proportions were very much larger. In addition to these

<sup>1</sup> The National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs now have in progress studies that will contribute to the scattered information on this important subject new data taken from their own membership and club groups.

<sup>2</sup> See Women's Bureau Bul. 75, *What the Wage Earning Woman Contributes to Family Support*, 1929. Complete references to most of the additional reports cited in this section will be found in the partial list of references in the Appendix, since to refer to all of them by footnote here would be unnecessarily cumbersome.

<sup>3</sup> In perhaps one of these studies there may have been some duplication of individuals where more than one study was made at different dates in the same locality or by the same agency, but the proportionate values are not affected thereby, since they are similar to those found in other studies; and of course there are very many other women in similar situations who are not included in these sample studies.

special studies, analysis of 1930 census data covering all the employed women in the country who were responsible for the homemaking in the family besides having paid jobs shows that a similar proportion of these—13.7 percent of them, or more than 450,000 women in all—were the sole support of their families. The data reported in these 10 studies, and also the results of the 1930 census analysis, are as follows:

<i>Study</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>Number of women reported on this subject</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>Percent of women who were sole wage earners in family</i>
Census study of 11 cities, 1920, by Bureau of the Census.....	271, 022	8. 1
Family status of breadwinning women, 4 cities, analysis of census data of 1920, by Women's Bureau.....	31, 482	21. 0
Denver, married women applying for jobs, study by Women's Bureau, 1928.....	180	52. 2
Meat packing employees, survey by Women's Bureau, 1928.....	897	11. 3
South Bend, Ind., industrial survey by Women's Bureau:		
1930.....	3, 063	12. 0
1932.....	1, 438	7. 7
Bridgeport, Conn., analysis of census data, 1930, by Women's Bureau.....	10, 869	10. 3
Fort Wayne, Ind., analysis of census data, 1930, by Women's Bureau.....	7, 496	10. 5
Philadelphia, unemployment in families, 1931, by Wharton School of Finance, University of Pennsylvania.....	34, 000	28. 4
New York City, employed women on relief, by New York State Department of Labor, 1935.....	5, 946	89. 1
Beauty shop employees, by New York State Department of Labor, 1936.....	3, 332	21. 8
Total, 10 studies.....	369, 725	12. 7
Employed women homemakers, analysis of census data 1930, by Women's Bureau.....	3, 331, 386	13. 7

<sup>4</sup> Dates for the most part are for the period covered in the study and not the year of publication.

<sup>5</sup> Exclusive of women who were living alone or boarding.

Several of these studies which reported on size of family showed that many of the women reported were supporting good-sized families. In practically 40 percent of the South Bend families in which a woman was the sole wage earner this woman was supporting three or more persons besides herself. This also was the case with more than 60 percent of the New York employed women on relief, and with just over 17 percent of the women who were the sole family wage earners in Bridgeport and in Fort Wayne.

Women who are the sole support of their families are found in all types of occupations. According to the study of employed women on relief in New York City, the proportion of families being supported solely by women wage earners was about the same both for women employed as domestic servants and for women employed in other occupations.

Considerable proportions of these women who bear the entire financial responsibility of their families are single, but many of them

are married. The Philadelphia survey cited deals only with married women and reports more than 9,500 of them in that city alone as the sole support of their families. In South Bend more than a third of the sole family wage earners were married. In Bridgeport and Fort Wayne, analysis of census data for all employed women showed that a small proportion of the employed married women whose husbands were living at home were the sole family support. If all the cities in the United States that are at least as large as Bridgeport and Fort Wayne had much the same number of married women who were the sole family support though their husbands were at home—and since more than 40 cities are very much larger than Bridgeport and Fort Wayne it may be assumed that even more of their employed married women are the sole financial stay of the family—there would be well over 4,000 employed married women in such a situation in these cities alone, taking no account of more than 300 cities of a similar size or smaller. Nor does this take into consideration many times as many married women whose families have a need of their earnings, only less great than those just cited. This is telling evidence showing how vital it is that married women as well as others are given opportunity to keep their jobs.

#### **Women Responsible for Support of Dependents.**

In the 11 reports cited that show the cases in which the woman was the sole family support, it is obvious that such woman had persons entirely dependent upon her, but many women not the only economic stay of the family also have others wholly dependent upon them for support.

Other studies that show women having full dependents include surveys of their own memberships made in 1931 by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs and reporting on more than 14,000 women, and by the American Woman's Association of New York in 1933, reporting on more than 1,300 women. In each of these practically 17 percent carried the complete responsibility for support of one or more persons, and a number had additional partial dependents. More than one-tenth of the business and professional women with others fully dependent on them were supporting three or more persons besides themselves.

The studies cited give a much more definite picture of the numbers reported who are fully responsible for the support of dependents than is the case with many such studies. Often it is very difficult to get a clear picture of the extent to which wage earners carry the entire support of others. In many cases a woman will be found to share with others the support of one or more persons. Most reports, therefore, can indicate only partial dependency, the extent of which is very hard to measure.

An examination of 34 studies giving information as to dependents (exclusive of census and relief administration reports) shows that, of the 155,282 women they included, 59.6 percent were contributing to the maintenance of dependents, in some cases in addition to those for whose complete support they were responsible.<sup>6</sup> This gives striking evidence of the fact that employed women are most likely to be at least sharing in the support of others. This is true of the reports showing a woman the sole stay of the family. Other outstanding studies showing that, besides earning their own support, very many employed women contribute to dependents are as follows:<sup>7</sup>

<i>Study</i> <sup>8</sup>	<i>Number of women reported on this subject</i>	<i>Percent of women having 1 dependent or more (total or partial undetermined)</i>
Women with a Ph. D., by Emilie Hutchinson, 1921-- Business and professional women:	485	69.5
1926-27-----	13,856	39.0
1930-----	14,346	63.6
New York, American Woman's Association:		
1929-----	1,710	40.0
1933-----	1,350	44.2
Employed women in New Haven, by Russell Sage Foundation, 1931-----	1,034	23.3
Bridgeport, Conn., women registered with Citizens' Emergency Committee, 1931-----	557	64.5
Portland (Oregon) teachers, Reed College, 1932-----	629	51.8
Single women teachers in 37 cities, reported by Na- tional Education Association, 1932-33-----	1,955	68.7
Gainfully-employed married women homemakers, by Cecile T. La Follette, 1932-----	652	62.0
Pennsylvania, women suffering temporary total in- juries, 1933-----	2,406	15.7
Philadelphia, women applicants to employment agencies:		
1933-----	6,932	66.6
1934-----	6,574	77.0
Single women reported by New York Emergency Work Bureau, 1932-33-----	20,000	37.3
New York City, employed women on relief, by New York State Department of Labor, 1935-----	6,674	93.6
Y. W. C. A. employees other than professional, 1936--	2,217	4.4

<sup>8</sup> Dates for the most part are for the period covered in the study and not the year of publication.

Considerable proportions of the women reported have a number of dependents. In the New York study of women on relief, 11 percent of the women included had 5 dependents, and some had 9 or more. A somewhat similar proportion of the Philadelphia women in search of work in 1933 had 4 or more dependents. Of the business and professional women surveyed in 1931, 45 percent had 2 or more dependents and nearly 9 percent supported 4 or more. Of the women who had suffered industrial accidents in Pennsylvania in 1933, a number had 4 or 5 dependent children.

<sup>6</sup> In some cases there may be duplications for individuals where more than one study was made at different dates by the same agency or in the same locality, but the proportionate values are not thereby overweighted for dependency.

<sup>7</sup> A report listed here may have been listed also among those reporting women as the sole support of their families, since some reports give both types of information.

In many cases some statistical method of reporting is used to show the average number of dependents per woman at work. It cannot be told from this type of reporting how many women were entirely or even partially supporting one or several others; nevertheless, it is of some interest as indicating the general situation. Data from the following reports show one dependent or more per employed woman reporting this type of information (in each case in addition to the employed woman herself):

<i>Study</i>	<i>Number of women reporting as to dependents</i>	<i>Average number of dependents per woman worker</i>
New York, American Woman's Association:		
1929-----	9 453	1. 9
1933-----	9 597	2. 4
Single women teachers, by David W. Peters, 1930-31-----	921	1. 5
Single women teachers in 37 cities, reported by National Education Association, 1932-33-----	9 327	(10)
Gainfully-employed married women homemakers, by Cecile T. LaFollette, 1932-----	9 405	1. 7
Pennsylvania C. W. A. workers, 1933-34-----	13, 329	1. 3
New York City, employed women on relief, 1935:		
Domestic workers-----	2, 272	2. 2
Other workers-----	4, 254	4. 4

<sup>9</sup> Number of women with dependents.  
<sup>10</sup> 2 or more.

In the New York City study of employed women on relief in 1935, there were selected 565 women with especially large numbers of dependents—something less than one-tenth of all reported—in order to show their wages, and this group affords data on the occupations of women with dependents. The 60 percent of these who were engaged in manufacturing had the most dependents. The average numbers of dependents according to occupation group were as follows:

	<i>Average number of dependents per woman worker</i>
Manufacturing-----	5. 1
Clerical-----	4. 7
Trade-----	4. 4
Domestic service-----	2. 2

The women supporting dependents may be either single or married, and it is easily understood that the usually smaller group of widowed and divorced might be likely to have dependents. The list of women with dependents, cited, shows data for certain of the studies that deal wholly with single or with married women. The following proportions of the women for whom such information was reported in additional studies were single:

<i>Study</i>	<i>Number of women with dependents</i>	<i>Percent who were single</i>
Business and professional women, 1930-----	9, 096	60. 0
New York City, employed women on relief, 1935:		
Domestic workers-----	2, 001	14. 1
Other workers-----	4, 096	61. 7
Beauty shop employees, New York, 1936-----	11 728	42. 0

<sup>11</sup> Sole support of their families.

In the New York study of employed women on relief, it was stated that there were relatively few single women that had only themselves to support. Only 93 of the 2,903 reported had no dependents, and for all those outside of domestic service, the median number of dependents was 5.3. Only 3 of the 481 single clerical workers, only 4 of the 108 in hotels and restaurants, and only 4 of the 1,384 in factories had no dependents.

Many married women also are financially responsible for dependents. In a study in the Minneapolis schools, 23 percent of the single and 42 percent of the married teachers were supporting others besides themselves. The New York employed married women on relief were responsible for supporting an average of 3.6 dependents. Other data on the large extent to which the employed women who support others are married are as follows:

<i>Study</i>	<i>Number of women with dependents</i>	<i>Percent who were married</i>
Business and professional women, 1930-----	9, 096	21. 5
Women suffering temporary total injuries in Pennsylvania, 1933-----	377	76. 9
Beauty shop employees, New York, 1936-----	12 728	33. 3

<sup>11</sup> Sole support of their families.

### Contributions of Women's Earnings to the Family Support.

In the Women's Bureau summary of information on women's family responsibility,<sup>13</sup> reports from 22 studies showed that over half of the more than 60,000 women reported had given all their earnings to the family support, and another large proportion had given part of their earnings, the extent not shown.

A few of the more recent studies examined report this type of information. In a study of women in Bethlehem and Philadelphia after the shut-down of Pennsylvania silk mills in 1931, all the married women had used their entire earnings in the support of the family. In two other surveys of industrial women two-fifths of the women reported had contributed all their earnings to the family exchequer, and well over half had given at least half their pay to the family upkeep.

In the survey of South Bend, Ind., in 1932, the earnings of nearly one-third of the women for whom such information was reported formed the entire family income, and in another one-fourth of the cases such earnings formed at least half the amount the family had to live on.

### Women as Heads of Families.

It may be surprising to many people to learn that more than 2½ million women in the United States are heads of families of two or more persons. To put it another way, not far from one-tenth (9.4 percent) of the families of such size in this country have a woman head. The proportion is larger in the more underprivileged families,

<sup>13</sup> Op. cit., Bul. 75.

as represented by those eligible for employment for work projects in January 1936, among whom 15.4 percent of the family heads were women. Very nearly all the women employed on work projects, over 410,000 of them, are heads of their families. Reports of the following additional studies indicate that in industrial localities especially large proportions of the women are family heads, as for example in the Massachusetts Old Colony area or in South Bend, Ind., surveyed by the Women's Bureau. The findings of several special studies that reported this type of information show the following:

<i>Study</i>	<i>Number of families reported</i>	<i>Percent having a woman at head of family</i>
New York unemployment surveys, 1931: . . . . .		
Buffalo-----	9, 557	6. 2
Syracuse-----	4, 582	7. 6
Industrial women in South Bend, Ind., 1932-----	1, 295	18. 4
Massachusetts census of heads of families not fully employed, 1934-----	269, 554	7. 1
Old Colony area, Mass., 1935-----	1, 734	25. 4

Some of these women heads of families are married, some are single. Many of these women family heads are women of a mature age, as the following shows:

<i>Study</i>	<i>Age of women family heads</i>
Rural cases on relief, 1933-----	49.8 years, median.
Massachusetts Old Colony area, 1935-----	45 to 60 years, 37.4 percent of those reported.

### Families With No Men Wage Earners.

A further illustration of the economic situation of women in this country is in the extent to which women who are at work have no men wage earners in their families. Though these data do not show the responsibility of individual women, they do indicate in several cases that practically one-tenth or more of the families reported have no men wage earners.

Perhaps the most complete sample of fairly recent data on this subject exists in the Women's Bureau analyses of census reports on employed women in two industrial cities of over 100,000 inhabitants—Bridgeport, Conn., and Fort Wayne, Ind.<sup>14</sup> In 15 percent of the families in each of these cities the only wage earners were women. The smaller of these had a total of about 7,500 families. Supposing the 93 cities of 100,000 or more population in this country to have at least this many families with an employed woman (many of them have considerably more), and supposing 15 percent of these to have only women wage earners, there must be well over 100,000 families in the United States maintained entirely by their employed women.

<sup>14</sup> Not yet published.



## **Part II.—EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN UNDER LABOR LEGISLATION**

Consideration of the effects of labor legislation opens a very broad field of investigation, since every type of such legislation may be expected to have a number of different effects and these may vary widely with the differences in location, in time, in previous custom, and in the special provisions of the law as well as the general circumstances of its introduction and administration.

Instances illustrating the effects of labor laws along many different lines and from many different angles are continually sought. Naturally, all the possible effects of all types of labor laws cannot be reported upon here, and indeed data for such an evaluation do not exist, but the most usual experience as to the effects certain kinds of laws have had upon women's employment situation can be described from full and adequate data. Summaries will be given here of material from a few comprehensive surveys that indicate definite conclusions, drawn from wide areas, as to the results within particular fields of study arising from certain types of labor legislation; other instances illustrating the most usual and wide-spread effects of various types of such laws also will be shown. Together, these will cover the following subjects:

Effects of the National Industrial Recovery Act on women's employment, hours, and wages, and on collective bargaining.

Effects of minimum-wage laws.

Effects of labor legislation on the employment opportunities of women.

Certain of the labor legislation considered here applies to both women and men, but even though the basic law makes no difference between the sexes, the results show that along some lines the benefits of the law have been considerably more marked for women than for men. Other types of labor laws considered here apply solely to women and have been enacted to relieve situations under which women were especially exploited.

The major purpose of labor legislation is the same as the primary purpose of all legislation. It is an effort to put the authority of the Government behind such regulation of conditions as is necessary for the life and work of the individual at the points where without such authority he or she is unable to provide adequate self-protection in relations with other individuals or organizations. Labor legislation recognizes the stake of the community in healthful and satisfactory living and working conditions for the people. Every evidence points to the fact that employed women often are in a situation particularly

open to exploitation, and consequently there have been lines along which the action of government has been more necessary for women than for men.

Where the employed are organized in groups of comparable strength with those that exist for their employers, it is less necessary for the Government to step in as arbiter or commander. But where labor organization is weak the strength of the Government is the more needed.

Experience in the United States, as in other countries, has shown women's difficulties in developing labor organization, in consequence of which they sometimes particularly need legislation to prevent exploitation. A primary reason why organization moves especially slowly for women lies in the very fact emphasized so frequently in these pages, that women often form exploited groups, low paid, engaged in highly seasonal industries and in various types of part-time work, and usually subject to the traditional evaluation of their work as not highly skilled.

A number of the strongest organizations of men are in work in which women are not engaged; for example, building trades or mining. Of American Federation of Labor membership, building trades account for over a third, and more than another third are included in transportation and communication, mining and quarrying, and metal, machinery, and shipbuilding unions taken together (1932). The large manufacturing woman-employers, textiles, leather, and clothing, have formed together only about 6 percent of the Federation membership; adding food, liquor, and tobacco; paper, printing, and publishing; personal service and trade; and amusements and professions, still does not bring the proportion to one-fourth.<sup>1</sup>

It was estimated in 1924 that of the more than 8½ million women then employed only about 250,000 were organized.<sup>2</sup> This was less than 9 percent as great as the total membership of the American Federation of Labor reported for the next year, though the 1920 census figures showed that women formed over 20 percent of all gainfully employed persons and at least 15 percent both of those in manufacturing and mechanical industries and of those in trade. There are some unions that do not admit women, though women work in non-union shops in the same industries; for example, certain metal trades and glass unions.

At present, labor organization is advancing rapidly, under fuller governmental protection than heretofore, and this benefits women as well as men. However, the position of women in union development as well as in the working world still requires the assistance of government through strong legislation to relieve situations in which women as workers are especially subject to exploitation.

<sup>1</sup> Lorwin, Lewis L., and Jean A. Flexner. *The American Federation of Labor*. 1933. pp. 303, 486.

<sup>2</sup> Wolfson, Theresa. *The Woman Worker and the Trade Unions*. 1926. p. 127.

Of primary importance to workers are the following: The opportunity to get and hold a job suited to their abilities; hours of work short enough to preclude physical strain and to provide some leisure for life; a wage at least sufficient to maintain healthful living and help to provide for old age; healthful and otherwise suitable physical surroundings in the work place; and, basic to all of these, the right to associate freely with other workers for the purpose of bargaining collectively with the employing agency in order to secure these needs.

Ordinarily it is in relation to some phase of these matters of major importance that labor laws seek to place the authority of the Government behind workers' needs. Experience has shown that this authority often is even more imperative in the case of women than of men, because there are many ways in which women's employment situation is especially difficult and is such that they frequently are not able to maintain strong organizations to secure these things for themselves.

That this is the general experience of employed women is illustrated by the low rates of women's wages compared to men's, discussed earlier in this report (see pt. I, ch. 3), and by the fact that even where State legislation fixes maximum hours for women this maximum quite often is very much longer than the hours actually being worked by the majority and is needed primarily to hold in check the more unscrupulous employers and to provide better conditions for the groups of workers most exploited.

## Chapter 1.—EXPERIENCE OF THE EFFECTS OF THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY ACT ON WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT, HOURS, AND WAGES, AND ON COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

When the National Recovery Administration was organized, a part of its program of reviving industry sought, so far as the workers specifically were concerned, "to increase the consumption of industrial and agricultural products by increasing purchasing power, to reduce and relieve unemployment, to improve standards of labor."<sup>1</sup> The present report has stressed repeatedly the fact that the situation of women cannot be considered as isolated from all the other elements in the economy of a nation, but is instead an integral part of this economy. Though this Act applied to all workers, its effects along certain lines were, on the whole, more pronounced for women than for men, as, for example, in connection with wages, which were at a much lower level for women than for men.

Several very full studies of the effects of the National Recovery Administration have been made, and a summary will be given here of material from various sources, and particularly of what is shown, especially in application to employed women, in the conclusions of three major ones of these that deal with employment, hours, wages, and collective bargaining. Though these evaluations were made by entirely different agencies and approached the problem from quite divergent angles, the fact that their findings on these subjects are substantially similar reinforces the significance of such findings as a measure of effects of this law in respect to labor.<sup>2</sup>

When it was apparent that the framing of codes for various industries (the method employed under the Recovery Act) would consume a considerable time, the President's Reemployment Agreement was instituted, encouraging all individual employers to agree to a week of not over 40 hours and to certain minimum wages for the various industries (scaled according to size of locality) until such time as codes could be approved. The provisions of the P. R. A. were in some cases modified for individual industries. The effects of this agreement often were as pronounced as those of later codes, or even more so, and the following summaries sometimes apply to both the

<sup>1</sup>National Industrial Recovery Act. Public, No. 67. 73d Congress. H. R. 5755, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Unless otherwise specified, the discussion following is based on findings in the following: (1) Hours, Wages, and Employment Under the Codes, prepared by the National Recovery Administration for its hearings on employment provisions of codes. January 1935; (2) Employed Women Under N. R. A. Codes, a report by the Women's Bureau; and (3) Report of the President's Committee of Industrial Analysis on the Administration of The National Industrial Recovery Act, February 1937. This committee was composed of John M. Clark, economist, Columbia University, chairman; William H. Davis, of Pennie, Davis, Marvin, and Edmonds; George M. Harrison, president, Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks; and George H. Mead, president, Mead Corporation. Valuable data also are compiled in one of the later reports by the N. R. A. Division of Reviews: The Content of N. I. R. A. Administrative Legislation, Work Materials No. 35, Part B. Labor Provisions in the Codes. February 1936.

P. R. A. and the N. R. A. Since the effects of the two, though they may have differed in degree, usually were in much the same direction, the term N. R. A. often may be used to include both.

#### HOURS AND EMPLOYMENT UNDER THE N. R. A.

The President's explanation of the act stated:

The law I have just signed was passed *to put people back to work* \* \* \*. The idea is simply for employers to hire more men to do the existing work by reducing the work hours of each man's week and at the same time pay a living wage for the shorter week.<sup>3</sup>

It is most important to note that this differed materially from the various "spread-the-work" plans that formerly had been attempted, since its intent was to maintain, and indeed to advance, wage levels, whereas the "spread-the-work" plans usually reduced wages as well as time worked. The effects of this part of the program were two-fold: that on employment, and that on hours worked.

#### Employment Under the N. R. A.

The N. R. A. report made in January 1935 gave an estimate of the number of employees added to pay rolls in N. R. A. industries. How much greater the increase was under the N. R. A. and P. R. A. than prior to these moves is shown by the figures as to additions to pay rolls from March 1933, which, in round numbers, were as follows:

To June 1933 (prior to N. R. A. or P. R. A.)	1,628,000
To November 1934 (latest date reported)	3,464,000

Though care was taken not to say what part of this increase could be attributed specifically to the N. R. A., the statement was made that an appreciable increase in employment was experienced, particularly in those industries that were operating under codes when the report was made.

In September 1934 the Recovery Board included in its policy statements—

That the maximum hour provisions of the codes have made a definite contribution to reemployment.

The President's Committee of Industrial Analysis, headed by a distinguished economist, in its report in February 1937 stated that—

The effect of the P. R. A. in bringing about increased employment through reducing weekly hours of work was striking.

Between June and October 1933, the report continues, employment in N. R. A. industries had increased 11.4 percent, in other than N. R. A. industries only 4.4 percent, and in agriculture only 1 percent. "Since industrial activity declined during this period, increase in employment is directly attributable to the shortening of hours under the P. R. A." Between October 1933 and the early months of 1935,

<sup>3</sup> National Recovery Administration, Bul. 1. Statement by the President of the United States of America. Outlining Policies of the National Recovery Administration. 1933. p. 1.

there were slight further increases in employment, and these were greater in N. R. A. industries than in others, though the differences were not larger. A recent statement by a former N. R. A. official shows that—

During the N. R. A. period, employment in N. R. A. industries increased by some 2,055,000 persons, primarily because of the decrease in hours effected by the N. R. A., as production was declining during the period when this increase was effected.<sup>4</sup>

### Hours of Work Under the N. R. A.

In the 1929 period of peak production, working hours averaged more than 48 a week. They fell markedly during the depression and averaged less than 35 a week in 1932, but when recovery was imminent, in the spring and summer of 1933, they rose by more than 30 percent in 3 months.

The first N. R. A. code (that for the cotton textile industry) established a basic 40-hour week as the maximum, and this was the standard adopted in 84 percent of the codes. However, very many forms of exceptions were allowed, either by specific code provisions or through administrative tolerance. According to the report of the President's Committee, a maximum workweek of 48 hours or longer thus was permitted for a substantial part of the employees in 64 percent of the codes, those covering 61 percent of the workers in all those industries that were under codes.

The N. R. A. report of January 1935 showed that the average hours in manufacturing industries for 11 months in 1934, December excluded, were more than one-tenth lower than the average for the first 6 months in 1933. The President's Committee of Industrial Analysis, reporting in 1937 the results of its investigations of 159 industries, showed that because of reductions in the hours of work from June 1933 to October 1933, by the latter date only very small proportions of these industries had an average week above 40 hours, most of them having an average of 35 to 40 hours. The figures are as follows:

<i>Average hours</i>	<i>Percent of 159 industries with hours specified in—</i>	
	<i>June 1933</i>	<i>October 1933<sup>4</sup></i>
More than 45.....	25. 2	1. 9
40-45.....	37. 8	5. 0
35-40.....	28. 3	58. 5
Less than 35.....	10. 0	34. 6

<sup>4</sup> No data on number of employees.

### Women's Hours and Employment Under the N. R. A.

Naturally, women as well as men profited by the N. R. A., and along some lines women benefited more than men.

That on the whole greater reductions in hours had taken place in the large woman-employing industries than in those employing chiefly

<sup>4</sup> Barkin, Solomon (formerly of the N. R. A. Labor Advisory Board). Revival of N. R. A. Labor Program. In *Journal of Electrical Workers*, March 1937, p. 103.

men is indicated from the N. R. A. report of January 1935 as to changes in average hours for the first half of 1933 to the average for 11 months in 1934 (December omitted). In all but 1 of 6 important woman-employers, hours had been reduced 16 percent or more in this N. R. A. period, while in only 1 of 9 industries not among the great woman-employers had the hour reduction been so great. The figures are as follows:

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Percent reduction in hours under N. R. A.</i>
<b>Woman-employers:</b>	
Cotton goods.....	28.4
Boots and shoes.....	16.2
Electrical machinery.....	* 6.0
Knit goods.....	20.4
Silk goods.....	16.3
Woolen and worsted goods.....	25.1
<b>Not predominantly woman-employing:</b>	
Automobiles.....	6.2
Cane sugar refining.....	26.0
Cement.....	4.3
Chemicals.....	7.9
Leather.....	15.4
Iron and steel.....	* 3.4
Lumber and timber products.....	9.2
Paper and pulp.....	12.3
Rubber tires and tubes.....	3.1

\* In this case hours increased.

During this period the Women's Bureau, in the course of an investigation of women employed in the large manufacturing State of Michigan, reported striking employment increases due to hour reductions made necessary by the hour provisions set by codes in 10 industries. Before the P. R. A. or N. R. A., from 38 percent to 90 percent of the women worked more than 40 hours a week, but after the introduction of codes less than 10 percent (except in one industry) worked so long; in 5 of the 10 industries less than 5 percent of the women worked over 40 hours. These figures for Michigan follow:<sup>7</sup>

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Percent increase in employment under codes or P. R. A.</i>	<i>Percent of employees working over 40 hours—</i>	
		<i>Before codes or P. R. A.</i>	<i>At close of 1934</i>
Bakery products.....	16.0	51.3	6.8
Drugs and chemicals.....	18.0	43.5	7.2
Electrical supplies.....	58.0	37.9	4.1
Furs and millinery.....	4.4	90.1	5.6
Knit goods:			
Hosiery.....	52.4	68.9	1.3
Other.....	25.0	76.6	2.6
Metal products.....	93.6	40.8	7.6
Paper boxes.....	16.7	62.0	4.1
Paper manufacturing.....	12.1	50.3	21.9
Women's underwear.....	15.2	83.8	1.1

<sup>7</sup> From unpublished material in the files of the Women's Bureau.

Other scattered studies further illustrate the benefits of the N. R. A. to women. For example, a State survey of identical firms in Minnesota reported an increase of 24 percent in the employment of women, with shortened hours and increased earnings as a result of the N. R. A.<sup>8</sup>

A study of the cotton-garment industry in Pennsylvania, among whose employees women greatly predominate, reported that "Evidence is conclusive that the N. R. A. has \* \* \* reduced the working hours of all employees and increased the weekly earnings for the majority of workers in the cotton-garment industry."<sup>9</sup>

Compared to the advantages for women in manufacturing industries, the N. R. A. was not able to do so well for women in their two largest fields of employment—service and clerical work. It did not succeed in dealing adequately with enforcement of labor provisions in the service codes, such as those for the laundry and hotel industries. Practically two-fifths of the codes established longer hours or greater tolerances for clerical workers than for production employees, though it was common knowledge that very large proportions of the women seeking jobs through employment agencies were clerical workers.

#### WAGES UNDER THE N. R. A.

Since the effort of the N. R. A. was to reduce working hours and at the same time to increase purchasing power, naturally there had to be a considerable advance in hourly rates. This upward movement of hourly earnings continued throughout the period of N. R. A.'s existence. The statements of the N. R. A. as to policy, made in September 1934 and based on experience of the law, included the following:

That a minimum-wage structure is socially beneficial not only as a safeguard to the worker but also as a wage-floor for the operation of the competitive system and therefore should be maintained.

More significant from the point of view of increasing purchasing power, as well as from that of the benefit of the law to the worker, are weekly earnings. Increases in these are of more importance than hourly increases, which could be considerable without meeting the purpose of the act if hours were reduced too drastically.

According to the 1937 report of the President's Committee of Industrial Analysis, average weekly earnings for the manufacturing and 13 nonmanufacturing industries combined increased from June 1933 to October 1933 by 3.6 percent, in spite of a reduction of 12.7 percent in actual weekly hours worked. Of this P. R. A. period the report states, "The course of industrial trends was completely changed." From October 1933 to the early months of 1935 there was an 8 percent advance in wages.

<sup>8</sup> Minnesota. Department of Labor and Industry. Biennial report, 1933-34, pp. 138-156.  
<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania. Department of Labor and Industry. Bureau of Women and Children. Cotton Garment Workers in Pennsylvania Under the N. R. A. 1934. p. 1. (Mimeog.)



There were greater wage increases in the combined industries under codes than in those not under codes, and the N. R. A. report in 1935 shows from weighted averages the following advances.

	<i>Percent increase from June 1933 to—</i>	
	<i>June 1934</i>	<i>November 1934</i>
N. R. A. industries.....	8	6
Noncodified industries.....	4	4

Discussing real wages, that is, wage levels adjusted according to changes in living costs, this report shows that in every month after March 1933, wages were above the low point of that month, and wages in the early months of 1933 (January–April) always were exceeded by those of the corresponding month in 1934. Of course, there were differences among industries. Of 10 shown in detail in the report, 7 showed wage increases from the early months of 1933 (January–April) to the latest months then reported (October–November 1934). The advances in some of these were very much greater than the declines in the remaining 3.

These reports are careful not to estimate the exact extent to which these advances can be attributed to the N. R. A. and the degree in which other factors operated in the same direction. However, as to the effects of the N. R. A. on wage standards the following may be quoted from the summary of the final impartial report:

The N. R. A. represented the first attempt at regularizing the wage conditions in industry on a uniform National basis \* \* \* N. R. A. did usher in an upward wage movement which had tremendous force, establishing a firmer basis of buying power; removing inordinately low wages; stabilizing wage competition to a considerable degree through the establishment of a minimum-wage level; introducing higher wage standards in many areas in which low wage traditions prevailed.

### **Women's Wages Under the N. R. A.**

The experience that has been found usual under labor legislation in relation to women was demonstrated again under the N. R. A.; namely, that the establishment of moderate wage standards as a minimum benefits women on the whole even more than men since in general the levels of women's wages are below those of men.

Available data show that under the N. R. A. women's wages advanced more than men's even in spite of the fact that a wage lower than men's was permitted for women workers in 159 codes, covering 16.6 percent of all persons at work under codes. The 1937 report of the President's Committee points out that "practically every significant industry which employed women at low wage rates or in which labor was unorganized requested female wage exception, or a minimum rate so low as to allow for a differential without providing a specific female wage exception." In New York (the only State that was publishing reports of manufacturing wages by sex through the N. R. A. period) women's average weekly earnings in manufacturing increased

by 16.2 percent, men's by 3.4 percent, from July 1933 to November 1934.<sup>10</sup> The proportional wage increases for the two sexes in certain clothing industries in this State were as follows:

	Percent of wage increase for—	
	Women	Men
Women's clothing.....	26	6
Men's furnishings.....	53	10
Women's headwear.....	17	7

In Pennsylvania, during the same time, wages in all manufacturing increased 11.6 percent, but in the following important woman-employers they showed greater increases, sometimes very much greater:<sup>11</sup>

	Percent increase in average weekly earnings for all employees
Textiles.....	27.3
Women's clothing.....	29.6
Confectionery.....	13.9
Cigars and tobacco.....	42.4

Examples taken from woman-employing industries further illustrate women's wage advances under the N. R. A. A Women's Bureau survey of the dress industry in New York showed the following advances in median week's earnings of women as inside operators in dress shops due to the N. R. A. or to the Union Agreement, the provisions of which were incorporated in the code:<sup>12</sup>

	Percent increase in median week's earnings
On cheapest dresses.....	75.2
On cheap dresses.....	44.3 to 55.7
On dresses highest in price.....	47.5

A Pennsylvania report of wages in the cotton-garment industry, a very large proportion of whose employees are women, showed that from October 1932 to February 1934 wages had increased by one-half.<sup>13</sup>

A survey of the cotton-textile industry by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that from July 1933 to August 1934 the real weekly wage (that is, adjusted for cost of living) of women employees had increased by 7 percent in the North, by 16 percent in the South.<sup>14</sup>

In cotton dyeing and finishing the same agency reports that 28 percent of the women received at least \$14 in July 1933, whereas in August 1934 the percent receiving so much was 36. In silk and rayon dyeing and finishing 47 percent of the women had received \$14 or more in August 1933 (the earliest data available for comparison) in contrast to 56 percent in August 1934.<sup>15</sup>

According to other reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, wages in the cigarette industry advanced by 46 percent for white and 73 percent for Negro women.<sup>16</sup> The same agency also gives the

<sup>10</sup> See Women's Bureau Bul. 130. 1935. p. 121.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>12</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Piece work in the Silk-Dress Industry. Bul. 141. 1936. p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Pennsylvania. Department of Labor and Industry. Bureau of Women and Children. Cotton-Garment Workers in Pennsylvania Under the N. R. A. 1934. p. 7. (Mineog)

<sup>14</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Monthly Labor Review, March 1935. p. 624

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, May 1936, pp. 1347, 1357.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1326

following evidence as to women with hourly earnings of 35 cents or more in the silk and rayon industry and of 40 cents or more in woolen and worsted manufacturing:<sup>17</sup>

	<i>Percent before N. R. A.</i>	<i>Percent during N. R. A.</i> <i>(August 1934)</i>
Silk and rayon.....	7 (April 1933).....	57
Woolen and worsted.....	19 (January-March 1932).....	48

The fact that women were among those especially benefiting by the N. R. A. wage provisions, though in many cases their minimum was fixed below that of men in the industry, is indicated in the following summary statement from the 1935 analysis made by the N. R. A.:

In short, there have been increases in wage rates nothing short of phenomenal, wherever the previous rate was low, that is, for labor working in low-paid industries, for labor in the South, particularly female labor, for labor living in towns of less than 20,000 population, for labor in low-paid occupations, in a word for labor getting very low pay anywhere coming under codes \* \* \*. In short, the codes have probably helped those whom it was especially designed to help, namely, those whose real incomes were already pitifully small \* \* \*.

#### **LABOR RELATIONS UNDER THE N. R. A.**

Of even greater importance to workers than the direct efforts of the Recovery Act to secure better wage and hour conditions were its parts designed to assure to the workers a more favorable status in their formation of organizations and their use of these to improve their employment conditions. Basically, the Constitution of the United States contains the following provision:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

—Amendment I—part of the original Bill of Rights of the Constitution.

This is the charter of right for every assembly in the land, religious, secular, philanthropic, or of whatever type, from the smallest woman's club or struggling labor union or auxiliary to the largest federation of organizations of whatever kind. There are countries in which women are not normally allowed free organization but, instead, all their associations are controlled by a powerful State in its own interest. This has not been the case under the theory of the United States Government. But there are still many cases in which vigorous efforts must be made to maintain and to make effective this constitutional guarantee.

In this country the earliest women's clubs were not organized until the eighteenth-fifties,<sup>18</sup> though working women's organizations

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1935, pp. 1436, 1451.

<sup>18</sup> *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. XXVIII, 1906, pp. 205-206, 227-228. Organization dates of the earliest women's clubs in this country were as follows: 1852, the Ladies' Literary Society of Kalamazoo, Mich.; 1859, Minerva Club of New Harmony, Ill.; 1868, both the Sorosis and the New England Woman's Club. The Lowell Female Labor Reform Association existed considerably earlier than this, and the tailoresses in New York formed a union as early as 1825.

existed earlier. In 1833 so famous a leader as Lucretia Mott reports that she and three other women attending an antislavery meeting "were not recognized as a part of the convention by signing the document" agreed upon.<sup>19</sup>

The basis of freedom to meet in groups is the same, no matter what the type of organization. To workers this freedom is of the first importance when they meet for the purpose of dealing with problems arising out of their employment. This is even more true when employers seek to prevent or circumvent what the Constitution guarantees.

It should never be forgotten that the principles that apply to organizations for labor bargaining are those that underlie all freedom to hold club meetings or form any other associations. But because of the primary importance to the worker of the employment contract and the right to organize for its improvement, and because this comes into conflict at times with other and powerful economic interests, there probably has been more discussion and more legal action on this type of organization than on any other in the United States. This arises partly from the fact that the employer often has very much more real power to affect the worker's whole life than has the Government, which normally is more remote from the individual. For example, a woman observer in discussing a basic industry writes:

This land \* \* \* is in reality composed of a multitude of kingdoms whose despots are the employers—the multimillionaire patrons—and whose serfs are the laboring men and women \* \* \* whereas Pharaoh by his unique will controlled a thousand slaves, the steel magnate uses, for his own ends also, thousands of separate wills.<sup>20</sup>

It is not possible to discuss here the considerable body of American legislation seeking to protect the free organization and action of labor groups, such as the Clayton Act of 1914 and the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932, both seeking to limit court injunctions against labor action, and the court cases defining more closely the position of labor in respect to organization.<sup>21</sup>

The famous section of the National Recovery Act that sought to give further guarantees for the full association and action of labor groups, Section 7 (a), provided in part as follows:

That employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and shall be free from the interference, restraint, or coercion of employers of labor, or their agents, in the designation of such representatives or in self-organization or in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection; that no employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union or to refrain from joining, organizing, or assisting a labor organization of his own choosing.

<sup>19</sup> James and Lucretia Mott—Life and Letters. 1884. pp. 111, 114.

<sup>20</sup> Van Vorst, Mrs. John, and Marie Van Vorst. *The Woman Who Toils*. 1903. pp. 9-10

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Lorwin, Lewis L., and Jean A. Flexner. *The American Federation of Labor*. 1933. Also Commons, John R., and John B. Andrews. *Principles of Labor Legislation*. 1936.

As to the purpose and effects of this, a thorough study of the work of the labor relations boards made these statements:

Congress sought to make sure that collective bargaining, through organizations of the workers' own free choosing, was furthered, and to protect workers against coercion or dismissal for union activities.

Employers in industry as a whole were no longer legally free to impose upon employees against their will a form of labor organization to which they did not agree and employers were to negotiate in good faith with bona-fide labor organizations. <sup>22</sup>

The N. R. A. experience showed that these groups of workers freely organized formed the most effective force in carrying out the spirit of the N. R. A. provisions. The impartial report of the President's Committee of Industrial Analysis, made in 1937, states that--

\* \* \* the declaration as public policy of the provision for the protection of the workers' individual right to organize and bargain collectively represented a landmark in the development not only of labor organization but of labor legislation.

The N. I. R. A. had declared definitely in favor of collective bargaining by assuring protection to employees who organized themselves for this purpose \* \* \* it was recognized that labor representation and active participation were essential.

The report states further that the Recovery Act and its administration "profoundly affected labor relations in American industry", and that the greatest contribution of the boards created under the N. R. A. "was in an exposition of the meaning of collective bargaining."

The provisions of 7 (a), taken seriously by workers, gave a tremendous impetus to organization. New drives for membership were undertaken, both through existing unions and through new unions in industries formerly unorganized. Labor organizations were given an opportunity, where sufficiently well-formed and articulate, to have a fuller influence in establishing and maintaining better standards of work in American industry. During 1933-34 the number of paid-up union members increased by about 650,000. A former N. R. A. official has stated recently: "Membership in unions rose; new unions appeared; collective bargaining spread; trade agreements increased." He indicates further the effects of the law in maintaining labor standards, since after it became inoperative these standards declined, and--

\* \* \* hourly wages have fallen to the depression levels in some industries, and in industry as a whole, despite the fact [of] increased economic activity, have not risen appreciably; and hours have been considerably lengthened. <sup>23</sup>

A series of special studies of typical clothing industries, which are important woman-employers, reported that in hosiery manufacture the most important gain for the workers has been the right of collective

<sup>22</sup> Lorwin, Lewis L., and Arthur Wubnig. *Labor Relations Boards*. 1935. pp. 448, 450.

<sup>23</sup> Barkin, Solomon (formerly of N. R. A. Labor Advisory Board). *Revival of N. R. A. Labor Program*. In *Journal of Electrical Workers*, March 1937, p. 136.

bargaining. They showed also that in the men's clothing and ladies' garment industries workers gained because the codes were national in scope and enabled standards to be established for the entire industry, and because they provided for a label on goods produced under code conditions, thus making possible a check to see that all manufacturers were aware of the standards required. In the ladies' garment industry the ban on overtime, together with the 35-hour week, made possible a better control over a highly seasonal industry than the union formerly had achieved, and establishment of uniform standards tended to halt the migration of shops into lower-wage areas.<sup>24</sup>

#### **SUMMARY AS TO EFFECTS OF THE N. R. A.**

The experience under the National Industrial Recovery Act gives definite testimony to the benefits secured by workers through this piece of labor legislation, especially in its early stages. Hour standards were materially shortened on a national scale, new guarantees were given for collective bargaining, and a new impetus to the development of labor organization resulted.

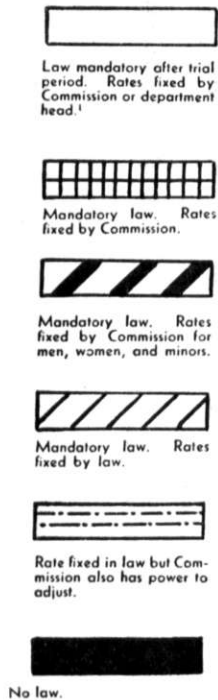
The levels of wages in manufacturing industries were advanced somewhat, very much more so for women than for men because women's wages had been at the lowest levels. Women in two very large occupational groups—service and clerical work—received less benefit than did those in manufacturing. The Administration never was able to enforce adequately the labor provisions in codes for service industries, in some of which there was little organization of labor to be of assistance; and a large proportion of the codes allowed to clerical workers, most of whom are women, longer hours or greater tolerances than were allowed in the case of production workers.

This experience again illustrated the fact that under legislation which in itself includes women on the same terms as men, women whose employment standards are so much below those of men are more affected along some lines than men are, but they still fare worse than men do since more than a fourth of the codes had exceptions permitting a lower minimum wage for women than that permitted for men. That custom and the powerful force of tradition still countenance such a situation again emphasizes the fact that in many cases special measures to assist women in attaining adequate standards continue to be necessary.

<sup>24</sup> Affiliated Schools for Workers, Inc. *Labor and the N. R. A.* By Lois MacDonald, Gladys Palmer, and Theresa Wolfson. 1934. pp. 33, 34, 37, 38, 46.

## MINIMUM WAGE LAWS FOR WOMEN AND MINORS

JUNE 1, 1937



<sup>1</sup> This type, known as "the minimum fair wage law", is the uniform standard now in force in 9 States.

## Chapter 2.—EXPERIENCE AS TO THE EFFECTS OF MINIMUM-WAGE LAWS

Other parts of this report have shown how consistently the level of women's wages has remained below that of men's.<sup>1</sup> There is considerable testimony to the definite effects minimum-wage legislation in this country has had in raising women's wages. For a time such information was very scattering, but in 1935 there were 16 States that had mandatory minimum-wage laws on their statute books; one State adopted such legislation in 1936 and three others by May 1937.<sup>2</sup>

At least 13 States and the District of Columbia have had periods of effective minimum-wage activity, in most cases affording data as to the results obtained.<sup>3</sup> These data invariably show some effect in raising women's wages. A few of these States have been continuously at work for many years to raise women's wages by this method and have met with a considerable measure of success in so doing. Data for eight States, all of them important industrially, will be presented here.<sup>4</sup>

### STATES WITH CONTINUOUS MINIMUM-WAGE EXPERIENCE FOR MANY YEARS

#### California.

Experience of more than 20 years in the administration of minimum-wage provisions in California illustrates the efficacy of this type of legislation in bringing women's wages more nearly to the level of men's and in maintaining high wage levels in a considerable degree even during severe depression.<sup>5</sup> Women's wages in this State showed an abrupt rise each time the minimum was increased, and even in 1931, when some concessions became necessary because of the depression, they were maintained at a level surprisingly high considering the abyss into which women's wages had fallen elsewhere. Three pro-

<sup>1</sup> See ch. 3 of pt. 1.

<sup>2</sup> California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. In 1936 Rhode Island was added. In 1937 Nevada, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania were added by May 1, Arizona later in 1937. A decision of the United States Supreme Court in this year has been held to revive laws never repealed in Arkansas, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and in Minnesota as applying now to adult women. Hence, such laws are operative in 24 jurisdictions.

<sup>3</sup> Arkansas, California, Kansas, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, and Wisconsin. Minnesota can be added to this list, but is not discussed here since the law in that State for years applied only to minors. Orders have not been issued or the law has not been put into effect in Colorado, Nevada, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Utah. Connecticut and Rhode Island have not yet had orders for important woman-employing industries that have been in effect long enough for determination of results, though both have made careful industry studies and each has issued one important order.

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of Arkansas, Kansas, and the District of Columbia, whose laws were declared unconstitutional, see Women's Bureau Bul. 61, The Development of Minimum-Wage Laws in the United States, 1912 to 1927. 1929. pp. 334-337 and 340-346. For discussion of Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington, where few data are available, see Bul. 61, cit., pp. 374-396.

<sup>5</sup> The first decree was in effect in 1916. See Women's Bureau Bul. 61, cit., p. 11.



gressive weekly minimum rates for industries in general—hourly rates for canning had been set in 1916—were fixed in California as follows:

1917-----	\$10. 00
1919-----	13. 50
1920-----	16. 00

The last was the highest ever fixed on a general scale in any State, and women's wages in California thus were kept at a correspondingly high level for more than 15 years. This situation was maintained with the ardent support of many employers, in spite of the fact that some of the most important industries to which the law applies are highly seasonal and some are among those usually thought of as especially low-paying; for example, various types of canning and preserving, laundries, confectionery, and certain of the clothing industries.

Median earnings in California industries before and after the 1920 standard was established were as follows:<sup>6</sup>

	<i>Median of week's earnings in—</i>	
	<i>1919</i>	<i>1920</i>
Manufacturing-----	\$13. 50	\$17. 10
Laundries-----	13. 85	17. 25
Mercantile-----	13. 85	17. 35

Striking examples of the effect of the minimum-wage provision are shown by comparison of the proportions of women earning certain amounts before and after the order fixing a \$16 minimum. The following are the proportions with earnings of \$17 or more before and after this minimum was set:<sup>7</sup>

	<i>Percent earning \$17 or more</i>
March 1919 (\$10 minimum)-----	16. 5
March 1922 (\$16 minimum)-----	54. 5

The proportion continued to rise, and even in the depression years of 1930 and 1931 more women than at the earlier dates were earning at least \$17, well above the required minimum. In September 1931 the following were the proportions earning \$17 or more:<sup>8</sup>

	<i>Percent earning \$17 or more</i>
Manufacturing-----	44. 0
Laundry and dry cleaning-----	45. 7
Mercantile-----	72. 4

The proportions of women in manufacturing whose wages were well above \$16 even in the earlier depression year of 1921 had more than doubled those before such minimum was fixed. In laundries and in those manufacturing industries for which 500 or more women were reported, the following are the proportions whose wages were \$18 or more before the decree and after the decree fixing the minimum at \$16.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Women's Bureau Bul. 61, cit., p. 237.

<sup>7</sup> California. Department of Industrial Relations. Biennial report, 1930-32, p. 103.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112, 113, 119.

<sup>9</sup> California. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Biennial reports: 1919-20, p. 140 ff, and 1921-22, p. 146 ff.

	Percent whose wages were \$18 or more—	
	Before decree, 1918	After decree, 1921
All manufacturing.....	15.0	40.0
Bakery products.....	2.7	30.0
Boxes, bags, cartons, etc., paper.....	.4	17.3
Canning and preserving of fruits and vegetables.....	20.9	38.7
Canning and packing of fish.....	10.5	34.6
Packing and processing of dried fruits.....	18.3	37.4
Clothing, men's.....	16.1	57.6
Clothing, women's.....	12.9	51.7
Confectionery.....	7.4	27.7
Electric machinery, apparatus, and supplies.....	6.0	54.5
Food preparations.....	1.0	27.2
Printing and publishing.....	14.6	77.1
Tobacco manufactures.....	18.8	30.8
Laundries (steam).....	6.6	39.6

Comparison of the California wage rates with those of other States indicates the influence of the minimum-wage law and its administration in keeping up women's wages. In surveys of two important industrial States in 1922, the Women's Bureau found women's median week's earnings in manufacturing, stores, and laundries combined to be \$13.65 in Ohio and \$14.95 in New Jersey,<sup>10</sup> but in California in the same period women had median earnings in manufacturing of \$17, in laundries of \$17.35, and in stores of \$18.35.<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the definite effect of the minimum-wage law in increasing the proportions of women receiving amounts well above the minimum, such amounts still were received by very many more men than women. The reports on manufactures for 1918 (prior to decree setting \$16) and 1921 (after the \$16 minimum) show more than nine-tenths of the men to be receiving \$18 or over, the proportions being the same in the 2 years. For women, while the proportion after the \$16 minimum was set was more than two and one-half times that before, it still was less than half of men's. The figures are as follows:<sup>12</sup>

	Percent whose wages were \$18 or more—	
	1918	1921
Men.....	91.0	91.8
Women.....	15.0	40.0

It would be difficult to find a more striking example both of the need of minimum-wage legislation for women and at the same time of its marked effect in raising the levels of women's wages.

### Massachusetts.

The first minimum wage in Massachusetts was put into effect in 1914. Through most of its history the law in this State has been nonmandatory—carried out only through publicity of violations, not through any active enforcement powers—and the minimum rates fixed have been rather low. These conditions have not fostered so spectacular a showing of results as that in California. Nevertheless,

<sup>10</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Women in Ohio Industries. Bul. 44. 1925. pp. 26, 131, and Women in New Jersey Industries. Bul. 37. 1924. p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 61, cit., p. 337.

<sup>12</sup> California, cit., 1921-22, pp. 97, 98.

there is considerable evidence to indicate that the more than 20 years' experience of Massachusetts has demonstrated that the law has had some influence in advancing women's wages.

The experience as to the extent to which the low-wage groups had been raised in certain important woman-employing industries is quite striking when the reports are considered from inspections made before and those made shortly after the minimum-wage decrees were issued.<sup>13</sup> Though the minima fixed were quite low and though the period was one of generally rising prices, these reported inspections are not representative of either the price peak of 1920 or the trough of 1921-22 and may be considered fairly indicative of some definite influence of the wage law even though compliance was not compulsory.

	Percent whose rates were \$1½ or more—	
	Before wage decree	At first inspection after decree
Druggists' preparations (1923; 1924)-----	9. 8	51. 6
Electrical equipment and supplies (1925; 1928)-----	46. 2	63. 5
Laundries (1918-19; 1923)-----	<sup>14</sup> 14. 4	50. 8
Retail stores (1919; 1922-23)-----	21. 8	68. 4

<sup>14</sup> \$13 or more.

Earnings had been very materially raised for the women in one very low-paid group for which between 1,000 and 2,000 women were reported—the cleaners of offices and buildings. Before the decree well over two-fifths of these workers had rates of less than 32 cents an hour; after the decree less than 3 percent had such low rates in any year reported. Before the decree only 13 percent had rates so high as 38 cents; after the decree, in the various years reported, from a third to more than a half received this much and practically a tenth to a sixth were paid at least 45 cents.<sup>15</sup>

Before the decree the median of the week's earnings was the pitifully small sum of \$6.55, and only a fourth of the women received as much as \$7.35. After the decree, even in the depressed year of 1921, the median of the earnings was \$11.35 and a fourth received more than \$12.55. These and other week's data from inspections of the wages of this low-paid group at various times are as follows:<sup>16</sup>

	One-half earned above this amount	One-fourth earned above this amount
1917-----	\$6. 55	\$7. 35
1920-----	10. 00	10. 90
1921-----	11. 35	12. 55
1922-----	11. 55	13. 20
1925-----	12. 10	13. 50

Reports for individual industries indicate marked rises in earnings after a decree or frequently a series of several decrees progressively raising earnings over a period of years. While these years represent a time of generally rising prices, yet the wage advances in a number

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts. Department of Labor and Industries. Annual reports: 1923, p. 64, and 1929, pp. 74-75.

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts, cit., 1929, p. 75.

<sup>16</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 61, cit., p. 348 ff.

of cases were greater than could be accounted for without the action fixing a minimum. In stores and in bread and bakery products, for example, a rise of about one-fifth took place in a 2-year period not one of phenomenal price rises. In women's and men's clothing, laundries, and men's furnishings very great wage advances occurred over 5- to 10-year periods marked by decrees successively raising the minima fixed. These and other figures for special industries show the following wage advances:<sup>17</sup>

	<i>Median of week's earnings—</i>		<i>Percent increase</i>
	<i>Before any decree</i>	<i>After decree or series of decrees</i>	
<b>Manufacturing:</b>			
Bread and bakery products.....	\$12. 05	\$14. 25	18. 3
Candy.....	8. 30	12. 35	48. 8
Corsets.....	10. 25	9. 70	<sup>18</sup> 5. 4
Knit goods.....	10. 40	<sup>19</sup> 15. 00	<sup>20</sup> 44. 2
Men's clothing.....	6. 50	<sup>19</sup> 18. 00	<sup>20</sup> 176. 9
Men's furnishings.....	6. 65	13. 75	106. 8
Millinery.....	8. 95	15. 60	74. 3
Muslin underwear.....	6. 10	9. 35	53. 3
Paper boxes.....	10. 15	13. 70	35. 0
Women's clothing.....	6. 00	<sup>19</sup> 18. 00	<sup>20</sup> 200. 0
Cleaners, office and building.....	6. 55	10. 00	52. 7
Laundries.....	5. 95	13. 35	124. 4
Retail stores.....	7. 05	8. 55	21. 3

<sup>17</sup> In this case a decrease, in the depression year 1921.

<sup>18</sup> The median falls above this amount.

<sup>19</sup> See footnote 19.

## Wisconsin.

Since the minimum rates fixed in Wisconsin have been relatively low, the effect in raising the general wage level has not been great. However, 20 years of experience has shown definite effects in raising the wages of many women whose earnings were very low.

The first decree was put into effect in 1917. After the minimum was raised in 1921 to yield, on the basis of the 50-hour week usually worked, \$11 to \$12.50 according to size of locality, computations show three-fourths of the women in all industries, from localities of all sizes, earning above the following amounts:<sup>21</sup>

1922.....	\$13. 35
1923.....	13. 65
1924.....	14. 10

Comparison of Wisconsin wages with those in other States shows the definite benefits of minimum-wage laws for women. During the late depression year of 1932, minimum hourly rates set for experienced women in canning factories in Wisconsin were, by size of locality, 20 and 22½ cents. In California, another minimum-wage State, the rate was higher, 33½ cents. An investigation made in the summer of 1932 of 43 canneries in New York State, which at that time had no minimum-wage law, showed that in almost three-fourths of these plants women received not more than 12½ cents an hour.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 61, cit., p. 348 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 61, cit., p. 367

<sup>22</sup> New York Consumers' League. What the New Canning Code Has Done for the Women Employed in New York Canneries. [1932?] p. 10.

Data on average full-time earnings per week in 1930 in three industries reported by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics show the average lower in most States than in Wisconsin, in spite of the rather low Wisconsin rates.

	States or cities reported	Having wages below those of Wisconsin
Boots and shoes <sup>22</sup> .....	14 States.	11 States.
Hosiery <sup>24</sup> .....	13 States. <sup>25</sup>	8 States.
Men's clothing <sup>26</sup> .....	12 cities.	9 cities below Milwaukee.

<sup>22</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wages and Hours of Labor in the Boot and Shoe Industry, 1910 to 1932. Bul. 579. 1933. p. 22.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Wages and Hours of Labor in the Hosiery and Underwear Industries, 1932. Bul. 591. 1933. p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Data for Minnesota were tabulated with those for Wisconsin, but the latter, an important State in this industry, undoubtedly predominated.

<sup>26</sup> U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wages and Hours of Labor in the Men's Clothing Industry, 1932. Bul. 594. 1933. p. 7.

### STATES WITH RECENT MINIMUM-WAGE EXPERIENCE

The severe depression that began in 1929-30, causing unprecedented lows in women's wages, aroused a very keen and widespread interest in existing minimum-wage laws and gave new impetus to their passage in additional States. In four of these States the new laws were followed by the fixing of minimum rates in an important service industry in which such low wages had been paid by many plants that employers desired State cooperation in setting a bottom level to wages—the laundry industry. In each of these States the experience has been that the minimum-wage orders considerably raised the wage levels of women at work in laundries. The advances in average week's earnings in this industry in three of these States were as follows:

	Average weekly earnings—		Percent increase
	Before minimum fixed	After minimum fixed	
New Hampshire <sup>27</sup> .....	\$10. 20	\$11. 33	11. 1
New York <sup>28</sup> .....	10. 41	13. 42	28. 9
Ohio <sup>29</sup> .....	8. 83	10. 61	20. 2

<sup>27</sup> Some Effects of the Laundry Wage Order. Report of Inspections Made Under Directory Order No. 1 by the New Hampshire Minimum-Wage Office, 1934-35. Table 1. (Mimeog.)

<sup>28</sup> Factual Brief for Appellant in the New York Minimum-Wage Case Before the United States Supreme Court. John J. Bennett, Jr., Attorney General of New York State, 1935. p. 71.

<sup>29</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Special Study of Wages Paid to Women and Minors in Ohio Industries Prior and Subsequent to the Ohio Minimum-Wage Law. Bul. 145. 1936. p. 63.

Average hourly earnings also increased in these States, as well as in Illinois, as follows:

	Average hourly earnings—		Percent increase
	Before minimum fixed (cents)	After minimum fixed (cents)	
Illinois <sup>30</sup> .....	25. 8	27. 6	7. 0
New Hampshire <sup>31</sup> (rates) .....	27. 3	30. 6	12. 1
New York <sup>32</sup> .....	24. 1	31. 0	28. 6
Ohio <sup>33</sup> .....	22. 9	27. 5	20. 1

<sup>30</sup> Effect of the Laundry Directory Order on the Wages and Hours of Women and Minors (Illinois). (Mimeog.) p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> New Hampshire, cit.

<sup>32</sup> Unpublished data compiled by the Women's Bureau

<sup>33</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 145, cit., p. 76. Figures are for 60 laundries reported for both periods.

In New York 81 percent of the women had increases in hourly earnings after the laundry order went into effect. The advance in women's average week's earnings from May 1933 to November 1935 was much greater in laundries than in all manufacturing industries, the percent of increase being as follows:<sup>34</sup>

	<i>Percent increase in women's average weekly earnings</i>
Laundries.....	28.9
All manufacturing industries.....	16.7

Further testimony to the beneficial effects of a minimum-wage law for women on their wages is shown in the fact that in New York such wages immediately declined when the law in that State ceased operation. In presenting the data confirming this, the New York State Industrial Bulletin says:<sup>35</sup>

It is significant that the increased hours and the decreased wage had occurred within four months after invalidation of the minimum fair wage law by the Supreme Court and in spite of sincere attempts by laundry associations to maintain higher wage standards.

In order to secure further information on the effects of minimum-wage legislation, the Women's Bureau investigated women's wages in 131 laundries in New York, operating under a minimum-wage law, and 116 laundries in Pennsylvania, a State having no minimum wage.<sup>36</sup> Advances in women's wages had been much greater and wage levels were considerably higher under the minimum wage than without it, as the following data for women's wages show:

	<i>Percent increase in average hourly earnings, 1933 to 1935</i>	<i>Percent receiving less than 27½ cents an hour, November 1935</i>
New York.....	28.6	0.8
Pennsylvania.....	14.7	73.5

#### EFFECTS OF MINIMUM-WAGE LAWS OTHER THAN IN RAISING WAGE LEVELS

From the foregoing data it is apparent that it has been the universal experience in this country that minimum-wage legislation for women has raised the level of women's wages.

Two important questions that frequently have been asked as to its other effects on women can now be answered from experience of considerable duration. These questions are: How does it affect the employment of women? Does it pull down the wages of the women formerly paid above the minimum?

#### Employment of Women Where Minimum-Wage Laws Exist.

There is no evidence that where minimum-wage laws have been in operation they have had any general effect upon the employment of women. Indeed, there is no reason why the fixing of a minimum should cause women to be replaced by men, for even though it raises

<sup>34</sup> New York brief, cit., pp. 70-72.

<sup>35</sup> New York. Department of Labor. The Industrial Bulletin, February 1937, p. 49.

<sup>36</sup> Unpublished data compiled by the Women's Bureau.

women's pay considerably their wage levels still are very materially below those of men. The continual shifts in women's employment that are occurring at all times and in all places are caused by many factors other than those of the establishment of a minimum wage. Where losses occur they are due to industrial reasons, and the type of law that has been shown to have raised women's wages has no appreciable effect on their employment. In fact, the usual experience is that women's employment continues its normal increase where minimum-wage laws are in effect, as is illustrated by the following characteristic data from several States.

*California.*—The experience of California indicates that, rather than a decline in the employment of women after the \$16 minimum-wage orders had been put into effect, there were increases in numbers of women in manufacturing industries, and very decided increases in the proportions women formed of all employees. These orders were applied in 1920 and the figures compared are those reported by the California Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1918 and 1921.<sup>37</sup>

In all manufacturing industries (laundries included) the proportion of women among the employees increased considerably from 1918 to 1921, the figures being as follows:

	<i>Percent women formed of all employees</i>
1918.....	19. 8
1921.....	26. 7

Among the industries employing 500 or more women in 1921 were 5 reporting an increase in the number of women employed, even though in 3 cases fewer firms were reported. The proportion women formed of the whole showed little change in two industries. There was an increase in five industries as is shown in the following summary:

	<i>Percent women formed of all employees in—</i>	
	1918	1921
Canning and preserving of fruit and vegetables.....	62. 1	65. 7
Clothing, women's <sup>38</sup> .....	77. 3	79. 6
Food preparations.....	48. 1	54. 9
Packing and processing of dried fruits.....	29. 8	56. 4
Tobacco manufactures.....	51. 4	59. 6

<sup>38</sup> In this case fewer women in 1921, since fewer firms reported.

Further evidence of the fact that minimum-wage legislation for women does not cause decline in their employment opportunities is shown by the continuous increases in their employment in mercantile, laundry and dry cleaning, and manufacturing industries in California after the minimum-wage orders were put into effect. Though there were declines during the depression, yet even in some of the worst depression years, 1930 and 1931, there were more than twice as many women in these occupations as in 1919, before the \$16 minimum-wage orders. While the increase from 1920 to 1930 in employment of women

<sup>37</sup> California, *cit.*, 1919-20, p. 140 ff., and 1921-22, p. 146 ff.

in these industries in California was nearly 69 percent, the increase for the country as a whole, as nearly as comparable figures can be obtained, was less than 13 percent.<sup>39</sup>

*Massachusetts.*—In 5 years ending in 1923, wage rates of 123,543 women covered by minimum-wage orders were examined. A wholly negligible proportion of these, only 90 women in the grand total, so small a proportion as scarcely can be expressed, had been discharged because of refusal to adjust their rates to the law.<sup>40</sup>

*New York.*—The following statement, made by New York State officials, is based on data collected by the State department of labor as to the effects of the wage increase under the minimum-wage order for the laundry industry:

There is no indication that the increased wage for women has resulted in the displacement of women by men in the laundry industry. Throughout the period from 1933 to 1935 women have continued to form 60 percent of the employees in New York State laundries.<sup>41</sup>

Visits to 36 New York laundries, employing at least 50 workers and showing a change in proportion of women employed during the minimum-wage period, were made by agents of the Women's Bureau, United States Department of Labor (data unpublished). The actual number of women in these laundries had increased 4.5 percent. Though in some cases women had lost jobs because of introduction of machinery or other purely industrial causes, in only three cases did the employers mention the minimum wage as contributory. Their complaint was not the basic minimum wage but the higher rates required for short hours and overtime. In the Women's Bureau study of conditions in 131 New York laundries as compared to 116 such establishments in Pennsylvania, greater employment increases were found in New York than in Pennsylvania where there was no minimum-wage law.<sup>42</sup> Women's employment had increased in the following proportions during the period when the New York minimum-wage law was in effect:

	Percent increase in woman-employment, May 1933–November 1935
New York-----	5.9
Pennsylvania-----	2.9

*Ohio.*—A comparison of the numbers of women employed in *identical establishments* before and during the operation of the minimum-wage orders in Ohio shows that the number of women both in laundries and in dry-cleaning plants had increased in this period, though the number of men in dry cleaning had declined.<sup>43</sup>

*Wisconsin.*—Of 863 Wisconsin employers asked in April 1923 as to whether the minimum-wage law had resulted in dismissal of women

<sup>39</sup> California, *cit.*, 1930–32, p. 108; U. S. Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census, 1930: Population, vol. IV, Occupations, p. 6 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Frankfurter, Felix, Mary W. Dawson, and John R. Commons. *State Minimum-Wage Laws in Practice*. Published by National Consumers' League. 1924. p. 171.

<sup>41</sup> New York brief, *cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Unpublished data compiled by the Women's Bureau.

<sup>43</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 145, *cit.*, p. 75.



and minors, 96 percent replied that it had not. Of the few who said there had been dismissals, some added comments indicating inefficiency of the employees who had lost their jobs, and the possibilities therefore were that this would have happened without the law.<sup>44</sup>

### Wages of Women Above the Minimum.

Minimum-wage laws are designed specifically to raise wages at the very lowest levels, and it has been abundantly illustrated that they accomplish this. The experience also has been that the laws have tended to raise the wages of many who were receiving above the minimum, in spite of the fact that such laws are not especially designed to apply to these workers. Instances of this in a number of minimum-wage States may be shown.

*California.*—The experience of California has been that the proportion of women receiving \$17 and over has increased steadily from 1920, when the minimum of \$16 was fixed, through 1929, with only a slight drop in 1930, and that in September 1931 such amounts were received by 58 percent of the women. Even in this depression period (1931), the following proportions received \$20 or more:<sup>45</sup>

	<i>Percent receiving \$20 or more</i>
Manufacturing.....	25.6
Laundry and dry cleaning.....	22.9
Mercantile.....	45.7

*Massachusetts.*—In Massachusetts, where the minimum rates were fairly low, usually less than \$14, and the orders were not mandatory, the increases in proportions receiving \$17 or more were remarkable. These proportions follow:<sup>46</sup>

	<i>Percent with rates of \$17 or more—</i>		
	<i>Before wage decree</i>	<i>At first inspection after decree</i>	<i>At inspection several years later</i>
Druggists' preparations.....	(47)	19.5	31.4
Electrical equipment and supplies.....	12.0	24.6	26.8
Laundries.....	(47)	14.1	23.7
Retail stores.....	8.1	26.3	38.3

<sup>47</sup> Not reported.

*North Dakota.*—Though without a large industrial population, North Dakota has had long experience with a minimum-wage law. A survey of that State made by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor in the depression year of 1931 found that almost two-thirds of the experienced women in a large sample were receiving more than the minimum rates fixed for the industries in which they were employed.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Frankfurter, Dewson, and Commons, cit., pp. 121-122.

<sup>45</sup> California, cit., 1930-32, pp. 108, 112, 116, 119. For earlier data for particular industries, see p. 101 of present report.

<sup>46</sup> Massachusetts, cit., 1929, pp. 74-75; 1930, p. 59.

<sup>48</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Wages and Hours of Women in North Dakota. (Mimeog.) pp. 6-8.

*Laundry wages in four newer minimum-wage States.*—The fact has been referred to that several of the newer minimum-wage States fixed such wages first in the laundry industry. Their experience has been that after a minimum was established not only did larger proportions of women than before receive as much as this amount, but larger proportions than before earned more than this minimum. For example, 30 cents or more, an amount above the minimum, was received by the following proportions of women in the States specified:

	Percent receiving 30 cents or more—	
	Before minimum fixed	After minimum fixed
Illinois <sup>49</sup> -----	18. 2	20. 9
New Hampshire <sup>50</sup> (rates)-----	37. 5	42. 4
Ohio <sup>51</sup> -----	15. 6	25. 0

<sup>49</sup> Illinois, cit., p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> New Hampshire, cit., table 4.

<sup>51</sup> Women's Bureau Bul. 145, cit., p. 76. Figures are for 60 laundries reported for both periods.

A similar showing is made even if amounts considerably above the minimum are considered. These proportions of women received as much as \$16 and as much as \$15 in New Hampshire <sup>52</sup> and New York, <sup>53</sup> respectively:

	Percent receiving amount specified—	
	Before minimum fixed	After minimum fixed
Women in New Hampshire receiving as much as \$16-----	3. 5	13. 9
Women in New York receiving as much as \$15.	9. 1	21. 7

### SUMMARY OF THE EFFECTS OF MINIMUM-WAGE LAWS

The universal experience with minimum-wage legislation, wherever it has been introduced into the various States in this country, is that it has very materially raised the wages of large numbers of women, and that in some cases this effect has been most marked.

Far from reducing the wages of those receiving above the minimum, this type of law has resulted in raising the wages of many persons who previously had received more than the minimum fixed, and experience has shown that the minimum put in operation does not become the maximum.

In regard to women's employment, the usual experience has been that it continues to increase regardless of whether or not there is minimum-wage legislation, and in the State where the highest minimum was maintained over a long period of years women's employment increased considerably more than in the country as a whole. The constant changes in employment that are occurring are attributable to many factors not connected with the minimum wage, and there is no evidence that such legislation has any general or controlling effect toward inducing the replacement of women by men.

<sup>52</sup> New Hampshire, cit., table 2.

<sup>53</sup> New York brief, cit., p. 71.

### Chapter 3.—EXPERIENCE AS TO THE EFFECTS OF LABOR LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN ON THEIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT

When the occupations of any group are under fire, that group naturally becomes very jealous of its position. For example, in the recent depression period the employment of women was under fire in some areas and under certain situations—and indeed in some countries it was urgently suggested that, in spite of a large unattached woman population, the traditional housekeeping duties of their sex still should form almost their only job.

Women in the United States, suffering from a considerable drive against the employment of married women, regardless of their status and financial responsibilities, saw in this situation the beginning of further opposition to the gainful employment of all women. This caused a redoubling of the efforts of the advocates of opportunity for women, accompanied by a flare-up of the old fear that legislation to secure improved wages, hours, and conditions of work for women might limit their chances of employment.

A similar situation occurred during the depression after the World War. At that time also there was a fear that women's employment opportunities might be lessened by labor legislation applying especially to them, such as that shortening their hours, even when it merely sought to secure for women hours as short as those already provided for men through union action.

Curiously enough, this led to a resistance to labor legislation for their own sex on the part of women who advocate primarily women's rights, and who therefore, it would be thought, would welcome efforts to secure better labor conditions for women and to bring their situation in this connection nearer to the standards more generally enjoyed by men. This attitude has continued over some years.

The Women's Bureau, the Federal agency officially charged with the duty to "promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment", sought to gather accurate information as to the actual effects of labor legislation on the women who were at work at the time of its enactment. To obtain this information, a very extensive survey was conducted, consisting of many parts and planned specifically to secure objective data. The findings of the survey constitute the most comprehensive and objective report as to the experience in the effects of labor legislation for women that ever has been made in any part of the world. Its findings are

in principle as authentic under present conditions as they were when the study was made, and they are likely to remain so for many years to come.

### **CHARACTER AND PARTS OF STUDY OF EFFECTS OF LABOR LEGISLATION<sup>1</sup>**

The report was based on schedules secured over a nine-month period beginning in March 1926 from more than 1,600 establishments employing over 660,000 men and women, and from personal interviews with more than 1,200 working women who actually had experienced a change in the law or who were employed under conditions or in occupations prohibited for women in some other State. The setting up of the problem and the technique of procedure were designed to safeguard the objective character of the results. The survey sought to find out what actually happened in a selected number of industries in various States before and after the enactment of laws in those States that had them, compared with what actually happened in the same industries in States not having such laws.

In planning the investigation a carefully considered choice was made between a detailed statistical study of conditions in a few establishments in a limited area and the collection of information through individual interviews covering large groups in many States and occupations. It was felt that the latter method would yield the most significant results, because, provided the findings were acceptable from a scientific point of view, the field from which they were drawn would be broad enough and sufficiently varied to be conclusive.

It was necessary, of course, to adopt the sampling process so as to secure material that would illustrate the subject adequately. In selecting these samples the policy followed was to take certain industries that, in regard to numbers and proportions of women employed, increases or decreases in such numbers and proportions, extent of organization, type of work done, amount of skill required, and opportunity for competition with men, were typical of different conditions of women's employment.

#### **Five Important Woman-Employing Industries Studied.**

Five manufacturing industries—boots and shoes, hosiery, paper boxes, electrical products (including apparatus and supplies), and clothing—were selected as typifying representative conditions of women's employment in industries regulated by laws in many States and as furnishing adequate samples of the general influences that have played a part in determining women's position in industrial

<sup>1</sup> Much of the material in the pages following is taken bodily from the report of the study. Because of the importance of making clear the scientific character of the survey, and because of its many parts and far-reaching character, scope and method are set forth in considerable detail. For the complete report see Women's Bureau Bul. 65, *The Effects of Labor Legislation on the Employment Opportunities of Women*, 1928. 498 pp. (Out of print but available in libraries.) For a summary see Bul. 65, which is a reprint of ch. II of the report. 1928. 22 pp.

pursuits. There was planned also a survey of possible opportunities for women in industries operating longer than the hours permitted by law for women or operating at night. In States where there was no legal limitation of women's hours, the extent of women's employment under the conditions prohibited in other States was studied; and in States where such limitations existed, employers were interviewed to discover what would be the possibilities for the increased employment of women if the legal restrictions were not in effect.

One form of schedule was used for the detailed comparative study of women's employment in five industries. For other sections of the investigation, more limited in scope, a less elastic schedule was used.

### **Special Lines of Employment and Characteristic Occupations Studied.**

In addition to the information concerning women employed in general manufacturing processes, data were collected as to the effects of any legislation regulating the employment of women and especially of hour regulation in the following:

**Important fields of work for women:**

- Occupations in stores.
- Waitresses in restaurants.

**Occupations representing concrete individual problems:**

- Core makers.
- Street-car conductors and ticket agents.
- Elevator operators.
- Pharmacists.
- Metal-trades occupations.
- Printing occupations.

**Special occupations prohibited in some States (in some cases very unimportant numerically):**

- Welding.
- Grinding, polishing, and buffing.
- Taxi driving.
- Meter reading.

### **Agencies Cooperating in Special Parts of the Survey.**

In an attempt to secure information regarding women's employment as affected by legislation from the standpoint of the placement official, the Women's Bureau was fortunate in securing the cooperation of the 44 State employment offices cooperating with the United States Employment Service.

Information was secured also from the Industrial Survey Commission of the State of New York as to the experiences of many persons in relation to a proposed 48-hour law for women.

In two instances the information secured by the Women's Bureau was supplemented by investigations made by State labor officials. In New York State the Bureau of Women in Industry of the Depart-

ment of Labor made a survey of the number of women employed at night in newspaper offices that was used in this report in the section on night-work legislation; and in Pennsylvania the Bureau of Women and Children of the Department of Labor and Industry made a study of the mercantile establishments of that State and furnished an abstract of the study for inclusion in the Women's Bureau report.

### Interviews With Industrial Women as to Their Experiences.

Another part of the investigation, fully as important as the detailed examination of the industrial employment of women, was the securing, through interviews with working women themselves, of accounts of how legislation had affected them personally. With the exception of a group of women who were employed in occupations or under conditions prohibited in other States by law, interviews were not used unless the women were employed when some legislation went into effect. In this section of the investigation the effort was especially determined to keep the material objective and to record no general opinions as to approval or disapproval of the laws in question. This policy materially limited the group of women who could be interviewed, as in many States the only important laws had been passed so long ago that few women could be located whose work history went back so far. Nevertheless, a considerable number of women were found who could give direct testimony of the effects on their opportunities of specific labor laws, and this testimony threw much light on certain aspects of legislation.

### Coverage of the Survey.

The entire coverage of this very extensive investigation is shown here and on the following page.

	<i>Establish- ments</i>	<i>Men em- ployed</i>	<i>Women em- ployed</i>
Grand total.....	1, 563	500, 223	164, 552
Manufacturing industries.....	312	75, 947	44, 894
Boots and shoes.....	37	8, 142	7, 238
Clothing.....	81	7, 164	8, 942
Electrical products.....	106	55, 907	17, 055
Hosiery.....	42	3, 801	9, 581
Paper boxes.....	46	933	2, 078
Stores.....	54	5, 193	13, 374
Restaurants (waitresses).....	198	2, 537	2, 361
Long-hour industries.....	233	90, 748	24, 453
The evening shift.....	7	3, 616	2, 114
The effect of night-work laws on women in industry.....	301	217, 421	71, 141
Special occupations (where these can be statistically recorded):			
Elevator operators.....	335	1, 608	691
Street-car conductors and ticket agents.....	7	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Core makers.....	12	3 198	3 121
Women in metal trades.....	15	101, 797	5, 146
Women in printing and publishing.....	89	1, 158	257

<sup>2</sup> The report on women street-car conductors and ticket agents was compiled from three sources: 2 studies made in 1919 and 1 in 1926. Information giving total numbers of men and women employed therefore would not be indicative of the situation at any one time and has been omitted for that reason.

<sup>3</sup> In the occupation.

In addition to the foregoing, pharmacists were reported on from 38 States in which both the State boards of pharmacy and the labor departments were consulted.<sup>4</sup>

Further than this, in the case of four occupations prohibited in some States, information was obtained for women employed in such occupations in other States where they were not prohibited, though some of them were of little importance numerically. The numbers reported upon in these were as follows:

	<i>Establishments</i>	<i>Women</i>
Grinding, polishing, and buffing.....	43	526
Welding.....	19	126
Meter reading (electric and gas).....	16	None
Taxi driving.....	5 20	5 40

<sup>1</sup> Of the 20 establishments investigated, 19 employed no women.

### CONCLUSIONS OF STUDY OF EFFECTS OF LABOR LEGISLATION

Women in gainful occupations are assuming steadily a more important position in economic and industrial fields, in spite of differences in locality, economic condition, industrial need, demand for labor, or status of women as wage earners.<sup>6</sup>

This development of gainful employment for women has been accompanied by extensive increases in the labor legislation applying to women; and just as the growth of women's opportunities has shown different trends in different places, so has the legislative regulation of their work. In some States there is very complete legal regulation of most phases of women's employment in industry; in other States there is practically no regulation whatsoever. In some States the laws in question cover a large proportion of the women who are at work; in other States they apply to only a small group. Even the most comprehensive of them, however, does not apply to many women in business and professional occupations, to women who work independently, nor to women in supervisory positions.

Disregarding two factors—the nonexistence in 1937 of a figure even approximating the number of women gainfully occupied and the effects of recent changes, favorable and unfavorable, in legislation—it can be said that at the time of the Women's Bureau study of the effects of legislation it was estimated that the sum total of women in the United States having working hours regulated by special labor legislation amounted to only about one-third of the women gainfully occupied. The industrial codes in operation are due to the experiences and efforts of many different groups, some of which have been dominant in one locality and some in another.

The Women's Bureau investigation sampled many different types of women's employment. Some of the occupations studied may be considered typical of a wider field; others are unique in their require-

<sup>4</sup> As pharmacy study was made chiefly by questionnaire, the information cannot be classified statistically in the form required by this table.

<sup>6</sup> See pt. I, sec. 1, of the present report on employment of women.

ments and correspondingly individual in the effects of legislative regulation. The variety of occupations and industries covered, however, was sufficiently wide to indicate the most obvious benefits and pitfalls that may result from different kinds of legislation covering the outstanding occupations of women.

### **Effects of Hour Laws.**

In general, the regulatory hour laws as applied to women engaged in the manufacturing processes of industry do not handicap the women but serve to regulate employment and to establish the accepted standards of modern efficient industrial management. When applied to specific occupations not entirely akin to the industrial work for which the laws were drawn, this regulatory legislation in a few instances had been a handicap to women. But the findings seem to show that the instances of handicap, which were diligently sought by the investigators, were only instances, to be dealt with as such, without allowing them to interfere with the development of the main body of legislation.

In 4 States with laws that limited women's working week to 48 or 50 hours, information was secured from 156 establishments employing 24,216 women. In only 2 of these establishments was there any indication of a curtailment in women's employment resulting from the hour law. In those 2 establishments the total decrease in the number of women employed was only 9. The almost infinitesimal proportion that these 9 form of the more than 24,000 women included under the law in the plants studied indicates the relative unimportance of legislation as a possible handicap to women.

There is no doubt that legislation limiting women's hours of work has reacted to establish shorter hour standards generally and to eliminate isolated examples of long hours. Also, in a large majority of cases, when hours were shortened for women because of the law they were shortened also for men.

Legislation is only one of the influences operating to reduce hours in manufacturing establishments. Other factors that have the same effect and that operate to a greater or less degree according to the locality and type of industry, are agreements with employees or with other firms, competition with other firms, production requirements, and business depressions. The report stresses the impossibility of generalization, the necessity for recognizing differences in occupations, industries, and localities.

On the whole, the investigation showed that legislative hour restrictions of women's work have a very minor part in influencing their position and opportunities in manufacturing industries. Employers have very generally accepted the fact that long hours do not make for efficient production. This has been even more widely accepted in the very recent years since the reports under discussion. Competition between firms often leads to decreased hours so that a better type of



labor may be attracted, and cases even were reported of a reduction in hours to lessen the competition for labor resulting from a legal standard of short hours for women in a neighboring State.

The legal limitation of women's hours occasionally results in the maintenance of different schedules for men and women in the same plant. This, however, has not limited nor restricted women's employment and is not a situation peculiar to establishments operating under legal regulation. Employment of men and women on different hour schedules was found as an operating policy where such differences were not due to the law but were inaugurated merely for the convenience of the management or workers.

Legal limitations of women's hours of work have not brought about any degree of substitution of men for women. In manufacturing establishments that employed men longer hours than were permitted for women there was no evidence of any decrease in women's employment because they could not work so long as men could, but in a comparatively small number of cases there might have been additional jobs open to women if they could have worked longer hours. These jobs, however, bore no evidence of especially valuable occupational opportunity.

Not only have there been practically no instances of actual decreases in women's employment as a result of hour legislation, but the general status of their opportunity seems not to have been limited by this type of law. Women were employed as extensively in California as in Indiana, in Massachusetts as in New York. More than half the employers who required of men longer hours than were legal for women stated that they would not employ women for such hours even did the law permit it.

Aside from the shortening of hours and the elimination of overtime, the most important effect of legislation limiting women's hours of work is the increased employment of women that accompanies such legislation. It is a very general condition that where women are restricted by law to 48 or 50 hours of work per week, a larger force of women is hired than would be the case if it were legally possible to employ women overtime to take care of rush work.

Further illustration of the fact that hour laws have not limited women's opportunities in industry was given by the actual experiences of working women who had been employed at the time when some hour legislation went into effect. Not one woman had found that such legislation had handicapped her or limited her opportunity in industry. As a result of the laws, hours had been decreased for the majority of women, but this was the only result experienced generally enough to be significant.

#### **Effects of Night-Work Laws.**

Laws prohibiting night work for women in industry are chiefly a reflection of the usual attitude of employers regarding such practice,

but occasionally they have resulted in a limitation of women's employment. There is an astonishingly strong feeling among employers in industry against the employment of women at night, irrespective of legal regulation. Night work, considered undesirable for men, is considered very much more undesirable for women. Sometimes the fact that women cannot be employed at night reduces or eliminates their employment during the day, but here again the legal prohibition of night work is not the primary factor; one of the most striking examples found of such a situation was in a State where there is no night-work law for women.

On the whole, in most localities and industries night work for either men or women is frowned upon and is decreasing. The majority of employers in industry consider night work to be even more undesirable for women than for men and they would not employ women at night even if the law permitted. When applied indiscriminately to special occupations that are professional or semiprofessional in type, night-work prohibition or regulation has resulted in restrictions of women's employment.

#### **Effects of Prohibitory Laws.**

It should be pointed out that labor legislation divides broadly into two parts: (1) Laws definitely prohibiting employment of women; (2) laws regulating their employment. The laws that regulate their employment may become prohibitory in their actual effects. A very different problem of investigation was involved in studying prohibitory legislation from that followed in connection with regulatory laws. The effects of the laws prohibiting employment in certain occupations are very different from those that are regulatory. Prohibitory laws have really only one effect—the elimination of women from the occupations covered. The importance or significance of this elimination is the one necessary qualification in a measurement of the effect. It is a difficult thing to measure what the prohibitory laws may have done to women's opportunities in the States where they are in effect. Through personal interviews with women employed in these occupations where no prohibition existed, and with their employers, there was obtained a record of conditions of employment and personal experience that would constitute a basis of judgment as to whether or not prohibition of such employment in other places had been a real handicap to women.

Certain situations did not seem susceptible of inquiry, such as the prohibition of employment of women in mines and in quarries and in saloons (which continued to be named in legislation). No one had seriously suggested that employment in mines should be open to women, and hence it did not emerge as a subject for investigation in this study, it being assumed that the changed practice of the mining

industry with respect to the employment of women which was universal in the United States was generally acceptable.

The occupations prohibited for women by the laws of one or more States are limited in number. Many of these laws are insignificant in their possible effect on women, but certain of them deserve very careful consideration. The prohibited occupations studied in the course of this investigation are grinding, polishing, and buffing, acetylene and electric welding, taxicab driving, and gas and electric meter reading.

From the fact that at the time of the survey women were successfully employed elsewhere in many of the prohibited occupations, it appeared that the prohibition must have been something of a restriction where it existed. This restriction afforded the outstanding example of possible discrimination against women resulting from labor legislation.

### **Industrial, Social, Economic Factors Influence More Than Laws.**

In almost every kind of employment the real forces that influence women's opportunity were found to be far removed from legislative restriction of their hours or conditions of work. In manufacturing, the type of product, the division and simplification of manufacturing processes, the development of machinery and mechanical aids to production, the labor supply and its costs, and the general psychology of the times, all had played important parts in determining the position of women. These factors have varied with the different industries and localities, but everywhere they have been far more significant in their influence on the employment opportunities of women than has any law regulating women's hours of work.

In other occupations other influences have been dominant in determining the extent of women's employment. In stores a more liberal attitude and successful experimentation with women on new jobs; in restaurants the development of public opinion as to the type of service most suitable for women; in pharmacy a gradually increasing confidence in women's ability on the part of the public; in the metal trades a breaking down of the prejudices against women's employment on the part of employers and of male employees, and demonstration of women's ability along certain lines—these are the significant forces that have influenced and will continue to determine women's place among wage earners. Such forces have not been deflected by the enforcement of legislative standards and they will play the dominant part in assuring to women an equal chance in those occupations for which their abilities and aptitudes fit them.

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## APPENDIXES

- A. Evidences as to Women's Wages.
- B. References.
- C. Recent Action by Official International Organizations on The Economic Status of Women.



## Appendix A.—EVIDENCES AS TO WOMEN'S WAGES

For the most part the data cited here refer to the earnings of women only and hence are not shown in chapter 3 of part I where only those sources are used that report wages of both sexes. In some cases, however, the sources quoted here also are shown in the chapter referred to.

### Domestic and Personal Service.

This category includes not only household employment but such workers as those in hotels, restaurants, laundries, and beauty shops.

*Service in homes.*—The information obtainable on the pay for home service is of a scattering character, but such as does exist indicates that women's wages for this type of work often are extremely low, and vary considerably from place to place and even within the same place.

Only one State (Wisconsin) has taken legal action on the wage of household workers, and in that case the minimum was fixed in 1932 at \$6 cash in addition to board or \$4.25 cash with meals and lodging, for a 50-hour week or longer in places irrespective of size (equal to 8½ cents cash an hour, with board and room). Board was estimated at \$4.50, rooms at \$2.25 for the larger places, thus making a total value of \$11 a week or 22 cents an hour for 50 hours, and at the rate of 20 cents an hour for smaller places.<sup>1</sup>

The wages paid in 1936 averaged a little above this, the Wisconsin Employment Service reporting that the average beginning wage of 1,327 maids placed in general maids' work and cooking in the first 6 months of 1936 was 10 cents an hour in cash, plus board and room. (Equivalent to \$11.75 for the larger places if all cash at the rate for board and room for a 50-hour week set by the commission.)<sup>2</sup>

In several surveys made of the occupations in homes, the following wages have been reported:

Philadelphia, 1928, general houseworkers living in: <sup>3</sup>  
Median week's earnings \$14.60.

Chicago, 1930, general houseworkers living in: <sup>4</sup>  
Earning \$15 or more, practically 80 percent.

Connecticut, 3 typical cities, 1934, employees living in: <sup>5</sup>  
Median weekly cash wage, by city, \$8.42 to \$14.65. (If room and board allowed, equivalent to \$16.50 to \$21.50.)

<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin. Industrial Commission. Minimum wage order, June 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Wisconsin State Employment Service figures. Compiled by Statistical Department, Industrial Commission. Mimeographed report, Oct. 17, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Household Employment in Philadelphia. Bul. 93. 1932. p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Household Employment in Chicago. Bul. 106. 1933. p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> Connecticut. Department of Labor. Household Employment in Hartford, Waterbury, and Litchfield. May 1936. p. 26.

St. Louis, 1935, all employees: <sup>6</sup>

Average weekly wage \$5.79.

Pennsylvania, 1934, domestic servants not otherwise classified: <sup>7</sup>

Median earnings for full-time week \$7.75.

*Beauty shop operation.*—A survey of the wages of women in beauty shops made by the Women's Bureau in 1933-34 showed operators in four cities averaging \$14.25 a week.<sup>8</sup> A study of these occupations made by the Division of Minimum Wage in Illinois in late 1934 and early 1935 reported a similar wage as the week's average, \$14.54, and median year's earnings of about \$823.<sup>9</sup> The surveys made by the Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration in 1934 reported median earnings of \$13.30 a full-time week for beauticians.

*Hotel and restaurant service.*—In a survey of hotel and restaurant employment made by the Women's Bureau<sup>10</sup> in the spring of 1934, the median earnings of women in the various cities included ranged as follows:

Hotels.....	\$8.25 to \$16.25
Restaurants.....	6.55 to 12.50

Studies made of food service establishments in Ohio and of hotels and restaurants in New Hampshire and New York reported the following as the average earnings of employees in these industries:

	Week's wage	Year's wage
Ohio, May 1933 <sup>11</sup> .....	\$7. 70	\$467
New Hampshire <sup>12</sup> —Restaurants.....	8. 70	<sup>13</sup> 452
Hotels.....	5. 75	<sup>13</sup> 299
New York, 1933-34 <sup>14</sup> :		
New York City.....	8. 96	537
Elsewhere.....	7. 84	459

<sup>11</sup> Ohio. Department of Industrial Relations. Report of the Division of Minimum Wage Relating to Working Conditions and Wages of Women and Male Minors Employed in Food Serving Establishments in the State of Ohio. 1935. Tables 11, 37.

<sup>12</sup> New Hampshire. Bureau of Labor. Minimum Wage Office. Wages of Women and Minors Employed in Restaurants (and in Hotels, a companion report) in New Hampshire. 1935. No table nor page numbers.

<sup>13</sup> Computed on a 52-week basis.

<sup>14</sup> New York. Department of Labor. Report of the Industrial Commissioner to the Hotel and Restaurant Wage Board. April 1935. pp. 121, 125.

The Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration survey in 1934 reported a median for a full-time week of \$9.60 for waitresses and \$11 for cooks. Some of these undoubtedly were in private homes.

In a study of its own nonprofessional employees by the Young Women's Christian Association in 1935, the payments made to certain workers whose occupations may be considered somewhat comparable to those in restaurants were reported as follows: <sup>15</sup>

Weekly average of maintenance workers.....	\$13. 82
Weekly average of food service workers.....	15. 00

<sup>6</sup> Community Council. St. Louis. Study of Household Employment in St. Louis. April 1935. p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania. State Emergency Relief Administration. Census of Employable Workers in Urban and Rural Non-Farm Areas in Pennsylvania, 1934. 1936. p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Employment Conditions in Beauty Shops. Bul. 133. 1935. p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Illinois. Department of Labor. Report of the Minimum Wage Division of the Beauty Culture Wage Board Relating to Wages and Hours of Women and Minors in the Beauty Culture Industry in Illinois. 1935. pp. 32, 61.

<sup>10</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Employment in Hotels and Restaurants. Bul. 123. 1936. pp. 8-9, 12-13.

<sup>15</sup> National Young Women's Christian Association. Study of Standards of Work of Association Employees Other Than Professional, 1935-36. p. 12.

*Laundries.*—In laundries, surveyed recently by the minimum-wage authorities in a number of States, the following average wages have been found:

	<i>Average week's wage</i>
Connecticut (fall, 1935)-----	\$11.04
Illinois (August 1935)-----	10.90
New Hampshire (fall, 1934)-----	11.33
New York (November 1935)-----	13.42
Ohio (July 1934)-----	10.61
(April 1935)-----	11.40

In a survey of this industry made by the Women's Bureau, the average weekly earnings of white women productive employees for 21 cities in 1934 ranged by city from \$6.67 to \$13.05. The highest average year's earnings for these women ranged from approximately \$580 to \$679 in 6 of the northern cities, and white women in 5 southern cities averaged between \$345 and \$400.<sup>16</sup>

**Clerical Occupations.**

Clerical workers' earnings are reported periodically by the States of New York and Ohio, the former giving information as to those employed in factory offices, the latter as to those in all types of establishments. The average weekly earnings or rates reported at the 1929 peak and in 1934 after the worst of the depression were as follows:

	1929	1934
New York <sup>17</sup> -----	\$24.38	\$21.15
Ohio <sup>18</sup> -----	22.40	18.56

<sup>17</sup> New York. Department of Labor. Labor Bulletin, November 1929 and November 1934. Figures are average weekly earnings for October of each year.

<sup>18</sup> Ohio. Department of Industrial Relations and Industrial Commission. Division of Labor Statistics. For 1929 from Rates of Wages, Fluctuation of Employment, Wage and Salary Payments in Ohio. Report No. 26. 1929. p. 132. Average (median) computed in Women's Bureau. For 1934, from unpublished material of the Commission. Average computed in Women's Bureau.

Three studies of office workers made or published by the Women's Bureau show their salaries as follows:

Survey of 7 cities by Women's Bureau,<sup>19</sup> 1931-32:

Average monthly salary rate:

Median-----	\$99 (equal to \$1,188 if for 52 weeks)
High: By city-----	109
By type of office (banks)-----	111
Low: By city-----	87
By type of office (pub- lishers)-----	87

Questionnaires by Young Women's Christian Association to their camps for business girls,<sup>20</sup> 1930-31:

Over 4,900 replies showed median week's earnings \$24.60; year's equivalent if for 52 weeks, \$1,279.

Range from \$19.85 for cashiers or tellers to \$28.65 for secretaries.

Questionnaires by Women's Bureau to employment agencies as to their applicants' last pay,<sup>20</sup> 1931-32. Replies showed for over 4,300 women the following ranges of median week's earnings, by occupation and city:

High—Secretary, \$22.75 to \$30.75.

Low—Clerk, \$16.15 to \$20.60.

<sup>16</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Factors Affecting Wages in Power Laundries. Bul. 143. 1936. pp. 32, 33, and unpublished data.

<sup>17</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. Employment of Women in Offices. Bul. 120. 1934: p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. Women Who Work in Offices. Bul. 132. 1935. p. 27.



The survey of employables made by the Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration in 1934 showed weekly full-time salaries of women in each of seven clerical occupations with a median of more than \$16, ranging from \$16.05 for general office clerks and typists to \$21.55 for secretaries. Of the clerks and stenographers, from more than one-sixth to practically one-fifth received less than \$12.50 a week, or amounts that would equal less than \$650 for a full year.<sup>21</sup>

A survey of its own membership in all parts of the country made by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs in cooperation with the Bureau of Business Research of the University of Michigan included reports of the earnings for 1927 of 5,500 women in more than 40 clerical occupations.<sup>22</sup> In the 10 occupations having the largest numbers, the median annual salaries ranged from \$1,253 for cashiers to \$1,582 for secretaries (\$1,733 for private secretaries or secretaries to officials) and \$1,881 for office managers. The stenographers' median was \$1,295, or as much as \$1,396 when combined with other work.

### Manufacturing Industries.

In manufacturing industries, women's earnings have been separately reported over a series of years in three States and by the National Industrial Conference Board. In the peak year of 1929, at the depression low (1932 or 1933), and in 1935 or 1936, average weekly earnings according to these sources were as follows:

	Average weekly earnings		
	1929	Depression low	After the depression
Illinois <sup>23</sup> .....	\$17. 49	<sup>24</sup> \$11. 68 (1933)	\$15. 12 (1936)
N. I. C. B. <sup>25</sup> .....	17. 61	11. 73 (1932)	15. 28 (1935)
New York <sup>26</sup> .....	18. 75	13. 35 (1933)	15. 83 (1936)
Ohio <sup>27</sup> .....	16. 73	12. 72 (1932)	15. 33 (1935)

<sup>23</sup> Figures computed by Women's Bureau from monthly figures issued by the Illinois Department of Labor.

<sup>24</sup> Average for 11 months.

<sup>25</sup> National Industrial Conference Board. *Wages, Hours, and Employment in the United States, 1914-36.* 1936 pp. 50, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Factual Brief for Respondent, *People ex rel. Tipaldo*, Court of Appeals, State of New York, filed January 1936, p. 108.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit. See footnote 18.

In certain States recently surveyed by the Women's Bureau, the average earnings of women in manufacturing industries were as follows:

	Week's wage	Year's wage
Arkansas (spring, 1936):		
White .....	\$9. 50	\$535
Negro .....	\$7. 40	( <sup>28</sup> )
Delaware (late spring, 1936) .....	\$11. 05	590
Michigan (late 1934) .....	\$10. 75 to \$18. 75 (by industry)	605
Tennessee (winter, 1935-36):		
White .....	\$12. 00	615
Negro .....	\$6. 75	345
Texas (late spring, 1936) .....	\$6. 80 to \$13. 05 (by industry)	( <sup>28</sup> )
West Virginia (summer, 1936) .....	\$12. 70	670

<sup>21</sup> Op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Elliott, Margaret, and Grace E. Manson. *Earnings of Women in Business and the Professions.* 1930. pp. 127, 128.

<sup>23</sup> Not reported.

In important woman-employing manufacturing industries as reported periodically in two large industrial States, women's average weekly wages in November 1936 were as follows:<sup>29</sup>

	Average weekly wage	
	Illinois	New York
Cotton goods.....	<sup>30</sup> \$14. 12	\$14. 00
Knit goods (except silk).....	14. 76	13. 58
Shoes.....	13. 81	13. 55
Women's clothing.....	12. 46	20. 29
Men's clothing.....	14. 19	13. 68
Silk and silk goods.....	( <sup>31</sup> )	13. 23
Electrical machinery, apparatus, and supplies.....	17. 83	( <sup>31</sup> )
Printing and bookmaking.....	15. 51	16. 01
Confectionery.....	13. 25	14. 57
Gloves, bags, canvas goods.....	( <sup>31</sup> )	15. 29
Watches, clocks, and jewelry.....	17. 07	( <sup>31</sup> )

<sup>30</sup> Includes also woolen and silk goods.

<sup>31</sup> Not reported.

The Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration survey in 1934 reported median earnings for a full-time week in several characteristic manufacturing occupations of women ranging from \$9.40 for sewing-machine operators in garment factories to \$15.25 for knitters in hosiery mills. Of the knitters, with the highest median, practically one-fourth had received less than \$12.50 for a full week's work, and in four other occupations practically half of those reported, or a proportion still larger, had received so low a wage. Even the knitters, had they had 50 full weeks' work in the year—and even in periods not clouded by depression it is unusual to have so full a year—would have had less than \$763 to live on for the 12 months.

For territorial possessions, the only available figures except some on home work, chiefly needlework, shown in this report,<sup>32</sup> are of an earlier date, 1927. These show women's earnings in pineapple canneries in Hawaii.<sup>33</sup> In Honolulu the median was \$9.90 a week and about three-fourths of the women had received less than \$12; on the Island of Maui, where the pay was by the month and fewer women were reported, the median was \$20.75 and nearly one-half of the women had received less than \$20 a month. In Honolulu, the largest group of those with weekly hours reported had worked 54 to 60 hours and had earnings with a median of \$9.80.

### Professional Work.

One of the few studies affording data on the earnings levels of women in this category is the survey, already referred to, made by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, which shows the earnings for 1927 of more than 14,000 women in all parts of the country.<sup>34</sup> These occupations were highly individualized, more than 175 types being given, and many in clerical and sales occupations

<sup>29</sup> New York. Department of Labor. The Industrial Bulletin, October 1936, p. 429. Illinois. Department of Labor. Division of Statistics and Research. Review of Employment and Pay Rolls of Illinois Industries, November 1936. [No page number.]

<sup>32</sup> See pt. I, Compensation section, Home Work, p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> U. S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau. The Employment of Women in the Pineapple Canneries of Hawaii. Bul. 82. 1930. pp. 21, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Op. cit., pp. 11, 19, and 127 ff.

were included, groups considered separately in the present report. However, a separation of salaried and independent workers shows the following annual earnings for these two classifications:

	Annual earnings		
	One-half earned less than—	One-fourth earned less than—	One-fourth earned more than—
Salaried workers.....	\$1, 540	\$1, 211	\$1, 945
Independent workers.....	2, 043	1, 261	3, 072

According to the 1930 Census, three-fourths of the women professional workers were school teachers or trained nurses.

*School teachers.*—Eighty percent of the school teachers reported by the census are women. The National Education Association has reported the salaries of school teachers as fixed in 150 recent salary schedules (adopted by various communities in 1928 or thereafter). According to size of city, the ranges in the medians of the maximum and minimum yearly salaries were as follows:<sup>35</sup>

	Median yearly salary	
	Minimum	Maximum
Elementary school.....	\$999 to \$1, 227	\$1, 141 to \$2, 280
Junior high school.....	1, 135 to 1, 390	1, 657 to 2, 671
Senior high school.....	1, 269 to 1, 507	1, 983 to 2, 840

Later figures for cities of over 100,000 report the yearly rates fixed in schedules for women teachers' salaries in 15 cities in 1934-35, ranging from city to city as follows:<sup>36</sup>

Minimum.....	\$1, 000 to \$2, 400
Maximum.....	1, 500 to 3, 300

The median year's salary of 1,068 women teaching in 50 land-grant colleges or universities in 1927-28 was reported by the Office of Education as \$2,309.<sup>37</sup>

The survey of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs referred to included reports for 2,689 teachers. In 1927, one-fourth of these earned less than \$1,253, and the median (one-half earning more, one-half less) was \$1,557; only 4 percent had received as much as \$3,000. The largest groups showed the following median earnings:

Teacher, public elementary.....	\$1, 289
Teacher, high school.....	1, 615
Principal, public elementary or secondary.....	1, 700

The Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration survey in 1934 shows median week's earnings of more than 34,000 women "professors and teachers" at only \$26.60.

*Trained nurses.*—Monthly salaries of public health nurses reported for January 1936 show for public health nursing associations a range of modes from \$130 to \$135 according to size of locality, running up to \$145 in health departments.<sup>38</sup> Entrance salaries of graduate

<sup>35</sup> National Education Association. Research Bulletin, March 1936, pp. 56, 62, 67.

<sup>36</sup> Unpublished data furnished the Women's Bureau by the National Education Association.

<sup>37</sup> U. S. Department of the Interior. Office of Education. Salaries in Land-Grant Universities and Colleges. Pamphlet No. 24. November 1931. pp. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Salaries of Public Health Nurses in 1936. In Public Health Nursing, May 1936, p. 314.

nurses in the civil service are reported as ranging from \$1,620 to \$2,300, according to grade of responsibility and duties.<sup>39</sup> Trained nurses reported in the business and professional women's study cited had a median of \$1,783 for the year, one-fourth of them having received less than \$1,558. Physicians in private practice and osteopaths had medians of over \$3,000. Of more than 6,000 registered and graduate nurses reported in 1934 by the Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration, over a fifth had received less than \$12.50 for a full week's work, though their median was \$21.35.

*Librarians.*—The other professional occupations largely engaged in by women are those of librarians and social workers. Nine-tenths of the librarians and four-fifths of the social and welfare workers reported by the 1930 census were women. The business and professional women's study referred to reports median earnings of \$1,595 for librarians. The American Library Association reports professional assistants in cities of over 200,000 population as having median earnings of \$1,110 to \$1,800 on December 31, 1935; branch and subbranch librarians, \$1,422 to \$1,957.50.<sup>40</sup>

*Social and welfare workers.*—A study of the salaries of workers in family welfare agencies made by the Russell Sage Foundation reports median earnings of case work supervisors as of March 1936 to be \$2,100 where there were 10 to 19 workers and as much as \$3,300 in the largest agencies.<sup>41</sup> In June 1936, a committee of the New York branch of the American Association of Social Workers recommended \$1,800 to \$2,040 for senior case workers, \$2,200 to \$2,650 for unit case work supervisors.<sup>42</sup> In the business and professional women's study referred to, the general welfare or social service workers reported had year's earnings with a median of \$1,650, the median for superintendents and executives being more than \$2,000.

Salaries at the 1929 peak and chiefly for New York City naturally tend to go above, sometimes well above, those just discussed. A study in cooperation with the President's Emergency Committee for Employment in that year, made by the American Woman's Association, with membership largely among the better established business and professional women in that city, reported the following earnings of its members in certain of the professions just discussed:<sup>43</sup>

	<i>Annual earnings</i>	
	<i>One-half earned less than—</i>	<i>One-fourth earned less than—</i>
Teachers (not executives).....	\$2, 750	\$1, 875
Nurses (not executives).....	2, 150	1, 750
Public-health workers.....	3, 375	2, 335
Librarians.....	2, 320	1, 895
Social workers.....	2, 320	1, 805

<sup>39</sup> U. S. Civil Service Commission. Annual Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1935. p. 72.

<sup>40</sup> Bulletin of the American Library Association, April 1936, pp. 260-261. Reports also are given for higher officers, and for three sizes of cities less than 200,000. The issue for February 1937 reports salaries in school libraries.

<sup>41</sup> American Association of Social Workers. The Compass, October 1936, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., June 1936, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>43</sup> American Woman's Association. The Trained Woman and the Economic Crisis. 1931. p. 94.

*Home economics occupations.*—By far the most numerous group of women making professional use of home economics training are high-school teachers. Yearly salaries reported for 1936 for this work in six widely scattered States ranged from an average of \$908 in South Dakota to a maximum of \$2,400 in California.<sup>44</sup> In 1935 median salaries of directors or supervisors ranged from \$1,253 to \$2,770, according to size of city.<sup>45</sup> Another large group of women in the profession of home economics consists of those employed in the cooperative extension service carried on by the United States Department of Agriculture and the State colleges of agriculture. Late reports were that salaries ranged from \$945 to \$3,950 a year, with an average of \$2,009.

### Occupations in Trade.

The earnings of saleswomen in stores in Ohio have been reported over a series of years. Under the peak conditions of 1929, the average weekly earnings for these workers were \$15.21, falling to \$12.63 in the depression low in 1932; in 1935 they were \$13.54. For 52 weeks' work such averages would yield respectively \$791 (1929), \$657 (1932), and \$704 (1935).

A Women's Bureau survey made early in 1933 reported wages of women in 46 department stores in 17 cities in 5 States, showing that the median week's earnings of the women in the various localities who had worked 48 hours or more in the week ranged from \$13.10 to \$17.15, the equivalent of from \$681 to \$892 if maintained for the full 52 weeks in the year. From 8 to 44 percent of all the women reported in the several localities had received less than \$12 for their week's work.<sup>46</sup> A survey by the Bureau of wages of women in limited-price stores in 18 States and 5 additional cities in 1928 showed the median earnings of the women reported to be \$12 and one-fourth of them to be receiving less than \$10.<sup>47</sup>

The Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Administration survey in 1934 reported median earnings for a full-time week for more than 24,500 saleswomen in stores to be \$12.85. Nearly half had received less than \$12.50. Assuming even 50 full weeks' work in the year—and 50 weeks, all things considered, is a liberal estimate—this would have meant year's earnings of not more than \$643 for at least half these women.

The study by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs already referred to reported median year's earnings of sales clerks at \$932, one-fourth having received less than \$730, one-fourth more than \$1,100.

<sup>44</sup> Salaries Paid Home Economics Supervisors. By William G. Carr. In *Journal of Home Economics*, June-July 1935, p. 361.

<sup>45</sup> Unpublished data from the U. S. Office of Education, furnished the Women's Bureau by the American Home Economics Association.

<sup>46</sup> U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. *Employment Conditions in Department Stores in 1932-33*. Bul. 125. 1936. pp. 14, 15.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* *Women in 5-and-10-Cent Stores and Limited-Price Chain Department Stores*. Bul. 76. 1930. p. 52.

The average weekly earnings of regularly-employed women in department stores reported in recent Women's Bureau surveys of various States are given below. In each case the potential earnings for 52 weeks have been computed, the receipts in this type of occupation tending to be fairly uniform for regular employees. These averages, for regular workers unless otherwise shown, are as follows:

	<i>Week's median wage</i>	<i>Potential year's wage (if for 52 weeks)</i>
Arkansas, 1936.....	\$13. 05	\$679
Delaware, 1936.....	13. 85	720
Michigan, 1934.....	<sup>48</sup> 13. 50	702
Tennessee, 1936.....	12. 75	663
West Virginia, 1936.....	12. 70	660

<sup>48</sup> All workers.

With one exception, the earnings were lower in limited-price stores.

## Appendix B.—REFERENCES

The list following is presented merely as an indication of the more outstanding sources of information on the points covered and not in any sense as a complete bibliography. A number of the references listed contain information on two or more of the subjects under consideration; usually these references have not been repeated but have been placed either under the subject most largely covered by them or under that for which they give outstanding data on something for which such data are especially meager.

### WOMEN'S OCCUPATIONS AND THEIR RECENT CHANGES

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<sup>1</sup> The reports listed do not exhaust the wage material published by the Women's Bureau. Other reports listed elsewhere in this reference list also contain wage material. A full list of publications may be obtained from the Women's Bureau.

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## **Appendix C.—RECENT ACTION BY OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN**

**RESOLUTION PASSED AT 16TH SESSION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, SEPTEMBER 1935**

### **Political, Civil, and Economic Status of Women**

The Assembly,

Noting that the question of the status of women was placed on the agenda of the present Session for examination, at the instance of a number of delegations, with particular reference to the Equal Rights Treaty signed at Montevideo on December 26, 1933, by representatives of the Governments of Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay;

Considering that the terms of the Equal Rights Treaty should be examined in relation to the existing political, civil, and economic status of women under the laws of the countries of the world;

Recognizing that the question of conditions of employment, whether of men or women, is a matter which properly falls within the sphere of the International Labor Organization:

- (1) Decides that the question of the political and civil status of women shall be referred by the Secretary-General to the Governments for their observations, including observations as to the action which in their view the League might take in this matter, and that the Governments shall be requested to supply to the Secretary-General, together with their observations, information as to the existing political and civil status of women under their respective national laws;
- (2) Recommends that the women's international organizations should continue their study of the whole question of the political and civil status of women;
- (3) Requests that the observations and information communicated by the Governments and the statements of the said international organizations shall be sent to the Secretary-General for consideration by the Assembly of the League of Nations at a subsequent Session;
- (4) Expresses the hope that the International Labor Organization will, in accordance with its normal procedure, undertake an examination of those aspects of the problem within its competence—namely, the question of equality under labor legislation—and that it will, in the first place, examine the question of legislation which effects discriminations, some of which may be detrimental to women's right to work.

### **EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR OFFICE FOR 1935**

During the year the Office has continued to carry out a number of inquiries in response to the frequent demands which are made upon it from all quarters. Special mention may be made of the inquiry now in progress in regard to the employment of women. The Governing Body agreed that the suggestion made by the Assembly should be carried out and that a report should be prepared in regard to the legal status of women in industry with particular reference to any discriminatory measures which may have been taken against their employment. This is

to be followed by a more extensive investigation covering not only the legislation affecting women's employment but also their actual position in respect of conditions of employment, wages and economic status. Clearly this inquiry involves many difficulties and will require considerable time. It will be carried out in consultation with members of the Correspondence Committee on Women's Work, and it may be hoped that it will throw some light on the various questions relating to women's work and position in industrial and commercial occupations about which controversy has been provoked. It is probable that the supposed antagonism between the interests of men and women in industry is largely imaginary, and it may be noted in passing that with the revival of the textile industry both in Belgium and Great Britain, the reemployment of men was restricted in a number of instances owing to the absence of a sufficient number of skilled women. However this may be, a thorough investigation of the question in all its aspects is overdue, and the decision of the Governing Body that it should be undertaken should be generally welcomed.

**RESOLUTION PASSED BY INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE,  
JUNE 21, 1937**

**Concerning Women Workers**

Whereas, in view of the social and political changes of recent years and the fact that women workers have suffered from special forms of exploitation and discrimination in the past, there is need to reexamine their general position; and

Whereas, it is for the best interests of society that in addition to full political and civil rights and full opportunity for education, women should have full opportunity to work and should receive remuneration without discrimination because of sex, and be protected by legislative safeguards against physically harmful conditions of employment and economic exploitation, including the safeguarding of motherhood; and

Whereas, it is necessary that women as well as men should be guaranteed freedom of association by Governments and should be protected by social and labor legislation which world experience has shown to be effective in abolishing special exploitation of women workers; therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Twenty-third Session of the International Labor Conference, while recognizing that some of these principles lie within the competence of other international bodies, believes them to be of the greatest importance to workers in general and especially to women workers; and therefore requests the Governing Body to draw them to the attention of all Governments, with a view to their establishment in law and in custom by legislative and administrative action.

