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# Womanpower Committees

during World War II

Women's Bureau  
Bulletin 244

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Martin P. Durkin, *Secretary*

WOMEN'S BUREAU

Frieda S. Miller, *Director*

Washington : 1953



# WOMANPOWER COMMITTEES DURING WORLD WAR II

United States and British Experience



*Women's Bureau Bulletin No. 244*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
MARTIN P. DURKIN, *Secretary*

*Women's Bureau*  
FRIEDA S. MILLER, *Director*

Washington : 1953

MONUMENTS OF THE  
DURING WORLD WAR II

Volume I: Artistic and Historical Monuments



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## **LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,

WOMEN'S BUREAU,

*Washington, January 23, 1953.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit a report on the work of three women's committees during World War II: The Women's Advisory Committee to the War Manpower Commission in the United States; the Women's Consultative Committee to the British Ministry of Labor and National Service, and the Woman Power Committee which was established largely through the efforts of British women Members of Parliament.

This report was undertaken with the assistance of a research grant to the Women's Bureau from the National Security Resources Board as part of a defense-connected project dealing with womanpower programs. In studying women's committees the objective was to prepare an analytical history which would illustrate the ways in which two major democratic nations responded to the wartime necessity for developing basic policy on womanpower.

It was hoped that the report would be useful as a basis for womanpower planning for those in the United States called upon to consider similar problems contingent upon another full mobilization of the labor force. Accordingly, the Women's Advisory Committee on Defense Manpower, appointed by the Secretary of Labor in March 1951 as a result of the Korean conflict, was provided with this report, and devoted extensive study and discussion to it. The contemporary Committee directed its emphasis primarily toward analysis of the structure, composition, and function of women's committees during World War II, in order to arrive at a set of principles for the establishment of effective working relationships of womanpower committees with the Government and the public. Recommendations of the Women's Advisory Committee on Defense Manpower are presented as an appendix in this bulletin.

In preparing the report on United States experience in World War II the research staff drew upon previously unpublished and scattered documents from both Government and private sources. The three histories were combined in a single report with awareness of the differences in national background and degree of emergency in both countries, but also in recognition of the similarity of principles underlying the steps that both governments had to take in national crisis.

The Women's Bureau is greatly indebted to the principal participants in the affairs of the Women's Advisory Committee to the War Manpower Commission for review and modifications of the original draft, and to the Committee's Chairman, Margaret A. Hickey, for significant aspects of the Committee's work that were not documented because of the press of circumstances.

There are undoubtedly important omissions to this report which may some day be taken into account; there are also positive contributions of devoted public service and clarity of purpose such as Miss Hickey and others gave to the Committee which will never be adequately recognized because they are immeasurable.

Through the gracious cooperation of Dame Mary Smieton of the British Ministry of Labor and National Service and a group of distinguished women who served on both British Committees, the original draft of the British section of the report was not only reviewed but essentially amplified to include significant data not previously recorded.

It is still an open question as to whether the preoccupation of the historian with facts is the best means for evaluating programs concerned extensively with human motivations and directed toward the preservation of a way of life at a time when life itself is endangered. The experience of the research staff in working with the bare bones of documented events and then interviewing the participants, both British and American, who brought the facts to life, led them toward the conclusion that research is only half the story, and methodology in problem-solving only as effective as its human agents.

The report was prepared in the Women's Bureau's Research Division, of which Mary N. Hilton is Chief, under the direct supervision of Lillian V. Inke. Immediate responsibility fell to Gertrude B. Morton with assistance from Evelyn S. Spiro in preparation of the history of the British Consultative Committee.

Respectfully submitted.

FRIEDA S. MILLER, *Director.*

Hon. MARTIN P. DURKIN,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

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## Part I—THE UNITED STATES

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### The Women's Advisory Committee to the War Manpower Commission, 1942–45

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#### *History of the Women's Advisory Committee*

The Women's Advisory Committee was appointed by Paul V. McNutt, Chairman of the War Manpower Commission in September 1942, almost a year after the United States entered World War II. The appointment marked the end of a period of more than two years during which the Women's Bureau, with some support from national women's organizations and from its own Labor Advisory Committee, had worked toward obtaining official participation of women in policy matters affecting women's employment in the war economy.

#### *Background for Appointment*

Early in 1940, shortly after the appointment of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense, Mary Anderson, then Director of the Women's Bureau, suggested to Sidney Hillman, who was the labor member of the National Defense Advisory Commission, that he appoint a woman to his staff as adviser in view of the anticipated role of women in war production. Mr. Hillman recognized the need for women's point of view on problems relating to women workers and asked Miss Anderson's suggestions for candidates. However, by July 1940, he appeared to have been influenced by Dr. Reeves, his assistant and head of the Division of Training in the National Defense Advisory Commission.

It was Dr. Reeves' opinion that the Commission needed a woman for research rather than for policy-making. Miss Anderson continued to maintain her position that the appointment of a research assistant would not fill the need for having a woman at the policy-making level. Besides, this would have duplicated the research function which the Women's Bureau was carrying out at another level. Later in 1940 Miss Anderson, supported by the Women's Bureau Labor Advisory Committee, made another request of Mr. Hillman to appoint a woman to his staff as adviser. No such appointment was made. It was apparent that the National Defense Advisory Commission did not

favor the participation of women in development of policy with respect to women's expanding integration into the labor market.<sup>1</sup>

*Women's Bureau Program* Meanwhile, the Women's Bureau had already initiated an intensive program of research and field work related to defense production demands, and had geared its studies to the projected defense economy. Consultation was held with employers who were changing over from men to women workers, and recommendations were made which would promote the easy integration of women and provide for their satisfactory working environment. As a result of such consultation and study of working conditions, the Bureau began to issue a series of statements, later published as leaflets, dealing with topics relevant to the employment of women, such as weight lifting, sanitary facilities, safety clothing, problems of selection and counseling, health and hygiene, and many other subjects.<sup>2</sup> Close working relationships were established by the Bureau with the War and Navy Departments with special reference to the employment of women in ordnance plants, and continued throughout the war.

As early as 1940, Miss Anderson had been requested by the Secretary of Labor to formulate standards for women workers and had established the Labor Advisory Committee to the Women's Bureau for this initial purpose.<sup>3</sup> The standards as developed by this Committee, working with Women's Bureau staff, were submitted to, and adopted by, the Subcommittee on Utilization of Women in Defense of the National Labor Supply Committee by December 1941.<sup>4</sup>

Due to the reserve of unemployed at the outset of the war, manpower officials in this period were not sufficiently pressed by a general labor shortage to plan for the projected increase in women's employment.

*War Manpower Commission February 1942* By February 1942 the Office of Production Management and its National Labor Supply Committee were dissolved and labor mobilization functions were consolidated into the War Manpower Commission.

In April of the same year, Sara Southall was appointed as adviser to the Chairman of the War Manpower Commission on general problems relating to the employment of women.

Miss Southall asked the cooperation of the Women's Bureau in the preparation of basic policy statements on recruitment, referral, training, and employment of women. Although close working relationship was established between the Bureau and Miss Southall, there were obstacles to the acceptance and channeling of policy,

<sup>1</sup> See note at beginning of appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Special Bulletin Series, Nos. 1 through 20, 1942-44, of which several are listed in Current Publications of the Women's Bureau, 1952.

<sup>3</sup> Still in existence as of 1952, this group is periodically called for consultation by the Bureau.

<sup>4</sup> Various revisions of the "Standards" leaflet have been issued periodically by the Women's Bureau, the latest in 1950, "Recommended Standards for Employment of Women."

many of which were due, at this time, to continuous change and development in the new manpower organization. The local offices of the United States Employment Service had not yet been fully integrated into the organization, and there were shifts and realineements in staff and operating personnel at the administrative level. In addition, Miss Southall herself could not devote full time to her assignment because of her many professional and civic commitments.<sup>5</sup>

Simultaneously with the need to resolve organization problems and to tighten agency structure, the increasing pressures of the labor market were felt by manpower officials by the summer of 1942. Ten months of war production and manpower additions to the armed forces had virtually exhausted male labor reserves. It became apparent that women would have to be recruited not only for customary employment but also for a great variety of jobs traditionally filled by men. Factors to be dealt with in the projected mobilization of woman-power included the reluctance of many women to enter the labor market and the strong resistance of a number of employers and labor unions to admitting women to nontraditional jobs.

Much earlier, the Women's Bureau and several of the national women's organizations, in anticipation of the full use of the woman-power reserve, had expressed dissatisfaction with the degree of attention accorded by the War Manpower Commission to the labor-market problems of integrating women. Among these were the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, who recommended the establishment of a large women's advisory committee, and the National Women's Trade Union League. The latter group did not formally oppose the creation of a women's advisory committee but strongly favored the point of view of Miss Anderson and nearly all women's organizations of the period that a women's advisory body would have limited effectiveness, particularly without a policy-determining status. Miss Anderson's repeated recommendation was for the appointment of several women at the appropriate level to insure the acceptance and implementation of policy and to provide for the direct channeling and use of technical data on women's employment problems.

Proposals for a women's advisory group to the War Manpower Commission had not clearly delineated thus far the functions of such a group nor had they taken due recognition of the possible duplications of activities among labor mobilization agencies and committees.

#### *Appointment*

In the summer of 1942, Miss Anderson approached Mr. McNutt about the appointment of one or two women to the Management-Labor Policy Committee of the War Manpower Commission. The

<sup>5</sup> Miss Southall continued part time in her capacity as personnel executive of the International Harvester Co.

Management-Labor Policy Committee, however, completely rejected Miss Anderson's proposal. At the same time, the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs submitted their request for the appointment of a women's advisory committee to Mr. McNutt who accepted the proposal and delegated preparatory work to Arthur J. Altmeyer, then Executive Director of the War Manpower Commission.

Mr. Altmeyer invited Miss Anderson to advise him on the appointment of members of the future committee, and during their conversation pressed to convince Miss Anderson that, after the Management-Labor Committee's refusal to accept women members, the appointment of a women's advisory committee was the next best solution. Miss Anderson agreed to the appointment of a women's advisory committee on the understanding that the chairman of the new women's committee would have full voting membership on the Management-Labor Committee. However, when the committee was appointed in September 1942 the status of the chairman with regard to the Management-Labor Committee had been limited to representing the Women's Advisory Committee on the Management-Labor Committee without voting rights.<sup>6</sup> The press release of the War Manpower Commission of September 2, 1942, in which the appointment of the Women's Advisory Committee was announced simply states:

Miss Hickey, as chairman of the Women's Advisory Committee, will participate in the discussions of the Management-Labor Policy Committee, or she may designate a representative for this purpose.

**Function of Committee** By Administrative Order No. 22 of the War Manpower Commission of August 31, 1942, the Women's Advisory Committee was appointed "... to study the national situation with regard to conditions which affected adversely the mobilization and utilization of women in the war effort, and to make recommendations to the Management-Labor Policy Committee on a policy arriving at correcting these conditions whenever practicable."

Point 4 of Administrative Order No. 22 states more specifically the function which the Committee was to assume:

The Women's Advisory Committee is authorized to consider and recommend to the Chairman of the War Manpower Commission matters of major policy concerning the activities and responsibilities of the Commission, particularly as they affect women and the contribution women can make in the successful prosecution of the war. The Committee

<sup>6</sup> Miss Hickey, in an interview with a Women's Bureau staff member pointed out that, in the beginning, she sat on the "offside" and only after several meetings was she invited by the members to join them at the conference table. Other active committee members have stated subsequently that they had accepted appointments with the understanding that their group would be represented with a vote on the Management-Labor Policy Committee. Cf. also *Woman at Work, Autobiography of Mary Anderson*, as told to Mary N. Winslow. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn., 1951, ch. 27, p. 250.

shall initiate studies and the formulation of policies, as well as consider those referred by the chairman.

*Responsibility of Chairman* The chairman of the Committee, all through its existence, was Margaret A. Hickey, lawyer and business executive from St. Louis. She was directly responsible to the War Manpower Commissioner. It was her duty to prepare the agenda for the meetings, handle press relations, and discharge such administrative duties as were necessary to keep the Committee operating: Correspondence, distribution of material to members, speeches, and other public relations activities. She was responsible for representation of the Committee on the Management-Labor Policy Committee of the War Manpower Commission and functioned as liaison with other Government agencies, especially with the Women's Bureau, the only Government agency that had a staff specializing in the problems of women's employment.

*Composition of Membership* Selection of members for the Advisory Committee aimed at a fair representation from management, labor, and the public; from key women's organizations, the educational field, welfare work, and the press. The list which follows includes several members who served only part of the full term and also several alternates who were sufficiently active to have been considered regular members.

Ruth Allen, University of Texas, San Antonio, Tex. (Did not serve full term of office.)

Mrs. Harris T. Baldwin of Washington, D. C., former Vice President of the League of Women Voters.

Mrs. Dorothy J. Bellanca of New York City, Vice President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

Bess Bloodworth of New York City, Vice President and a director of the Namm Store, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mrs. Maudelle Bousfield, Principal of the Wendell Phillips High School, Chicago, Ill.

Elisabeth Christman of Washington, D. C., Executive Secretary of the National Women's Trade Union League. (Active alternate.)

Mrs. Saidie Orr Dunbar of Portland, Oreg., Executive Secretary of the Oregon Tuberculosis Association and past president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Mrs. Gladys Talbott Edwards of Denver, Colo., Director of Education for the National Farmers Union.

Dr. Esther Cole Franklin, Associate in Social Studies, American Association of University Women, Washington, D. C. (Did not serve full term of office.)

Mrs. Beatrice Blackmar Gould of Philadelphia, Pa., Co-Editor of the Ladies' Home Journal.

Margaret A. Hickey of St. Louis, Mo., lawyer and business executive.

Mrs. Lowell Fletcher Hobart of Cincinnati, Ohio, past National President of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Jenny Matyas of San Francisco, Calif., Vice President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Eleanor Park of New York City, Assistant to the Manager of Industrial Relations, Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation. (Active alternate.) Mrs. Blanche Ralston of Coahoma, Miss., former Regional Director of the Professional and Service Division of the Work Projects Administration.

*Sub-committees* Almost immediately after the Committee's creation, standing subcommittees were formed which were charged with responsibility for developing special programs for the full Committee's consideration. The three permanent standing subcommittees were:

- (1) Community Facilities and Services, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Saidie Orr Dunbar.
- (2) Public Relations, headed by Bess Bloodworth.
- (3) Postwar—created in 1943 and merged in July 1944 with the Public Relations Committee, in view of the growing reality of postwar adjustment and the need for public education on postwar problems.

Temporary subcommittees were appointed periodically to work on specific problems, such as education in connection with employment of youth under 18, and also the agricultural labor situation.

*Staff* In February 1943, an executive secretary, Virginia Price, was employed. In August 1944 Miss Hickey requested from the War Manpower Commission a full-time research assistant to work exclusively for the Women's Advisory Committee. The Committee supported the chairman's request with a recommendation that the chairman's proposal be followed up. The request was favorably received by the Executive Director of the War Manpower Commission, but no appointment was made.

Throughout its existence the Committee called repeatedly upon the experience of the Women's Bureau Director and staff, not only for consultation on policy, but for research and information.

*Meetings* The Committee had altogether 39 meetings, the first on October 1, 1942, the last one on March 21, 1945. According to Miss Hickey the Committee discontinued meeting in 1945 but was never formally dissolved. Meetings were held once a month until the summer of 1944, then twice a month, and after the establishment of the V-E Day manpower program, on call. As a rule, the meetings were in Washington. One meeting was held outside of Washington in recognition of wartime travel problems. Each meeting lasted 2 days and included one executive session at which the Executive Director of the War Manpower Commission joined the group to report on manpower developments in general and on organizational changes in the War Manpower Commission; to present items to be discussed by the members; and to receive and discuss the members' suggestions and recommendations. A part of the Women's Advisory Committee meeting was always set aside for reports from, and discussions with, staff members of the War Manpower Commis-

sion or other Government agencies whose programs had bearing on the Committee's area of interest.

**Members' Expenses** Except for reimbursement for their traveling expenses and per diem while at the monthly meetings in Washington, members served at their own expense.

### **Procedure**

**Agenda** Agenda for meetings were sent to members ahead of time.

Regular items on the agenda were: Reports from the chairman on progress made and on activities between meetings; progress reports from the chairmen of the subcommittees; "Subjects to be discussed and acted upon" by the Committee; and reports from War Manpower Commission staff or other Government agency staffs pertaining to subjects under discussion or of special interest to the Committee which in many meetings took up the entire time of one of the two meeting days. A review of speakers and of topics from the Committee's agenda shows a wide range of topics and of agencies represented.

**Outside Speakers** The Deputy Chairman of the War Manpower Commission acquainted the Committee members at their first meeting with the fundamental organization and the early development of the War Manpower Commission. Other War Manpower Commission staff members joined the group regularly to report on changes in policy, programs, and procedures of the War Manpower Commission. At one early session a report was given by a War Manpower Commission staff member on the history of the United States Employment Service and on its role in the recruitment of women. Other topics presented to the Women's Advisory Committee by War Manpower Commission staff were: Services to children of working mothers; plant and community facilities; training within industry plan (two sessions); the basic principles of the Executive Order on 48-hour week; the background and thinking on national service legislation as well as the contents and implications of proposed legislation regarding a national service act (three sessions); the postwar demobilization of civilian workers and armed forces.

The Women's Bureau participated at all sessions because Miss Anderson had a standing invitation to attend or to send a substitute. She participated fully and informally in the discussions of the group, more like one of the members than an invited guest. The Federal Security Agency sent staff members to three sessions to talk on all phases of the Federal Security program. A staff member of the War Production Board spoke on problems of women in shipbuilding and aircraft industries on the west coast. The United States Office of Education was represented at two sessions when war production training of women and problems of acceptance of counselors were discussed. Florence Hall from the Extension Service of the United

States Department of Agriculture spoke to the Women's Advisory Committee on the Women's Land Army program. Katharine F. Lenroot and staff members of the Children's Bureau participated several times in discussions concerning a maternity policy for industry and a postwar program. General Hines from the Veterans' Administration spoke to the Women's Advisory Committee on retraining and reemployment. Special events were addresses by Mrs. Roosevelt, Frieda S. Miller, and Mrs. Ethel Wood, Secretary of the British Woman Power Committee. Mrs. Roosevelt appeared twice before the group, once to report on British womanpower under wartime conditions and a second time to talk to them on her observations on women in the South Pacific. Miss Miller joined the Committee in a meeting of June 5, 1944, after her return from service in London, and spoke about some significant aspects of wartime labor controls in England.

*Types of Action Taken* With very few exceptions, the only kind of official action taken by the Committee was the issuance of policy statements which were submitted to the War Manpower Commission and released to the press. In the press release Miss Hickey usually gave a résumé of the Committee's thinking and discussion and explained fully why current manpower developments called for the establishment of a certain policy on womanpower problems. If the Committee's policy was accepted by the War Manpower Commission, the Committee's recommendations were included in the War Manpower Commission's field material. Some of the major policy statements of the Committee were published in pamphlet form and were widely distributed, through the Committee's office as well as through War Manpower Commission field offices. Occasionally the Committee's discussion led to the initiation of special studies by the staff of the War Manpower Commission, such as one study on older workers and one on the part-time employment of women.

In a few cases, as a result of the Committee's discussions, major policy statements were published in the form of pamphlets and widely distributed.<sup>7</sup>

In only one instance did the official action taken by the Committee include the full development and handling of a program: Cooperation with women's organizations on recruitment campaigns and other community participation in womanpower programming.

There is one notable record of an official protest action initiated by the Committee in May 1943, in connection with the Kaiser shipyards day-care facilities program<sup>8</sup> in this case the Committee was able to

<sup>7</sup> See "The War Job Platform of American Women," May 1943; "Womanpower, An Appraisal by the War Manpower Commission," April 1943 (on which the Committee had obtained the cooperation of the War Manpower Commission Facts and Analysis Section); and "Women in the Postwar," April 1945.

<sup>8</sup> See p. 31.

follow through on policy to the point where Mr. McNutt and the War Production Board took action.

While the minutes and policy statements issued reflect fully the official business conducted, they do not reveal the considerable unofficial activity in which a number of members engaged. Miss Hickey was especially energetic in establishing conferences and consultation with executive staff members of the War Manpower Commission and with a long list of Government agency representatives so that the Committee would have as much as possible of the background information and policy on all labor mobilization problems and so that key officials could obtain the point of view of the Committee. In this way Miss Hickey and her colleagues, through tireless effort, bridged unofficially the gap left by lack of provision for direct policy channeling in many important phases of the program.

Committee members also used all of their connections with professional and civic groups to disseminate information on womanpower programs. Several of the most active members, including the chairman, made trips across the country, usually at their own expense, to present speeches, hold discussions, and answer questions. Groups like the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Management Association, as well as women's organizations, featured speakers from the Committee.

### ***Womanpower Problems on the Agenda, 1942-45***

During the 2½ years in which the Committee operated, it dealt with a great number of different aspects of the total problem of womanpower planning in a war economy. However, many problems were recurrent and were dealt with repeatedly whenever they came to the Committee's attention through the pressure of circumstances. For purposes of recording the Committee's work, the topics on which it conferred can be classified in four major areas: (1) recruitment, including training, and selection of women; (2) full utilization of employed women workers through adjustments on the job as well as (3) in the community; and (4) reconversion adjustments and postwar planning.

#### ***Recruitment***

The establishment of a basic policy on recruitment, training, and employment of women was the first job which the Women's Advisory Committee undertook after its appointment, and the War Manpower Commission accepted the Women's Advisory Committee recommendations immediately as national policy.<sup>9</sup> With regard to recruitment, the Women's Advisory Committee's statement included the following major principle:

. . . recruitment of women [should take place] on the basis of qualification for an occupation, without discrimination because of sex, race, national origin, or creed.

<sup>9</sup> "Manual of Operations," Title III, Secs. 2-4, October 17, 1942. War Manpower Commission.

**Recruitment Campaigns** A week after the Women's Advisory Committee basic statement had been released, the War Manpower Commission sought the Committee's advice and assistance on recruiting methods. It was the first time that the Commission consulted the Advisory Committee on a major problem of woman-power planning; the reason for this move on the part of the War Manpower Commission was that it had come to an impasse on the question of recruitment of women for industrial work. Throughout 1942 the War Manpower Commission had conducted, in areas of labor shortage, various recruitment campaigns for women workers on a local or State-wide basis.<sup>10</sup> In all these individual attempts, the responsibility for the campaign rested with the United States Employment Service office, but the method of reaching the women's labor reserve varied from locality to locality. Some communities or States designated post offices, schools, or employers as distribution centers for registration forms; other communities used volunteer workers to make door-to-door canvasses.

In meetings with the Women's Advisory Committee in October and December 1942, War Manpower Commission staff members reported that recruitment campaigns had been analyzed with the conclusion that, except for a few areas, the campaigns had produced unsatisfactory results. The over-all picture was considered alarming, especially in view of pressing labor demands in labor shortage areas. Results obtained in a campaign conducted in Detroit, August 1942, were used as illustration. Only about 35 percent of the women interviewed had responded, and only 21 percent of the responding group were actually placed.<sup>11</sup> War Manpower Commission officials thought that, in general, the failures were due partly to a lack of central organization and partly to the lack of cooperation of the part of employers who continued to hire at the gates and ignored United States Employment Service registers. War Manpower Commission officials asked the Women's Advisory Committee to cooperate in finding the reasons for the slow response to the recruitment program and to develop a centralized recruitment program.

It was the Committee's majority opinion that the psychological approach had been wrong and had made many campaigns ineffective because American women resented being urged to seek employment by women volunteers who were not employed themselves; that labor surplus areas where many women were asking for work had not been reached; and that recruitment campaigns would not influence women to leave their homes in really large numbers until they had assurance that supplementary community adjustments in the form of child-care centers and other community facilities would be provided, and also,

<sup>10</sup> "Summary of Campaigns Conducted in 1942 for the Mobilization or Registration of Women." War Manpower Commission, 1943.

<sup>11</sup> In retrospect these figures may be said to characterize a *successful* campaign for a first attempt with such limited preparation and experience, although returns by no means met manpower needs at the time.

in some instances, until they had better assurance of employer acceptance.

A minority of committee members interpreted the failure of local campaigns as an indication that women were not interested in going to work and that national legislation was needed to create authorization for the national over-all registration of women. In spite of the minority's opposition, the Committee agreed to support the War Manpower Commission in a recruitment policy which would:

- (1) Limit enrollment of women to labor shortage areas;
- (2) Include provisions for the development of child-care and other community facilities for working women; and
- (3) Stress the need for full utilization of women workers already employed.

On December 3, 1942, the following motion was adopted:

. . . That the Women's Advisory Committee concur in support of the plan for enrollment of women on a local basis where area committees have agreed that such enrollment is essential.

The principles established by the Women's Advisory Committee were included in a revised recruitment program of the War Manpower Commission, copies of which were distributed to United States Employment Service local offices.

The Women's Advisory Committee, wishing to support and help implement the War Manpower Commission's new policy on recruitment of women for industrial work, undertook a strong publicity campaign early in 1943. Chairman and members interpreted the facts about womanpower needs to the public over the radio, through the press, and through addresses to public groups, and the Subcommittee on Public Relations began its work on the preparation of background material.

*Cooperation with Women's Organizations on Recruitment*      The urgent need for the cooperation of local groups in carrying out national recruitment plans was discussed by the Women's Advisory Committee at the end of 1942 and early in 1943. The members expressed a keen awareness of the significant fact that women's organizations had broad experience in community organization and could, therefore, if they were properly guided, be of great assistance in local recruitment campaigns. In some communities, individual organizations had already participated for some time in recruitment programs. Mrs. Dunbar, the local member from Oregon and a past president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, had personally organized a local joint committee of women's organizations which, she felt, had worked successfully for 9 months. In addition, many individual women's organizations had expressed their desire to the Women's Advisory Committee to be officially associated with the Committee's work. The members came to the conclusion that a systematic attempt must be made immediately to

make use of women's organization experience and desire to help but that, in order to avoid misinformation and duplication of efforts, a nationally coordinated program had to be developed. The Subcommittee on Public Relations was given the task of working on a comprehensive program of cooperation. Special problems to be solved included the selection of cooperating organizations and the development of methods of cooperation between local and national levels. Gradually, through consent and clearance of the subcommittee's preparatory work with the entire Committee, the final program emerged and was put into operation.

*Procedure* The "Procedure" for cooperating on recruitment with *Developed* women's organizations, as developed and formulated by the Public Relations Subcommittee in 1943, included the following provisions: Recruitment campaigns were to be conducted under local sponsorship and with full utilization of local resources, such as available media of publicity (i. e., press, radio, theaters, clubs, church groups, stores, etc.), as well as locally available data which the United States Employment Service office and local industries could furnish with regard to the manpower situation. The establishment of basic policies, however, as well as the preparation of information material, would be handled entirely on a national level.

*Informational Material* The printed informational material used by the Women's Advisory Committee in this first major recruitment effort was a bulletin called "The War Job Platform of American Women." In it the Women's Advisory Committee attempted, with a minimum of patriotic-appeal arguments, to present to the American woman the facts about work opportunities and needs; put special stress on home-front jobs on a full-time or part-time basis; and redefined jobs in service industries, in nursing, in public utilities and transportation, in social work, on the farm, and even in the home (with its new responsibilities for food producing and preserving) as "battle stations."

Besides widely distributing its bulletin (either directly from the Women's Advisory Committee office or through the United States Employment Service local offices) the Committee made use of the Office of War Information, the national women's press, and the radio to inform women all over the country and especially those who had not been reached by local campaigns, as to the industries and jobs in which additional women workers were needed and on the kind of work requirements and conditions which they could expect when registering for work.

*Selection of Cooperating Organizations* The Women's Advisory Committee decided that the selection of local women's cooperating organizations should be based on criteria established by the respective national organization headquarters. With a transmittal letter signed by Miss Hickey, the Committee submitted a statement to women's organizations in which it urged the formation of local joint committees with women's organization affiliates. It was further pointed out in the statement that, as soon as local committees were established, they should exert pressure to have women members appointed to the Area WMC Labor-Management Committees. The Women's Advisory Committee statement reemphasized that all programs were to be drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the individual community.

*Local Womanpower Committees* During 1943, joint local committees of women's organizations were formed in a number of areas in the country to work in cooperation with local offices of the United States Employment Service on recruitment campaigns. Although the Employment Service offices carried the major work of recruitment it was conceded that the local women's committees were helpful in obtaining public interest and in making suggestions on sources of woman labor supply.

In 1944 Miss Hickey reported that, as a result of the cooperative relationship, recruitment methods had improved and enrollment for jobs had increased. There remained, however, some areas in which no efficient effort had been made to recruit local women reserves into the labor market.

Toward the close of 1944, the local committees still in existence but not especially active were in the Ohio cities of Cleveland, Dayton, Canton, Springfield, Cincinnati; in Kalamazoo, Mich., and in Louisville, Ky.

*Recruitment for Agricultural Work* As early as October 1942 the subject of recruitment of women for agricultural work was discussed by the Women's Advisory Committee as a special recruitment problem. Since male workers in increasing numbers were drawn away from agricultural areas into industrial work as well as into the armed forces, a critical farm labor shortage was expected for the summer of 1943. It was pointed out that in order to meet labor needs for both seasonal peak production and year-round quotas, large numbers of women would have to be recruited. The Women's Bureau through Miss Nienburg, Assistant to the Director, urged, at the Committee meeting, the adoption of a Federal program of guidance to which local requirements could be adapted. Shortly afterwards the Women's Bureau published a policy statement on Wartime Use of Women on Farms.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Cf. "Guides for Wartime Use of Women on Farms," Women's Bureau Special Bull. 8, 1942. For basic recommendations made by the Women's Bureau, cf. p. 20.

In subsequent meetings the members discussed reports they had received from their regions which seemed to indicate confusion among farmers and a great diversity of individual local plans. Should farm labor be frozen? Would imported labor be as useful for year-round farm work as it might be for seasonal peak production? Reactions toward newly formulated "Land Army" plans were mixed. Farmers' wives voiced opposition against importing urban women workers. The Women's Advisory Committee Subcommittee on Agriculture studied the situation and came to the conclusion that farmers were in desperate need of a coordinated program if food production were not to be jeopardized.

The subcommittee's conclusions were formulated in a Recommendation to the Chairman of the War Manpower Commission (January 14, 1943) with the urgent request that the Commission assume the responsibility for setting up an agricultural program to include the utilization of women. The Committee further expressed the wish to be consulted by the War Manpower Commission staff when drawing up plans.

In its statement, the Women's Advisory Committee made the same recommendations that the Women's Bureau had made in its policy statement on the Wartime Use of Women on Farms. The major points covered were as follows:

- (1) A list of special occupations in agriculture which can be performed adequately by women.
- (2) Possible local sources of woman labor supply.
- (3) Standards for employment of women (wages, hours, insurance, housing).
- (4) Training and supervision recommendations.
- (5) Recommendations for community facilities, especially child-care facilities.

*Local Agricultural Committees* In February 1943 the Women's Advisory Committee supplemented its first policy statement on women in agricultural work with a statement aiming at implementation. The Committee recommended that community committees be established to organize a local program for the recruitment, training, and placement of nonfarm workers to be employed as farm labor. The Committee further suggested that thought should be given to the creation of a formalized Women's Land Army. In March 1943, the Women's Advisory Committee made a direct appeal to local women's organizations to cooperate with United States Employment Service local offices or county agricultural agents on labor needs and to urge their members wherever labor shortages existed to engage in farm work, either on a voluntary or paid basis, or to take on supervisory work. Although there are no reliable data available on the number of local committees formed, the United States Department of Agriculture states that a consider-

able number of committees developed and that many local women's organizations enrolled their members in farm-work programs in small communities in the areas of greatest agricultural productivity.

*Women's Land Army* In February 1943, the operating responsibilities for Farm Placement Service were delegated to the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, while policies continued to be developed in the War Manpower Commission. A "Women's Land Army Division" was established in the Federal Extension Office with Florence Hall as head. According to a report by Miss Hall, about 2,000,000 women were placed in farm jobs from the beginning of 1943 through 1945. The majority of the women were used in peak seasonal work, but in 1944, 11,000 women were placed for year-round work. Women's organizations were well alerted and cooperated actively from the first, and a great number of local committees were formed immediately. However, it was found in some instances that the community had been alerted and large numbers of women enrolled for farm work before a real need for additional farm labor was established. County agents and United States Employment Service officials feared a negative effect on the morale of rural communities from badly timed recruitment measures and worked toward a better coordination of local labor supply and demand. After the first rush, the formation of new committees was discouraged to some extent.

In some States the Women's Land Army supervisor was assisted by a State advisory committee; on the national level Women's Land Army officials had the cooperation of a national advisory committee of which Miss Hickey was a member.<sup>13</sup>

#### *National Service Legislation*

*The Problem* A review of the Women's Advisory Committee policy and action in the area of recruitment of women would be incomplete without some consideration of the Committee's position with regard to national service legislation to control and direct the wartime labor supply.

It was mentioned before that as early as October and December 1942, when current recruitment failures were discussed by the Women's Advisory Committee, several members had pointed out the need for national service legislation. In February 1943 the issue was taken up again, as the controversial Austin-Wadsworth Bill had just been introduced.

Since the Women's Advisory Committee members had not had time to study the Bill, the discussion was mostly concerned with the broad issue of whether compulsory measures should replace voluntary methods of recruitment. It was the consensus of the group that the

<sup>13</sup> Cf. "Women's Land Army," Extension Farm Labor Program, 1943-1944-1945, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1945.

present manpower situation did not call for national service legislation, a viewpoint that was shared by the Management-Labor Policy Committee and many War Manpower Commission officials. Several members argued that, if the manpower situation became so serious that voluntary recruitment had to be abandoned, the method used in Great Britain, an over-all emergency power act to be used if and when needed, would be preferable to the Nation-wide registration provided for in the Austin-Wadsworth Bill.

In September 1943 the War Manpower Commission representative at the Women's Advisory Committee meeting pointed out to the group that because of serious lags in production due to manpower shortage the issue of national service legislation was likely to be revived. A discussion followed in which the members who were opposed to legislation argued that the continuation of the voluntary plan would be sufficient to solve labor-shortage problems if under-utilization of available manpower were corrected. Enforced recruitment without full utilization of workers would only increase the existing waste of labor. Among the suggestions which the members made for correction of under-utilization were the following: Transfer of workers from luxury industries (examples quoted were manufacturing of lipsticks and pocketbooks) into essential industries; employment of women, of Negroes and especially Negro women in areas where employers continued to discriminate against them; guarantee of seniority rights to men eligible for induction into military service. (Many men in the eligible group now preferred induction, through which they did not lose seniority rights to their regular jobs, since transfer into critical industries caused loss of seniority rights.)

The President, who had previously not taken a stand in the controversy, in his message on the State of the Union in January 1944 recommended the passage of a national service law. A second, revised Austin-Wadsworth bill was introduced and hearings in the Senate began on January 12. Mr. McNutt testified in the Senate in support of a national service act but stressed that a satisfactory job had been done by voluntary methods.<sup>14</sup> Again the Women's Advisory Committee discussed the issue of national service legislation. It became apparent during this discussion that national service legislation was an issue on which the Women's Advisory Committee was clearly divided into two camps.<sup>15</sup> In retrospect, it seems that on no other issue discussed by the Women's Advisory Committee was

<sup>14</sup> Mr. McNutt, who was the chief proponent of a national service act, and other War Manpower Commission officials who framed legislation were opposed to the Austin-Wadsworth Bill because it placed administrative responsibility for registration and selection of workers in the Selective Service System rather than on the War Manpower Commission and United States Employment Service.

<sup>15</sup> The Women's Bureau Director was opposed to a draft of women for two basic reasons: The Bureau did not consider that a real womanpower shortage existed but attributed the so-called shortage to under-utilization and unsatisfactory working and community conditions; also the Bureau regarded labor conscription as undemocratic. Cf. "Women at Work," *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251.

there such a strong difference of opinion.<sup>16</sup> The minutes show that the Committee had planned to submit recommendations to Mr. McNutt before his testimony in the Senate, but according to Miss Hickey's statement at a subsequent meeting no agreement could be reached and no official statement was made, although Miss Hickey informed Mr. McNutt unofficially of the difference of opinion among the members.

Labor shortages were not critical in spring and summer 1944, but in December 1944, after the German counteroffensive, production lags again became apparent and military authorities blamed labor shortage for it.<sup>17</sup> President Roosevelt, in his State of the Union message in January 1945 pressed for the second time the passage of a national service act, and on January 16, 1945, the Committee had another discussion regarding national service legislation. The earlier arguments for and against legislation were repeated and reemphasized, but this time the majority were in favor of a national service act. They pointed out that the President and his military advisers should be supported in their request since they had stated that legislation was unavoidable. They further argued that legislation would make it possible finally to eliminate continued discriminatory practices on the part of employers and would break down the persisting reluctance of many women to go to work. Legislation would also furnish the background to set up machinery for channeling labor into essential industries, and it would provide the psychological stimulus which was needed in order to end the war as soon as possible.

The minority reemphasized that no legislative measures would improve the manpower situation as long as current labor supplies were not fully utilized. They also stressed that use of compulsory recruitment methods would be detrimental to the war effort because greater cooperation of the people could be obtained with voluntary methods.

*Policy Statement on National Service Legislation*      The discussion led to a poll with eight votes in favor of, and three against, legislation. The Committee issued a statement in favor of national service legislation. In this statement the Women's Advisory Committee registered its opposition to any national service legislation which would not include women as an integral part of the labor force. The Committee recommended further with regard to women to exempt women with children under 16 years

<sup>16</sup> Women's labor groups did not favor national registration for women, but several women's civic organizations with a feminist program were articulate proponents of a draft of women. In the Korean war and defense program, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women have again called for a registration of women.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. "United States at War," *op. cit.*, p. 452.

of age and not to establish an age differential between men and women.<sup>18</sup>

Nothing ever developed as a result of this policy statement because the proposal for a labor draft, which had been controversial since the spring of 1942, finally died with the failure of the Austin-Wadsworth bill to be reported out of Senate Committee in March 1944. From this point onward, labor mobilization programs were continued on a voluntary basis and the United States never reached the need for conscription measures such as were adopted in Great Britain.

However, the main interest of a number of committee members in a national service act at this time was to provide for the full inclusion of women, as well as for their protection, if such an act were passed. Therefore it cannot be said that all of those who favored Mr. McNutt's proposal for a labor draft were ardent protagonists for labor conscription so much as for assuring that women were properly considered. Some who voted in favor of labor draft had no strong convictions about it; rather they felt it to be inevitable in the current situation.

#### *Training*

*Training for Industrial Work* The Committee's considerations of recruitment problems were closely related to the Committee's approach to the question of training. From the first and with

the early support of the Women's Bureau, the need for training opportunities for women was recognized by the Women's Advisory Committee as an integral part of a womanpower program. During the Committee's discussion in October 1942 on basic policy for women workers it was brought out that the majority of women to be recruited for employment had never worked, had no knowledge of the technical requirements of a job, and needed preemployment training or training on the job if they were to be used effectively. When the Women's Advisory Committee developed its basic principles regarding the employment of women in the war, the Committee recommended a policy under which women, on the same terms as men, on the basis of ability only, and regardless of race, national origin, or creed should be given training opportunities.

The Women's Advisory Committee basic policy on training was accepted by the War Manpower Commission in its own policy statement on Recruitment, Training and Employment of Women Workers of October 17, 1942. At the same time, Miss Hickey, in a public statement on training of women, recorded the special features of some individual training programs in several parts of the country, but especially on the west coast, and pointed out that carefully planned

<sup>18</sup> The recommendations referring to both men and women included suggestions made by Committee members, such as enforcement of removal of discriminatory practices on the part of employers and protection of seniority and other rights of employees in cases of transfer. The Committee further recommended penalties for those who would refuse to work or to engage in training for work; provision of transportation and suitable working conditions and housing facilities for workers transferred from labor surplus to labor shortage areas, and administrative responsibility to be placed with the Women's Advisory Committee.

training courses had reduced the time required for learning a job by a considerable percentage.

Prior to the Women's Advisory Committee emphasis on the need for training opportunities for women workers, the Women's Bureau, and especially Miss Anderson, had appealed to manpower officials in 1942 to consider a training program for women workers. According to the Bureau's experience, in-plant training programs proved to be a more acceptable method to employers than preemployment training courses. Although employers agreed that preemployment helped the new worker to acquire background knowledge and to choose her future job more carefully than without any orientation, they claimed that preemployment was wasteful because workers had to be re-trained in the individual plant where they accepted employment. Most employers, as they changed from men workers to women workers, proceeded with training programs of their own; however, other employers cooperated with "Training Within Industry" programs, which started in 1940.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1943, the Women's Advisory Committee devoted the major part of its meeting to a report on "Training Within Industry" by War Manpower Commission staff, including a demonstration lesson with illustrations from the Job Instruction Training Course; but no action was taken by the Committee until October 1943 when the Women's Advisory Committee released a public statement by Miss Hickey in support of the War Manpower Commission's training program. In this statement Miss Hickey stressed that women new to any work experience not only needed training in skills but also needed help in general adjustment to factory conditions and procedures before they could be used effectively in production. As a special program for women workers the Committee recommended the following four phases of training:

- (1) Orientation and pre-production training.
- (2) On-the-job training under trained instructors.
- (3) Supplementary training for those who wished to increase their skills.
- (4) Re-training for transfers when needed by increased war production.

*Training for Agricultural Work* Since the Women's Advisory Committee had been instrumental in arousing women's organizations to set up local agricultural committees to organize women's participation in farm work, it felt responsible for further suggestions regarding training facilities. In February 1943 the Committee recommended that the War Manpower Commission open up training facilities in agriculture. It suggested especially that schools and other agencies should be used to offer courses in handling of machinery, animal husbandry, and in harvesting of crops. To

<sup>19</sup> "Training Within Industry" was a cooperative plan of management and labor within industry and was designed to train new workers and re-train workers already employed for transfer to other jobs. A special part of the program which became more important in 1943 was geared to the training of supervisory personnel.

what extent the Women's Advisory Committee recommendation affected the development of agricultural training facilities is difficult to ascertain. It may be assumed, however, that through its co-operation with women's organizations and their local joint committees the Women's Advisory Committee was at least partly responsible for the efforts of these committees to recruit women for local short-term training courses, such as one-day tractor schools. Miss Hickey reported a month later to the Committee that a good start had been made with local training plans. With a few exceptions no formal training of women for agricultural jobs through facilities of schools and colleges was provided. Farmers, like industrialists, preferred to do their own "on-the-job" training.

#### *Summary of Employment Policy*

A summary of the basic principles of the Women's Advisory Committee policy on wartime employment of women is contained in the Committee's statement on Recruitment, Training, and Employment of Women of October 1942 which recommended the following:

- (1) Removal of barriers by management and labor organizations to the employment of women in any occupation for which they are or can be fitted.
- (2) Employment on the basis of qualifications for the job without regard to race, national origin, or creed.
- (3) Removal of upper age limits so that large numbers of older employable women could be brought into the labor market.
- (4) Wages paid on the basis of work performed, irrespective of sex.
- (5) Provisions for safety on the job.
- (6) Safeguards for health of women workers through provision of adequate medical service, 1 day of rest in 7, 8-hour shift, a maximum 48-hour week, scheduled rest periods and days, and adequate eating facilities for each shift.
- (7) Provision of counseling services to assist in the induction, integration, and follow-up of the newly employed women workers.

The Women's Advisory Committee's basic recommendations regarding employment of women were shortly afterward supplemented by special recommendations for the employment of youth under 18. The Women's Advisory Committee recommended, also in October 1942, safeguards for their intellectual and physical development through preserving and enforcing the existing school-attendance laws and child-labor standards. In case of a severe emergency and need for relaxation of such laws, the Committee urged observance of minimum requirements with regard to physical and educational standards.

The Women's Advisory Committee's basic principles regarding employment of women and of youth under 18 in wartime were accepted as national policy by the War Manpower Commission in October 1942 and January 1943, respectively.

### ***Utilization and Job Adjustment***

Throughout its existence, the Committee was strongly interested in the problem of full utilization of womanpower, either through bringing into employment untapped womanpower reserves or through job adjustments for already employed women. However, in only a few instances did the Committee follow up by special action its basic recommendations with regard to employment and full utilization of women war workers. Some of the problems involved were dealt with in different contexts, as for example, the continuous discriminatory practice of employers, which was discussed several times in connection with national service legislation. Through its cooperative program with women's organizations and through personal contacts of members in their regions the Committee maintained channels for publicity aiming at local implementation of the basic policy. For action, the Committee depended largely on United States Employment Service offices.

*Discriminatory Practices* With regard to discriminatory practices the Women's Advisory Committee took the following specific action: In December 1942 an individual incident of racial discrimination was brought to the Committee's attention. The Committee voted to refer the case to the Fair Employment Practices Committee of the War Manpower Commission. Late in 1943 the Committee became interested in reports that the Civil Service Commission discriminated against women as candidates for top executive positions in Government. The problem was discussed at length, but a formal recommendation was postponed pending further study. There is no evidence in the minutes or recommendations of the Committee of any follow-up in this matter.

In August 1943, the Committee discussed the problems of another special group of workers discriminated against by employers, the older women, and passed a motion urging the War Manpower Commission to continue emphasizing the need for increased utilization of older women.<sup>20</sup> In a public statement urging the increased utilization of older women Miss Hickey pointed out at the same time that employment of older women (from 50-70 years of age) had increased much more slowly than that of men of the same age groups and that in many areas the traditional upper age limit had been lifted for men, but not for women. The Committee took no specific action on this issue but requested a study on the employment of older women by staff of the War Manpower Commission.

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<sup>20</sup> An interesting counterpart to this problem was brought out during the discussion in which members stressed the need for additional public relations effort to break down indifference on the part of retired or leisure-class women, as well as resistance of husbands against paid employment of their wives.

*Wages and Hours* The question might be raised as to why the Women's Advisory Committee did not concern itself to a greater extent with problems pertaining to wages and hours for women workers, in spite of the fact that prewar standards were frequently threatened by wartime relaxation practices. The answer to this question lies partly in the fact that in a war economy regulation of wages and hours becomes part of a national system of controls. Although the Labor Department and its Bureaus, which were particularly interested in maintaining prewar standards with regard to hours and wages, never ceased to oppose extended relaxations, the Committee may have felt that it was necessary to subjugate the interests of special groups to the needs arising from the national emergency.

All major policy statements adopted, both in the basic platform and later in the postwar recommendations, included the principles of equal pay and safeguards on hours of work. War Labor Board decisions were reviewed for inequities, when the opportunity permitted, by the chairman herself, and special attention was given to the equal-pay principle in union contracts.

The Committee's focus on wages and hours differed from that of the British women to some degree. Considerable attention was given in Britain to the question of hours of work because of the nature of the emergency which required the limit in manpower. British women were also subject traditionally to far greater open discrimination in wages than took place in the United States.

One full meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee was devoted to discussing the implications of the 48-hour week as introduced in war plants in September 1943. The consensus was that there should be no defined differentiation between the work of men and women so that industrial assembly lines could be maintained without disruption, and the Committee issued no recommendation on this increase in hours.

*Safety and Medical Services* Throughout 1943, as women workers in large numbers entered employment which had formerly been considered "men's" work, the Women's Advisory Committee received reports from War Manpower Commission staff and from local committees on lack of adjustment of women workers within the plants all over the country. Problems of safety had been left largely to the individual employer's initiative, and inspection provisions were inadequate. In the fields of health, hygiene, and nutrition, Federal agencies (United States Public Health Service and the Nutrition Division of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services) had given some consultation to State industrial hygiene departments or individual employers, but no Federal agency had supervisory power to act on a State or local level so that an uneven program of in-plant facilities had developed. Of course, the Women's

Bureau had given much consultation along these lines to employers who took some initiative, and Bureau field agents visited over 500 plants during the war period for this, among other purposes.

In March 1943, in a basic policy statement on plant and community facilities (which was forwarded to the War Manpower Commission, incorporated into a Guide for Programs on Plant and Community Facilities and Services, transmitted by the War Manpower Commission to the field in October 1943) the Women's Advisory Committee expressed the need for the following provisions:

- (1) That safety provisions be supplemented by adequate safety education.
- (2) That adequate medical services should include first-aid and treatment facilities as well as necessary medical and professional personnel.

*Physical Examinations for Shipyard Workers*

When conditions in war plants, especially in the shipbuilding industry on the west coast where large numbers of women were employed for the first time, began to cause heavy turn-over and absenteeism in the spring of 1943, the Kaiser Shipbuilding Corporation requested two staff members of the War Manpower Commission, Dr. Sparks and Thelma McKelvey, to study conditions in their plants.

In June 1943 Miss Southall of the War Manpower Commission staff, who had gone with Thelma McKelvey to the Kaiser plants, reported to the Committee on the results of their inquiry, and in accordance with the War Manpower Commission's conclusions, the Women's Advisory Committee adopted unanimously a recommendation to the Chairman of the War Manpower Commission requesting him to urge the Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee of the War Production Board to provide physical examinations for shipyard workers, particularly women. The first recommendation was followed up in August 1943 by another recommendation to the War Manpower Commission requesting that the Committee be advised of further action taken by the War Manpower Commission. The Women's Advisory Committee was informed that a letter from Mr. McNutt transmitting the Women's Advisory Committee recommendations had gone to the Shipbuilding Stabilization Committee, had been transmitted from there to Donald Nelson, Chairman of the War Production Board, and was on the agenda at the Pacific Coast Zone Conference. The Women's Advisory Committee recommendations were discussed by the Subcommittee on Health, Safety, and Sanitation of the Pacific Coast Zone Conference in Seattle in November 1943 and were again placed on the agenda of the full Pacific Coast Zone Conference in Portland in February 1944,<sup>21</sup> but the result is obscured by inadequate documentation.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. "History of the Women's Advisory Committee," War Manpower Commission, 1944. 5 pp. mimeo.

**Maternity Protection Policy** At the February 1944 meeting the Committee heard reports from staff members of the Children's Bureau on maternity problems of women workers in industry. The

Children's Bureau had made a survey of 70 plants employing a total of 250,000 women to study maternity provisions and programs. The survey revealed that the usual practice was termination of employment rather than maternity leave and that few plants had any policy regarding prenatal care or selection of special jobs to which pregnant women should be assigned. The Children's Bureau had published the results of the survey and outlined the following provisions which should be part of a comprehensive maternity policy:<sup>22</sup>

- (1) Avoidance of penalizing regulations.
- (2) Examination of women to determine continuation of employment.
- (3) Job evaluation and transfer to other work.
- (4) Periodic check-ups.
- (5) Reasonable prenatal and postnatal leave.
- (6) Cooperation of industry and unions to protect reemployment and seniority rights of women on maternity leave.

The policy statement had been distributed to labor unions and to industry. The Committee passed a recommendation to assist in the distribution of the Children's Bureau statement. In April 1944 Miss Hickey reported that through the Committee's efforts in distributing the Maternity Policy Statement almost 4,000 copies had been sent out within 1 month.

**Absenteeism and Turn-over Among Women Workers** Throughout 1942, 1943, and 1944, as war production needs became more urgent, stabilization of labor became a major problem and manpower officials were increasingly interested in the causes of and remedies for absenteeism and turn-over which developed into a threat to the effort of meeting production schedules.

**Recommendations for In-plant Counseling** It was recognized that absenteeism and turn-over were higher among women than men. The Women's Advisory Committee took the point of view that the major cause for absenteeism of women workers lay in the failure of communities to provide facilities to assist the woman worker in her dual role of worker and homemaker, but that maladjustment of the newly employed woman worker to industrial life was another important cause. The Committee agreed that counseling services in industrial plants would be instrumental in accomplishing a better adjustment of women workers to employment, in the improvement of efficiency and morale of women workers, and in helping the reduction of absenteeism and turn-over.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. "A Maternity Policy for Industry," U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, 1943. This statement, published by the Children's Bureau, had been preceded by another statement, prepared jointly by the Women's Bureau and the Children's Bureau: "Standards for Maternity Care and Employment of Mothers in Industry," July 1942.

Before the war some industries which employed women had provided counseling services. Others introduced such services during the war as they employed larger numbers of women or employed women for the first time. Initiative in introducing a counseling service and selection of counseling personnel was left entirely to the individual employer. Up to 1943 the Women's Bureau alone had been concerned with counseling services for women in industry; their recommendations were available on request but had not been adopted as general policy.

The Women's Advisory Committee had included in its original policy statement on the employment of women a recommendation regarding counseling service as a method of inducting, integrating, and following up newly employed women workers. Throughout 1943, the Committee collected factual material from the War Manpower Commission and from community sources in the members' regions about individual attempts in industry to reduce absenteeism and turn-over through the use of counseling. In December 1943 Miss Hickey released a public statement in which she recommended wider development of in-plant counseling services. Her recommendation was illustrated by individual experiments in which the employment of counselors had led to elimination of technical or morale problems and had thus reduced absenteeism and turn-over. Miss Hickey further made some basic recommendations regarding the areas in which a woman counselor should be used, such as orientation, placement, safety, health, and clothing regulations, training, assistance to workers with personal problems, and assistance to supervisory personnel. In addition, standards for the selection of women counselors were included in the statement. Miss Hickey stated that the key requirement for a woman counselor was training in, and ability to deal in, human relations rather than any specific experience in industry, which could be acquired.

In the April 1944 meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee the item of women counselors in industry was on the agenda. Mrs. Frances W. Trigg, Special Agent in War Production Training of Women, Office of Education, discussed with the Committee certain problems to be solved before counseling services in industry could become fully effective. She reported that employers apparently had failed fully to accept counseling service as an important function within the plant. Many had chosen counselors from among friends of executives, socially prominent women, social workers, in general only women without industrial background.<sup>23</sup> No special training for counselors had been provided. The result, in many cases, had been that women workers did not accept the counselors and that their presence in the plants had remained ineffective. Furthermore, man-

<sup>23</sup> The lack of industrial background apparently was a more serious obstacle towards the acceptance of counselors by workers than Miss Hickey assumed in her statement. Mrs. Trigg pointed out that counselors without any previous industrial experience did not speak the women workers' language and found it hard to establish *rapport*.

agement had failed, as a whole, to give the woman counselor the status and authority necessary for the job.

During the discussion Committee members reemphasized their belief in the effectiveness of carefully planned counseling services, although they agreed that good personnel relationships and good supervisors remained the most important factors in the attempt to work toward stabilization of women's employment. A member suggested that copies of a "Job Analysis for Counselors in Industry," which was in the process of preparation by the Office of Education, should be disseminated through the American Management Association and the National Association of Manufacturers, particularly since several committee members had personal contacts with those groups.

*Part-time Work* The Women's Advisory Committee's interest in part-time work developed as an integral part of the Committee's

preoccupation with the problem of the lack of full utilization of womanpower. In April 1943 the Committee had its first discussion of part-time work. It was pointed out that large numbers of workers, and especially women workers, could be made available for employment in areas of critical labor shortages if employers would cooperate in part-time arrangements. Committee members agreed that many housewives who were unable to combine full-time employment with their domestic responsibilities and women not fully employed could be used for short periods during the day, or for several days within a week, to share industrial jobs with other part-time workers or to serve as relief for full-time workers, if employers could be persuaded to make the necessary adjustments in plant organization.

At the Committee's request, the War Manpower Commission had prepared two reports on part-time work, one on past experience and the other on the special problems arising from split-shift arrangements in industry,<sup>24</sup> and Miss Anderson reported at the April meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee that the Women's Bureau was in the process of making a study of part-time work. The Women's Advisory Committee decided to postpone a policy statement of its own until the Women's Bureau study was ready for release, but they reviewed Miss Anderson's recommendations.

The Women's Bureau recommended wider use of part-time employment of women to increase war production, to avoid, if possible, the extension of hours of regular women workers beyond 8 hours a day or 48 hours a week; also for the purpose of meeting essential civilian requirements and release at the same time some full-time workers for war production industries; and especially to reduce ab-

<sup>24</sup> Cf. "Review of Experience in the Use of Part-time Workers" and "Problems Incident to the Employment of Part-time Workers," War Manpower Commission, Bureau of Program Planning and Review, Washington, 1943.

senteeism of full-time workers through relief shifts.<sup>26</sup> It was further recommended in the Women's Bureau statement that wage rates and work conditions should be the same for part-time workers as for full-time employees; that beginning and ending hours should be adjusted to the needs of women with children of school age and that women with children of preschool age should not be recruited.

In its statement released September 1943, the Women's Advisory Committee followed the Women's Bureau recommendations and said specifically that part-time arrangements should be introduced only under the following circumstances:

- (1) If the supply of full-time workers is inadequate.
- (2) If untapped labor reserves, especially minorities, are fully utilized.
- (3) If the alternative solution is to bring in workers from outside with a heavy drain on available community facilities.
- (4) If part-time arrangements are feasible in local plants.
- (5) If wages, working conditions, health standards are the same as for full-time workers.

As to the groups to be utilized in split-shift arrangements, Miss Hickey pointed out in the policy release that housewives (if their home schedules were given consideration), older men and women, and persons not working a full 48-hour week would be the reserve from which additional labor could be drawn.

On the whole, the part-time program was never popular with industry in the United States. Even in Great Britain, which had a much more critical manpower situation, employers did not accept part-time employment on a wide scale.

*Seniority Rights of Women Workers* In order to encourage voluntary transfers of skilled workers to essential industries, the President's order of December 1942 had established a guarantee that workers who were transferred would be permitted to return to their peacetime jobs after the war without loss of seniority rights. By mid-1943 the Women's Advisory Committee became interested in the effects of the seniority regulation on women workers as it applied in the field of transportation.

Committee members discussed the situation in their August 1943 meeting on the basis of reports received from railroad yards and bus companies. They had learned that men who precede women in seniority were often transferred into jobs which were physically lighter and better paid so that the women workers in the company had to stay on heavier and less well-paid jobs, as for example intercity bus drivers who had to load busses, change tires and find overnight accommodations on the road. Light work, such as electrical work, for which women would have been especially well suited, was frequently assigned to men with higher seniority. The question was raised whether men should receive a "seniority bonus" if they per-

<sup>26</sup> "Part-Time Employment of Women in Wartime," Women's Bureau. Special Bull. 13, June 1943.

formed equal work with women of lower seniority status. The result of this discussion was a recommendation by the Women's Advisory Committee of August 13, 1943, in which the Committee formulated the following policy with regard to seniority rights of women workers in the field of transportation:

- (1) All jobs that women can do should be open to women without regard to seniority.
- (2) If a man with "older" seniority rights bids on a job that a woman can do and that a woman holds, he shall stay on his job if it is one that only a man can do or shall be transferred to a similar job.
- (3) Women are to be considered as "temporary" for the duration on all jobs which are considered "men's jobs." On such jobs women acquire seniority rights only among themselves.
- (4) After the war, those women who stay on their wartime jobs shall acquire the same seniority status as men, with seniority retroactive.

In addition it was reemphasized that this policy should not affect the principle of equal pay. Apparently the Committee made no attempt to follow up this recommendation.

#### *Community Adjustments*

The Women's Advisory Committee gave a great deal of consideration to the question of community adjustment to women's employment as a means of maintaining full use of the womanpower reserve and of protecting the long-range national interest.

The basic principle which underlies the Committee's entire policy in the field of child-care facilities was formulated in the Committee's original statement on the "Recruitment, Training, and Employment of Women" of October 1942. This statement postulated that, in order to protect the family group and to disrupt family life as little as possible, the recruitment of women with young children should be postponed until all other local labor reserves were absorbed and that *community-sponsored facilities for mothers of young children should be provided if such mothers had to work.* The War Manpower Commission adopted the Women's Advisory Committee recommendation and incorporated it, in January 1943, in its "Amendment to Policy on Employment in Industry of Women with Young Children."<sup>26</sup> Point IV of the Statement says specifically:

Whenever it is found that women with young children are gainfully employed in essential activities, or that the labor requirements of essential activities have not been met after the exhaustion of all other sources of labor supply and that to meet such requirements, women with young children must be recruited, it is essential that:

- (a) Such women be employed at such hours, on such shifts or on such part-time schedules as will cause the least disruption in their family life; and

<sup>26</sup> See "Manual of Operations," War Manpower Commission, Title III, Section 2-2 (1).

(b) If any such women are unable to arrange for the satisfactory care of their children during working hours, adequate facilities be provided for the care of their children during working hours. Such facilities should be developed as community projects and not under the auspices of individual employers or employer groups.

*Survey of Existing Child-Care Programs* In an effort to work toward implementation of basic policy on community facilities, a subcommittee on ways and means was established immediately after the Women's Advisory Committee's appointment. The subcommittee started its work with a survey of existing child-care programs. In the field of community and child-care facilities for women workers, a report was presented to the Committee by Miss Anderson at a meeting in February 1943. The Women's Bureau had developed a program of cooperation on the question of inadequate community facilities with the War and Navy Departments as well as with the Wage and Hour Division. The Women's Bureau had further been requested by the War Manpower Commission to cooperate with Dr. Taft, head of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services on this problem. In response to this request, Women's Bureau field staff were making surveys in communities with concentration of war workers where the lack of community facilities was recognized as detrimental to production efforts; in addition they served as consultants in such communities.<sup>27</sup>

At the meeting in February 1943 at which Miss Anderson gave her report, the Subcommittee on Community Facilities also made its first major report on day-care facilities for children of women workers. The report disclosed a very complex situation.

At least six major Government agencies were engaged in individual day-care programs.<sup>28</sup> The Committee's consensus was that the need for coordination was urgent. However, the Committee decided against making recommendations as to the selection of any particular Federal agency as coordinator of a day-care program. It may be assumed that the Committee's decision against a definite recommendation was based partly on the consideration that the problem of child-care facilities was peripheral to its major task, which was the full mobilization of womanpower, and should remain the major responsibility of agencies directly concerned with child care; it may also be that the Committee thought it unwise and

<sup>27</sup> The results of these surveys in 37 war-industry communities were published as Special Bull. 15, "Community Services for War Workers," Women's Bureau, February 1944.

<sup>28</sup> The Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services (WMC), the U. S. Office of Education, the Children's Bureau, the Federal Works Agency, the Office of Civilian Defense, and the Works Project Administration.

beyond its advisory function to become actively involved in the jurisdictional conflicts of agencies interested in day-care programs.<sup>29</sup>

*Recommendations on Community Facilities* The Women's Advisory Committee formulated its own recommendations to the War Manpower Commission on community facilities policy in March 1943, based on the Women's Bureau study of 37 war-production communities. The Women's Advisory Committee recommendations called for:

- (1) Adequate medical and sanitary conditions (in communities with workers in war production and essential civilian services).
- (2) Expansion and adaptation of eating facilities (in communities with concentration of war workers).
- (3) Expansion and adaptation of school facilities, provision of adequate number of qualified teachers.
- (4) Child-care provisions in form of nurseries, extended school programs, daily foster-home care, homemaker service, supervised playground facilities.
- (5) Adult recreation facilities.
- (6) Adjustment of shopping facilities in accordance with work hours and plant locations.
- (7) Opening up of community counseling and information services to help the in-migrant workers and their families orient themselves in and adjust to the community.

During the discussion of the draft, several committee members pointed out that the need for immediate implementation was urgent and that additional recommendations regarding machinery for execution of the policy were indicated. However, another group of members maintained that implementation would be the operating agency's (*i. e.*, the War Manpower Commission's) responsibility. The Committee compromised on making a strong statement to the War Manpower Commission as to its responsibility for prompt implementation of the policy. The Committee further passed a motion to the effect that, if the Women's Advisory Committee recommendations were accepted by the War Manpower Commission, the policy statement should be widely disseminated; if, however, the Women's Advisory Committee recommendations were not to be accepted, they should, nevertheless, be widely publicized as the Women's Advisory Committee policy. In October 1943, the Committee's recommendations were included in the War Manpower Commission's "Guide for Programs on Plant and Community Facilities and Services" and the Guide was distributed through War Manpower Commission field offices.

In accordance with the Committee's decision in March 1943 to

<sup>29</sup> The Federal Works Agency was administering funds which had been made available in 1942 for child day-care centers from appropriations under the Community Facilities Act of June 1941 (Lanham Act). The FWA used the former WPA child-care facilities without regard to plans for day-care facilities on a State and local level which the Children's Bureau was working on jointly with the U. S. Office of Education after receiving \$400,000 from the President's Emergency Fund in August 1942.

refrain from making recommendations on implementation of basic policy on community facilities, the Committee subsequently did not make any systematic attempt to work further at getting action on this problem. It did, however, continue to reemphasize, through repeated formal recommendations, the War Manpower Commission's responsibility and the urgent need for implementation.

*Special Action on Day-Care Centers* A test case arose when the Kaiser Shipbuilding plant received, in May 1943, an appropriation of a million and a half dollars from the Maritime Commission to set up child-care centers. The Women's Advisory Committee was unanimous in considering this event a profound break with national policy as enunciated by the War Manpower Commission and based on Women's Advisory Committee recommendations. The Committee had strongly recommended that a program for child-care facilities should be developed and that such child-care facilities should be sponsored by the community, not by the individual employer. When the Committee learned of the allocation of funds to the Kaiser Corporation, a memorandum protesting this action was sent to Mr. McNutt who, in turn informed Mr. Kaiser and the Maritime Commission of the reaction by the Women's Advisory Committee. The allocation of funds could not be annulled. Mr. Kaiser had received the funds. However, he assured the War Manpower Commission chairman that the project would be handled through community facilities. The Women's Advisory Committee protest further resulted in a statement from the War Production Board that no grants of this kind would be given to any other employer, until the Kaiser plan had been tried. There is no evidence of any other identifiable allocation of government funds to private employers for the purpose of setting up day-care centers.<sup>30</sup>

It is interesting to note further reports in connection with the Kaiser incident. In April 1944 Mrs. Dunbar, the west coast member of the Committee, reported in committee meeting that the Kaiser center was under-utilized to such an extent that the company was now accepting children of working fathers. The greatest obstacle to greater utilization of the center appeared to be the transportation of the children. Other committee members and War Manpower Commission staff members pointed out that, in general, the public's acceptance of day-care facilities was slow, not only because of poor location and transportation problems, but also because public opinion continued to associate day-care services with charity and social-welfare programs.

<sup>30</sup> There is, however, evidence that a number of other employers were allocated money, in the "cost-plus" part of the defense contract, for the purpose of establishing child day-care facilities or other community aids to war production. The extent to which this was done has not been estimated.

*Shopping Facilities* After the 48-hour week was introduced reports came in from War Manpower Commission regions to the effect that storekeepers did not make a sufficient effort to adjust store hours to women's work hours. The Women's Bureau was also concerned about the disruptive effect on employed women of inadequate shopping facilities and issued, in May 1943, a policy statement in which it was urged that shopping facilities must be provided if women workers' efficiency was to be maintained and if turn-over and absenteeism were to be avoided. The Women's Bureau recommended that retail and service establishment hours should be adjusted to work hours. The Women's Advisory Committee recommended that the War Manpower Commission support the Women's Bureau statement and the War Manpower Commission accepted this recommendation and included the Women's Bureau recommendation for the adjustment of store hours in its field instructions.

Throughout the war, shopping problems of women war workers, as well as housing, transportation, in-plant, and other community facilities problems, were never satisfactorily solved in a general way although some individual communities found solutions to some aspects of the entire problem. However, early in 1944, a War Manpower Commission staff member reported to the Women's Advisory Committee that the dissemination of the War Manpower Commission community facilities program through the local offices had been effective in easing some of the community facilities problems. One instance was cited in which absenteeism had decreased from 13 to 3 percent within 1 month after shopping facilities had been provided.

*Educational Opportunities* Reports from the regions alerted Committee members to the growing shortage of teachers, especially in rural

communities. The lack of qualified teaching staff combined with the overcrowding of physical facilities in war-production centers caused the Women's Advisory Committee to pass a motion on June 16, 1943, calling the attention of women's groups to the growing shortage of teachers in rural schools and urging them to lend their assistance toward averting a critical situation during the coming school year. In December 1943 the Women's Advisory Committee requested the War Manpower Commission Chairman to urge the War Production Board to review and relax restrictions on materials for the construction of school buildings. There is, however, no indication that either of the two motions was followed up by the Commission.

#### ***Reconversion Adjustments and Postwar Planning***

As early as May 1943, when the Committee was confronted with many current problems that needed immediate attention, members began nevertheless to include postwar problems in the agenda. Postwar planning was considered by the Women's Advisory Committee

as essential, not only as an integral part of any long-range planning, but as a means of intensifying the war effort. In working and fighting, people must be sustained by thoughts of the peace to come, according to the Committee's belief.<sup>31</sup>

In December 1943 the Committee released a public statement in which it dealt with postwar problems as they concern women workers. The statement called for continuation in the postwar period of the Women's Advisory Committee basic policy on the employment of women workers, especially for sustained effort to remove all barriers by management and labor unions to the employment of women in occupations for which they are, or can be suited; for the admittance of women to training programs on equal basis with men; and for equal wages. The Committee added a warning, addressed to those who believed that all women war workers would return to their homes after the war. The statement says:

. . . but any easy assumption that a great number of women will return to their homes is to be seriously questioned. Almost 14,000,000 working women are not newcomers to the labor force. The number of women who want and need to work has increased enormously during the war. There will be an even higher proportion of unmarried women in our population. There will be hundreds of thousands of women who must accept the permanent function of breadwinner because of the loss of husbands in the war. And there are the women who have adjusted their family life and found a new, often hard-won economic status, which they do not wish to lose.

Prospects for job security and other new job opportunities after the war are as important to these women as to men. Furthermore, no society can boast of democratic ideals, if it utilizes its womanpower in a crisis and neglects it in peace.

By unanimously passed motion at the December 1943 meeting, the Committee submitted the statement to Mr. McNutt with the request to submit it to Bernard M. Baruch, Chairman, Advisory Unit for War and Post-War Adjustment Policy in the Office of War Mobilization. On December 31, 1943, Mr. McNutt transmitted the statement to Mr. Baruch.

Some problems, essentially postwar- or reconversion-connected, became acute a considerable time before the end of hostilities. For example, the problem of the separation of women from war jobs was serious long before the end of the war. Early in 1944 the Committee's discussions revealed concern about the social and economic effects of current lay-offs of women workers. Large numbers of women were being prematurely dismissed from plants throughout the country in a spirit of "the war is in the bag." The Committee felt keenly that, in view of probably much greater numbers of separations at the end of the war, it was necessary to form a basic policy as early as possible.

<sup>31</sup> Similarly, the Women's Bureau staff had begun to gather data on postwar problems and to think about the implications of transition. See Special Bull. 18, "A Preview as to Women Workers in Transition from War to Peace," issued March 1944.

The recommendations which the Women's Advisory Committee made to the War Manpower Commission on February 16, 1944, for adoption of a basic policy on the withdrawal of women from industry were as follows:

- (1) Provision for counseling service in industry on:
  - (a) Other job opportunities in the community;
  - (b) retraining programs;
  - (c) social-security rights.
- (2) Humane treatment of separations, through early notice.
- (3) First groups to be laid off: Split-shift workers and youth.
- (4) Women workers who wished to return to their homes after the war to be urged to resign voluntarily.
- (5) Separation procedure to be developed under consideration of the following criteria:
  - (a) skill necessary on job;
  - (b) seniority on the job;
  - (c) dismissal pay based on length of service.

Both the statement that went to Mr. Baruch and the statement on lay-offs of women in industry were widely distributed by the Committee.

In June 1944 the chairman of the Women's Advisory Committee dissolved the Subcommittee on Post-War Planning as such, increased the membership of the Public Relations Subcommittee, and merged the work assignments of both. The new committee retained the title of Public Relations Subcommittee, and Bess Bloodworth, the original chairman of the Public Relations Subcommittee, continued to serve. From then on the subcommittee concentrated its efforts to a large extent on the development of a comprehensive policy statement regarding women in the postwar world. The formal policy statement was published in April 1945 and related to the status of *all* women, whether gainfully employed or engaged in homemaking. The statement refers to three groups of women and embodies the following principles:

- (1) *For women who work in their homes*, the following recommendations—  
Extension of **social-security provisions** benefiting the family.  
Federal aid to **education** to equalize educational opportunities;  
16-year age limit; and creation of the post of Secretary of Education in the Cabinet; stress on vocational and adult education program.  
Development of **low-cost housing** program.  
Development of an adult-education program in **nutrition**.  
Development of a **nursery-school** program.
- (2) *For women who work outside their homes*, the following recommendations—  
Expansion for women of existing training programs and **in-plant facilities**.  
Responsibility for "cushioning" separation effects to rest with the United States Employment Service to make possible a minimum of dislocation and suffering; to be implemented by provision of

adequate staff and finances, and by appointment of advisory committees of men and women at every level;

Continuation of part-time arrangements to meet the work requirements of special groups of women, e.g., wives of disabled veterans, wives with children who need additional income to meet the higher cost of living.

(3) *For women in household employment*, the following recommendations—

Inclusion of household employees under the social security act, workmen's compensation laws, minimum wage and hours laws; standards as to hours, vacations, sick leave, living arrangements.

## **Evaluation of the Committee's Work**

### **Introduction**

Conclusions about the Committee's limitations and achievements can be drawn from several sources: What the Committee members thought about their own efforts and contributions, both during its existence and in retrospect; how persons in the agency to which they were attached regarded their achievements; and the record of their accomplishment, as far as it can be traced in the absence of detailed and contemporaneous documentation, which was not provided either in the minutes of the Committee or in the annals of the War Manpower Commission and other cooperating agencies.

In addition, an advisory group must be evaluated in relation to the appointing agency, since its scope, function, program, and the way in which it is used are dependent extensively upon the agency it serves. The recognition of this fact is inescapable and provides a reasonable measure of performance, since it imposes equally certain responsibilities on both the agency and the advisory group. Theoretically, and regardless of pressures and circumstances, the appointing agent should determine conclusively the need for an advisory group, be able to establish a clear-cut set of objectives, arrange for appropriate consideration of reports and recommendations, and be competent to appraise the recommendations. What action shall be taken upon recommendations is the final responsibility of the appointing agent, and the advisory group must be prepared to work on this basis, as any staff group. It must also understand fully the objectives of the agency it advises, accept the directives given to it, and within this framework develop its method of operation and become productive.

An advisory group which is selected from among various affiliations and sets of experience, and whose members may have special interests, must learn to work, in as short a time as possible, as a homogeneous group. Without the day-to-day contact on the job, some burden is therefore imposed by the necessity of members to acquire sufficient technical data to give them background and focus and to enable them to develop a common basis of communication. On

the other hand, there is an advantage in their partial detachment: They should be able to bring considerable objectivity to the tasks at hand.

Regardless of the adequacy of working relationships and the clarity of purpose of all involved, there are still external factors, particularly in large governmental agencies with complex inter-relationships, that can affect the functioning and productivity of the advisory group beyond its control and beyond the control of the appointing agency within the time limits demanded by operating problems.

It is not feasible, and probably not practical, to attempt a detailed analysis of all the factors present in the external situation which may have affected the work of the Women's Advisory Committee, but the most obvious factors, for which positive documentation exists, will be taken into consideration.

Finally, it is not the purpose of this report to appraise the collective or individual competence of the committee members or of the War Manpower Commission; nor would this serve any useful end. Conclusions are drawn along broad lines, and against accepted standards for administrative procedure, with full recognition of the discrepancies between theory and practice in all human organizations. An examination of the area of discrepancy is the justifiably recurrent task of those who continue to work collectively with the forms provided for getting things done in a complex and democratic society. It is hoped that this examination of the machinery affecting one segment of the gigantic manpower program of World War II may reveal, at least, some experience that can serve as partial check-list guidepost, or area for further exploration to those who carry on the program in a parallel situation.

#### ***Limitations and Organization Problems***

*From the Committee's Point of View* No formal self-appraisal was made by the Committee at any time, but their minutes record considerable evidence of concern about the results of their labor. They seemed to be well aware of their advisory character and the limitation it imposed. In fact, several of the members approached the job of committee membership "with tongue in cheek," as one of them put it subsequently, wondering if there were a real place for such a group and whether their deliberations and conclusions would find the appropriate channels for expression and action, particularly in view of the unfavorable administrative attitude demonstrated up to the time of appointment toward acceptance of women at top advisory levels. Thus forearmed, they checked repeatedly upon the policy or action recommended on a specific topic to determine whether anything had been done toward implementation.

By the spring of 1943, a feeling of frustration had developed among Committee members concerning the apparent tabling or filing of the reports which they forwarded to the War Manpower Commission. This feeling, together with the still-unresolved problems of community provisions for day care of children for employed women resulted in issuance of a special invitation to Mr. McNutt for full discussion of both the general lack of progress which caused them some anxiety, and the urgent day-care problem before them.

Mr. McNutt appeared at the Committee meeting of May 12, 1943, and was presented with the situation regarding day care as an example of delay on recommendations. It was pointed out that the Committee had urgently advocated community-sponsored child-care facilities, but that no program had been developed to date. In addition, the Women's Advisory Committee recommendation that older and single women should be employed before women with children under 14, unless adequate child-care and community-facilities programs were developed, had been ignored. As a result of lack of adequate Government or community interest in facilities problems, employers felt that they had to take matters into their own hands. In the Kaiser case, for example, 500 children at the age from 6 months to 6 years had to be accommodated in company-sponsored day-care centers<sup>32</sup> and, because of the lack of community facilities and especially of child-care facilities, absenteeism and turn-over of women had increased all over the country in industries employing large numbers of women workers. This tended to make employers antagonistic toward women workers and had increased employers' reluctance fully to utilize the available woman-power reserve.

During the conference with Mr. McNutt, several committee members, in order to express most strongly their criticism of the ineffectual status they felt the Committee had within the War Manpower Commission, compared their own status to that of the Management-Labor Policy Committee, which, they stressed, had definite authority and effect on War Manpower Commission policy and operations. Mr. McNutt, in his answer, pointed out that Miss Hickey's lack of full membership on the Management-Labor Policy Committee was only a formality and that, actually, she had frequently influenced the Management-Labor Policy Committee in a most constructive way. However, the Chairman of the War Manpower Commission did not yield to the request of the Women's Advisory Committee for more authoritative representation. The Committee requested (in view of the fact that now 16 million women were employed in industry) that Miss Hickey be appointed as a voting member to the Management-Labor Policy Committee<sup>33</sup> and that qualified women be appointed to

<sup>32</sup> See p. 31.

<sup>33</sup> Miss Hickey had been excluded a few days earlier from an emergency meeting of the Management-Labor Policy Committee, an incident which roused the Committee and may have been instrumental in crystallizing the Committee's review of its own function and status.

regional management-labor committees not supplemental to, but on the same level as, men. While Mr. McNutt, in an unofficial conversation with Miss Hickey, appeared to approve of the appointment of qualified women to the Management-Labor Committee, he formally refused to make appointments on any level, explaining that he could not change the established membership of the Management-Labor Committee.

At the next meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee the War Manpower Commissioner explained in great detail the "staff" and "line" principles of organization under which the War Manpower Commission was set up in order to justify his refusal to appoint women members to management-labor committees on any level. Women's activities, according to the War Manpower Commission, should be integrated in total policy-making, but the solution of problems through program-making was the responsibility of operating officials. In conclusion, Mr. McNutt stated that the Women's Advisory Committee might make general manpower policy suggestions as well as recommendations concerning women in particular, but that before issuance of orders and specific programs the Committee's approval was needed only on women. The gains from this effort of the Committee to obtain an identifiable voice in planning were mainly those of mutual clarification of roles. Specific questions, like the day-care problem, seem to have been lost in the temporarily debated issue of relationship of the Women's Advisory Committee to the Management-Labor Policy Committee and the relationship, in general, of advisory groups to an administrative body. In addition to having the air cleared generally, Miss Hickey felt that the two conferences had led to better understanding, and the War Manpower Commission did agree to review the Committee's recommendations directly instead of having them submitted first to the Management-Labor Policy Committee, which had been the practice up to this time. On the other hand, Mr. McNutt apparently had felt it necessary to explain in detail the staff-line relationship and some of the formal mechanics of procedure which the Committee was not aware of to the same degree.

Another basic limitation which the Committee felt was the absence of technical assistance or staff of its own. The Women's Bureau and the technical staff of the War Manpower Commission were busy with full work programs of their own. One case in which this was keenly felt by committee members grew out of a report, at their June 1943 meeting, on the manpower situation on the west coast. A member of the War Manpower Commission staff described the situation as follows: Employers were forced now to accept women workers but were shocked by the high incidence of absenteeism and turn-over; the question was, what methods should be used to stabilize this situation? The members suggested a study to find out whether

there was any correlation between irregularities in women's employment and the adequacy of community facilities. They thought that exit interviews and polls should be conducted by a group of professional workers. When the discussion led to the conclusion that the only staff available would be from the United States Employment Service (whose activities had become less burdensome with the exhaustion of labor reserves) War Manpower Commission officials explained that appropriation cuts made this solution impossible. The chance to make a significant study of causes of employment instability and under-utilization of women workers was lost at this particular time. The various implications of the Committee's need for more technical assistance were to be discussed later. There is no record of consideration of alternatives to this limitation on the part of the Committee.

Problems of staff and time, however, were raised in several other connections by the Committee. The heavy workload of preparing for, and reporting upon, all meetings, was carried by Miss Hickey and the subcommittee chairmen. Apparently the War Manpower Commission was not able, in the emergency, to provide adequate assistance in the preparation of advance materials and the gathering of data. To what extent the committee members would have made use of advance preparation, or study between meetings is, as with all such committees, an open question.

Finally, the problem of official representation of women to a reasonable degree, at all levels, was one which the Committee felt as a limitation from its origin until its last meeting; this problem was, of course, interrelated with the entire pattern of administrative procedure as well as traditional attitude. Fuller participation of women on the Management-Labor Policy Committee could have opened the door to participation at the local level, but it cannot be stated with complete certainty that traditional attitudes provided the sole or greatest obstacle when some of the organizational factors are examined. Nevertheless, the Women's Advisory Committee sought and found some alternatives to limited participation on the appropriate official levels.

*Several* On program, it is believed by some reviewers in retrospect *Outside* that a good opportunity was overlooked by the Committee *Opinions* to gather more data and develop important information on the subject of equal pay, since this was a period in which women were entering the labor market to an unprecedented degree and performing many jobs held before almost exclusively by men. There is evidence that discriminatory pay and work opportunity practices did exist; the issue of equal pay and its corollary, equal opportunity, may have helped to create obstacles to the fullest possible integration of womanpower at a time when the labor supply was most critical. Although the Committee embodied the equality prin-

ciple in all of its basic policy and program releases, there was comparatively little emphasis on equal pay.

Similarly, the question of equal opportunity appeared once or twice on the agenda for specific discussion, but was dropped in favor of more pressing matters and also because of the absence of data.

In extenuation of the Committee it must be pointed out that the dilemma which employed women face ordinarily is never so sharp as in time of labor shortage in a national crisis, which creates, on the one hand, the proper conditions for removal of discriminatory employment practices and which, on the other hand, imposes a situation upon women in which they are required to meet suddenly an arduous test of adaptability to new environments and versatility in carrying the two roles of employee and homemaker. Given the opportunity for the test, women are wary of attracting unpopular attention to issues in their own behalf. This consideration, and the fact that there was so much to accomplish in so little time, on the total woman-power mobilization, undoubtedly account for the lack of emphasis on the question of equal pay.

*WMC Attitude* There is no written record of War Manpower Commission appraisal of the Committee's limitations, and indeed very little concerning its achievements. Since limitations are under consideration, however, it will round out the story to include observations in retrospect about the Committee of some of the officials who were at the top administrative level in the War Manpower Commission and who maintain a continuing interest in favor of women's advisory services in connection with the manpower program. After 6 years, these comments, in the nature of general impressions, relate mainly to the atmosphere into which the Women's Advisory Committee stepped at its first meeting.

There was a difference of opinion between the Director of the Women's Bureau and the representatives of some, but not all, women's civic groups as to the method of participation of women, but all agreed that the extent of staff participation of women, on women's special problems, within the War Manpower Commission organization was inadequate. At least three identifiably different points of view on method of using women advisers were recognized early by manpower planners in the Department of Labor and later by the War Manpower Commission as well. There is no doubt that each point of view was represented with considerable persistence, and in the climate of war crisis it was easy for men in the administration to evade the pressures or dismiss the requests for action as unnecessarily feminist, thus reacting in accordance with tradition. Many informal as well as official conferences took place concerning the method of women's participation, and in the process there was probably no agent or agency representing women which was not questioned or unfavorably criticized as to competence and objectives, either by hard-pressed

administrative officials or by the various women's representatives who defended their own separate proposals and who, it must be admitted, were each as biased in their own favor as many other organizations fired with patriotism and anxious for recognition. Whether women react more emotionally than men in this kind of situation is less important to administrators than to students of human behavior; the fact is that women, like other groups which have a minority role at any given time, are likely both to use defensive tactics and to become more vulnerable to biased criticism. There is no doubt, according to lasting impressions of War Manpower Commission contemporaries, that the attitude toward women's participation was negative at the time of the appointment of the Women's Advisory Committee, as a result of pressures, counter pressures, traditional behavior patterns, and the inability to unite for a common purpose in which all parties concerned must share responsibility.

Let it be said in favor of the Women's Advisory Committee that many of its members were not unaware of the emotional climate surrounding their initiation into manpower planning; some had decided misgivings, but the group managed to dissolve their fears in recognition of the larger job to be done. It took 7 months, however, from October 1942 to May 1943, before the War Manpower Commission and its staff advisers on women's problems sat down to consider the problem of how to improve communication.

*External Factors* Only the most significant and traceable factors which affected the work of the Women's Advisory Committee are

to be taken into consideration in this brief review. This is done with due appreciation for the arduous tasks which all persons faced in the manpower organization. Nor is it within the scope of this report to include an analysis of over-all policy and program in which every staff and line group or official participated. So that the conclusions drawn may be related in proper perspective it seems appropriate to preface them by an observation on the larger program, made in the Bureau of the Budget's historical review of this period:

The Nation's management of its war tasks was not . . . a smooth, uninterrupted, undeviating progress toward unchanging objectives . . . The immediate objectives were highly flexible and the execution of the program was changeable, at times hesitant and uncertain. This had to be. The tasks were unique, the problems not well understood, the resources not well inventoried, the necessary objectives not always clearly visualized, the methods to obtain them untried . . .<sup>34</sup>

There was, then, the war itself which provided an unprecedented situation in manpower planning, and within this framework, the use of women in the manpower program to an unusual degree and in tradition-breaking patterns. Nevertheless, several questions may be asked in accordance with the responsibilities imposed upon the

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<sup>34</sup> "The United States at War," p. 506. Bureau of the Budget, 1946.

principal manpower organization for the use of women advisers in this period: (1) Was the need for a Women's Advisory Committee clearly established? (2) Did the terms of appointment specifically set forth objectives for the Committee? (3) Was the organization plan for use of women's advisory services appropriate to the need and practical for getting policy into operating channels?

The need for counsel on women's problems was recognized in the early organization of the War Manpower Commission by the appointment of one woman staff consultant to the Director of the United States Employment Service in 1941 and, in 1942, a woman to the staff of the War Manpower Commission. Later another woman staff consultant to the War Manpower Commission was appointed on a part-time basis. Meanwhile there had taken place, beginning in 1940, the several conferences between the Director of the Women's Bureau and the National Defense Advisory Commission, and also conferences in 1942 with Mr. McNutt, about the appointment of women to the Management-Labor Policy Committee. Between 1940 and 1942 various women's organizations had requested the appointment of women advisers in the manpower program, and as previously observed, several different groups and officials, not all in agreement as to the kind and extent of women's representation, had made themselves heard. It is the general opinion of War Manpower Commission contemporaries, that the chairman was not firmly convinced of the necessity for having a Women's Advisory Committee when he appointed it in August 1942, but that he had yielded to general pressures and recommendations.

Further, there were some doubts and uneasiness concerning what was then regarded as a developing attitude of militancy or a crusading spirit on the part of women leaders, especially in view of an unfortunate experience that the War Manpower Commission had at the outset in all-out recruitment-for-women-workers campaigns in several areas too far in advance of need, producing strained relations between employers, job applicants, the public, and the United States Employment Service. It was felt in some quarters that this early experience in overextended recruitment had been pressed by too zealous women's staff advisers.<sup>35</sup> Responsibility for the badly timed program rested upon the War Manpower Commission, and it cannot be positively stated, in retrospect, whether it was a matter of inadequate supervision, inadequately trained staff, the misguided enthusiasm of one or two women's advisers, or whether it could be charged to the general confusion and haste attendant upon a complex and newly established

<sup>35</sup> Based on interview with Richard D. Fletcher, Assistant Chief, United States Employment Service, who was wartime staff assistant in WMC.

organization in which the line-staff functions had not yet been crystallized nor the channels of communications wholly identified. Nevertheless, the tendency to prejudge women as administrators and advisers, on the basis of one unhappy experience, emerged to cloud the atmosphere in which the Women's Advisory Committee was appointed.

Concerning the terms of appointment, Point 4 of WMC Administrative Order No. 22 is quoted again:

The Women's Advisory Committee is authorized to consider and recommend to the chairman of the War Manpower Commission matters of major policy concerning the activities and responsibilities of the Commission, particularly as they affect women and the contribution women can make in the successful prosecution of the war. The Committee shall initiate studies and the formulation of policies, as well as consider those referred by the chairman.

The first sentence is very comprehensive and certainly instructs the Committee that its role is in the area of major policy. The second sentence includes the initiation of *studies*, and this becomes a matter for discussion. Whether the Committee was to have technical assistance to make studies or whether it would have direct relationship with those agencies whose normal function it was to make studies is not clear. At this point, the question may first be raised as to why the Women's Bureau with its technical services for many kinds of studies was not directly tied in with the Women's Advisory Committee, or appointed directly to advise the War Manpower Commission on women's employment problems.

Again, while the Women's Advisory Committee was instructed to report to the War Manpower Commission, in the terms of its appointment, it was planned at once that all of its recommendations would be referred for action first to the Management-Labor Policy Committee. This tended to set up a delaying process and resulted in an organization pattern of having one committee work through another committee.

Meanwhile, the executive director of the War Manpower Commission was already deeply involved in problems of organization, jurisdiction, authority, and control related in part or in whole to the prosecution of the entire labor mobilization program. The Federal Security Agency and the Department of Labor each had had vested interests in a part of the manpower program, and the creation of a War Manpower Commission did not resolve jurisdictional disagreement; both the organization structure and the functions assigned were questioned or discussed at length by the War Manpower Commission and other agencies such as the War Production Board and the Selective Service System, the National Defense Mediation Board (later, the National War Labor Board), to name a few principals. Also, the Management-Labor Policy Committee, although appointed by Com-

missioner McNutt in June 1942, tended to direct the War Manpower Commission rather than advise it.<sup>36</sup>

Whether Mr. McNutt's intention in referring Women's Advisory Committee recommendations to the Management-Labor Committee was to delay action on them or to channel them appropriately, the effect was certainly to forestall consideration. Seven months later, however, when questioned by the Women's Advisory Committee on this procedure, Mr. McNutt may have been influenced to yield to a more direct working relationship as a result of his own experience with the Management-Labor Committee members. Similarly, his reason for not wishing to recommend a voting status in this body for Miss Hickey may have been based on his dissatisfaction with the Management-Labor Committee's assumption of authority.

Against this broad background which, although superficially treated, indicates the kind of organizational problems that confronted principal participants in the World War II manpower program, it may seem fruitless to pursue the organization question with respect to the special interests of women. But all large organization problems are a synthesis of multitudinous microscopic patterns, and the large administrative questions vary from the small less in kind than in degree. There is always, of course, more than one way to establish an architecture of organization, and theoretically perhaps an ideal way. A more serious tax upon administrative ingenuity and energy than establishing the perfect organization pattern is to get the job done, once the pattern is delineated for better or worse, and to a great extent this involves the principle of coordination of interrelated functions.

The question was raised earlier as to why the Women's Bureau was not more closely tied in with the Committee especially for the purpose of providing technical assistance. To pursue the question logically, it seems appropriate for the War Manpower Commissioner to have directly delegated the Women's Bureau with the task of initiating and carrying out all studies and research pertinent to women's role in the labor mobilization. In addition to making this division of work between the Committee and the Bureau, Mr. McNutt could have further provided for the coordination of the collective wisdom in both the specialized Government agency and the group of competent civilian advisers. As it was, the efforts of both groups reached their destination through more devious channels, and some were lost en route or arrived too late, as a result.

The Women's Bureau Director of the period has pointed out on several occasions<sup>37</sup> the duplication of effort that took place because

<sup>36</sup> "The Committee contained several very able individuals, and its members were both closer to and more directly concerned with matters of labor supply than the Commission members. Thus while it had been originally conceived as a purely consultative body it soon proceeded on its own motion to discuss in detail all important actions proposed by the WMC staff and also to propound manpower programs of its own . . ." from "The United States at War," Bureau of the Budget, 1946, p. 187.

<sup>37</sup> See especially "Woman at Work," *op. cit.*

the pertinent functions with respect to women's interests were not moved together organizationally at the outset. Standards of employment developed as early as 1940 by the Women's Bureau were applicable with few amendments to the womanpower situation in 1942 and could have been used by the National Defense Advisory Commission, and by the woman's adviser to the War Manpower Commission, and again later by the Women's Advisory Committee. Each of these bodies in turn deliberated upon the adoption of standards and upon many other policy matters that could easily have been channeled into the operational main stream much sooner, thus leaving the way open for deliberation upon issues in areas which had not been explored to the same degree.

Since the over-all civilian and military manpower agencies had some problems in working from a stage of competition to a program of coordination of effort, it is perhaps too much to have expected coordination of women's interests in civilian life with those of the newly organized women's branches of the Armed Forces. This particular question is still to be resolved in another era of national emergency. It is hoped that duplication will be reduced and the coordination increased.

Frequently, the answers given to some of the questions concerning the assignment of function are based on the assumption, or even positive judgment, that this or that agency or bureau was not "ready" for responsibility, or that it was not considered adequate in size or quality for the job to be done. But the Nation, after all, was not "ready" for total war on all fronts, and yet grew in stature, under its responsibilities, to win the war.

It may be concluded, in this microscopic parallel, that the various women's groups also got the job done, that women's interests were, on the whole represented, and that ways were eventually found to coordinate efforts that had not been provided by officialdom. The outstanding exception to adequate handling of women's interests in this period lies in the inadequate and unsystematic provision for day care of children of employed mothers, and for housing and transportation in many tight labor-market areas, all of which affected production schedules as well as the national welfare. In turn, this "woman's problem," which cuts across the interests of the entire community and the manpower program, would undoubtedly have had greater attention at an earlier date if appropriate voice had been given to women on the Management-Labor Policy Committee, and official representation in the community on the area labor-management committees. It seems sound, in any case, to permit a voice in their own affairs to one-third of the civilian working population, especially when that one-third carries a far greater proportion of responsibility for the maintenance of family and community welfare.

### *Achievements*

*The Record* Evaluation of the Committee's achievements is based primarily on the record. Review of the agenda and the amount of time and attention accorded to basic womanpower policy provides evidence of the Committee's collective judgment and sense of the appropriate. Although they produced very few original formulations of policy, but used extensively the materials at hand (such as Women's Bureau studies), it should not be concluded from this that they were lacking in creative ability, but rather that the situation did not require it. They appeared more and more to recognize their job as one of reviewing the materials already developed by technical and professional staff in the agencies in the light of their own varied background and experience, of giving the proper emphasis to proposals in relation to current need, and of obtaining action on the policy and procedure which they and many specialists had formulated.

The fact that some of the recommendations did not become an integral part of manpower operating procedure or were perhaps ill-timed is not the Committee's responsibility. For example, the child day-care program cut across the operating interests of many agencies and met obstacles through a general Congressional attitude of laissez-faire, if not outright opposition to broad Government participation in such matters. This and other unproductive recommendations can perhaps also be classified in the too-little and too-late category.

The most outstanding contribution appears in retrospect to be the Committee's development of a cooperative program with women's organizations, as a way of obtaining participation by women in women's problems. As the Committee's deliberations increasingly centered around the need for cooperation of the entire community in a national program of full utilization of manpower, it seemed logical to utilize organizations whose members had had a great deal of experience in some aspects of community organization. The Committee was to a large extent instrumental in drawing together into a joint effort the various elements of many groups. After the Committee's success in initiating the organization of local joint womanpower committees to handle recruitment campaigns, the Committee concentrated increasingly on developing methods by which women's organizations could be drawn into the task of helping solve women workers' problems. More and more systematically were policy statements and recommendations of the Women's Advisory Committee with regard to in-plant and community adjustments, as well as reprints of cooperating agencies' statements and carefully selected and edited background material, channeled into the communities through the women's organizations. To reach the public the Committee did not depend on the regular channels of the press and local United States Employment Service offices.

War Manpower Commission officials must have considered the Committee's program of cooperation with women's organizations of vital assistance in execution of the manpower program, for when the subject of the Committee's discontinuance came up for discussion in mid-1944 the Commission's executive director urged continued intensified work with women's organizations to aid in the prosecution of the last and most critical phase of the war. At this point the Committee also felt that they should not cut off contact established as a result of considerable effort, with organizations that reached toward millions of women in communities throughout the Nation.

Through its preoccupation with the causes of under-utilization of womanpower the Committee directed its energies increasingly to the numerous, interrelated problems that women face as workers on the job, and to those problems with which they are confronted as home-makers in the community. According to the Committee's view, neither group of problems could be solved separately but both together had to be tackled by a joint community effort. The Committee's postwar policy statement with its recommendations for women's right to work, for high standards of work conditions as well as extended social-security coverage and educational opportunities, is perhaps the strongest indication of how far the Committee had gone in believing that the community as a whole, rather than individuals or individual groups and agencies, should be responsible for providing safeguards for family life and maternal and child health to meet the needs arising from increased employment of women with children and family responsibility.

Equal concern for women as wage earners and for women as fulfilling their appropriate roles in the family and in the community has characterized increasingly the kind of approach made whenever women meet to consider seriously their common problems. The Committee's record in this respect should set at rest the alarm of those who wince at the memory of objectives ascribed to the early feminists as seeking to usurp the traditional masculine role or seeking special privileges which have no justification. To offset the unfortunate circumstances preceding their appointment, and the obstacles with which they had to cope, the Women's Advisory Committee demonstrated that it could hold to its purpose, that, in addition, it could quietly go about its business, without offending propriety or tradition, and finally that its purpose embraced larger objectives than special privilege.

*Off the Record* In accrediting the Committee solely through its official record it must be stressed again that the record is incomplete, particularly with respect to the work of the chairman and a number of individually alert members. Personal follow-up of recommendations was made by several members among large organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers and the American Management Association, and also with scores of smaller civic, man-

agement, educational, and labor groups throughout the country. Committee members who undertook trips to present speeches, hold discussions, answer questions and ferret out public opinion, usually did so at their own expense. It is not possible to evaluate the scope and depth of this kind of service, especially since it took place during an emergency period which did not permit time for documentation of activity.

There is general agreement among all reviewers that the selection of committee personnel was fortuitous in that it drew upon the services of women of excellent ability, good understanding of the often delicate issues involved, and devotion to purpose. These factors helped the Committee steer a steady and middle-of-the-road course between the extremes of feminism and subservience to reaction in countless off-the-record situations which called for judgment tempered with amiability.

## Part II—GREAT BRITAIN

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### The Woman Power Committee, 1940–45

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#### *Organization*

During the first year of World War II, many business and professional women in Great Britain lost their jobs. At that time the British Government gave no indication that it was ready to employ women in policy-forming positions. Women were thought of largely as "green" labor, and no official training programs for women were in operation. Concerned at the way in which its members were being affected, and also anticipating a later demand for women at higher levels, the British Federation of Business and Professional Women sent a deputation to the women Members of Parliament in the summer of 1940 to ask them to press for the utilization of the skills and experience of business and professional women in the war effort. Lady Astor responded by inviting representatives of the leading women's organizations and trade unions to meet the women Members of Parliament of all parties. From these informal meetings in Lady Astor's house, which were experimental, the Woman Power Committee gradually evolved.

The Woman Power Committee, as it was finally established, consisted of 21 women. Ten were Members of Parliament,<sup>1</sup> as follows: Irene Ward (Chairman), The Viscountess Astor, Thelma Cazalet, The Viscountess Davidson, Mrs. Agnes Hardie, Megan Lloyd George, Eleanor F. Rathbone, Dr. Edith Summerskill, Mrs. Mavis Tate, and Mrs. Beatrice Wright. In addition, there were 3 trade unionists and 8 members who came from women's key organizations such as the British Federation of Business and Professional Women, the National Council of Social Service, and the Women's Farm and Garden Association. These included: Dame Dorothy Elliott, B. Anne Godwin, Anne Loughlin, Dame Janet Campbell, The Lady Violet Bonham Carter, Mrs. Ayrton Gould, Dame Caroline Haslett, The Hon. Eleanor Plumer, and Mrs. Ethel M. Wood, C. B. E.

Chairman of the Woman Power Committee throughout its existence was Irene Ward, M. P., C. B. E.

<sup>1</sup> There were altogether only 14 women in Parliament in 1940, out of a total of 615 Members of Parliament.

The members voted to pay dues of 2 guineas each per year. This fund was supplemented by additional contributions and outside grants.

*Purpose* The Woman Power Committee had no executive or even advisory power. Its greatest value was to provide a medium through which the women's organizations could bring problems quickly to the notice of women Members of Parliament, who could raise questions in Parliament. It also enabled the women Members of Parliament to get first-hand information of actual conditions affecting women in different parts of the country. It was due to pressure from the women Members of Parliament, at the instance of the Woman Power Committee, that at least two all-day debates on womanpower problems were held in the House. The Committee decided not to encroach upon matters recognized as falling within the province of the trade unions, or within that of other groups dealing with specialized questions relating to women. It therefore agreed to devote itself mainly to problems confronting the special use of the women's labor reserve in the war emergency period and the broad policies relating to their use. Their objectives were expressed as follows, in summary:

- (1) To further the fullest utilization of womanpower in the war effort and secure equitable treatment of women workers.
- (2) To collect and consider facts concerning any matter influencing the use of womanpower.
- (3) To make formal representations to appropriate authorities where action was necessary on women's problems.
- (4) To prepare statements for the press with regard to the use of woman-power.
- (5) To cooperate with other societies on special aspects of recruitment, employment, and working conditions of women.
- (6) To press for inclusion of trained and experienced women in all the stages of the war effort, from policy-framing downward.

As seen in the early period of the war, the proposed program was to indicate ways in which women could be used to release men. Recommendations were to be made concerning short technical training courses of all kinds for women who already possessed special experience in related fields. Suggestions were to be offered on methods of adapting the recruiting machinery to effect these changes. The Committee held discussions on the transfer of administrative and professional women into occupations other than those for which they were previously trained. A memorandum transmitted to Ernest Bevin recommended changes in the functioning and staffing of the Employment Exchanges, and improved publicity.

Because the Women's Consultative Committee was formally appointed in March 1941 to advise the Minister of Labor on questions relating to the mobilization of women for war work, the Woman

Power Committee left this area of activity and devoted more of its attention to the social problems confronting women. Arrangements to assist employed women with the safety and care of their children under 5 years of age, recommendations as to methods for sustaining the morale of women outside the labor force, methods of utilizing women volunteers in local defense, the use of part-time workers to relieve full-time employees, equal compensation for women receiving civilian war injuries—all of these topics and many others came within the purview of the Committee. Indeed, there was no aspect of women's contribution to which the Woman Power Committee did not give some attention.

As the Committee was an independent voluntary body not responsible to any government official or department, it formulated its own agenda to meet the pressing problems arising during each stage of the emergency.

Its unofficial status meant that the kinds of action open to the Woman Power Committee were not limited by official regulations or policy. On the other hand, its lack of official status constituted in itself a very serious limitation which made it necessary for the Committee to use methods which would obtain it a hearing or a voice in official and public affairs. As to method, it was restricted only by the dictates of custom and manners accruing to public figures. In the public mind the Committee was associated with the British feminist tradition, an association carrying both the advantages and disadvantages of a pioneering effort.

Though official status was not sought, the fact that women Members of Parliament were actively associated with the Committee made it possible to exert Parliamentary pressure. Further, the traditional right of Members to have access to Ministers made it easy to convey the views of the Woman Power Committee to official quarters. The fact that the Woman Power Committee was so largely a parliamentary committee put an immense and unusual influence in its hands.

There is no doubt that the emergency nature of the war years, which affected all economic and social institutions, influenced the kinds of action taken by the Woman Power Committee, since they had to consider all action in terms of both the emergency and women's role in it.

*Formal Statements* In general, the basic action taken was the formulation of policy concerning women's role and status, and all policies were expressed in either recommendations or resolutions. Recommendations were incorporated into various memoranda addressed to appropriate government officials. Resolutions were also included in memoranda, were public in nature, and frequently were issued as statements to the press; whereas recommendations were not given widespread publicity.

*Deputations* More emphatic action on several issues was taken by the Woman Power Committee through the medium of formal deputations, or delegations, of the Committee, who waited upon public officials to make verbal communication of policy.

Where it was felt that government consideration was not given or action was not taken after repeated efforts of the Committee to draw the Minister of Labor's attention to conditions requiring amelioration, a strong type of protest was organized by the method of deputations. These deputations met with varying success. Often they were followed by an exchange of correspondence with the authorities involved. Sometimes they were reinforced by the active support of other women's organizations resulting in a combined delegation. Sometimes they led to action by individual women M. P.'s in conferring with appropriate ministers or in asking a question in the House.

*Cooperation with Women's Organizations and Trade Unions* The Committee worked in close cooperation with women's organizations throughout the country, many of which gradually came to find that they could appeal to the Committee in case of need. Some groups even endeavored to use the Woman Power Committee as a sounding board for their views.

From the very inception of the Woman Power Committee it was agreed that there should be no duplication of functions which were recognized to fall within the province of trade unions. Only insofar as the Committee might wish to support the unions' campaigns dealing with women was it considered desirable to discuss specialized topics relating to industrial or agricultural conditions of women in the labor force.

*Publicity* In the fall of 1941, a deputation of women editors came to the Committee to interest it in the circulation and scope of women's journals and the services which the women editors could render to the Committee. They stated that they would like a close liaison with the Committee, in whose work their readers would be interested. The Committee agreed that greater use should be made of these journals for educating women about war work. It was not until the autumn of 1943 that the matter of a public-relations officer was considered, and then, since the appointment of an individual for publicity work was thought too expensive, the Committee decided to use the free services of the Press Association.

The Committee took an interest in the use of films as a medium for extending the employment of women in the more skilled operations, and it was instrumental in obtaining improvements in the preparation of films. As to radio, the Committee tendered a report to the Board of Governors of the British Broadcasting Company requesting a second woman governor and an additional woman to be used in the Committee's suggested series of talks.

*Publications and Reports* A documented report entitled "Mainly for Men" was prepared on the employment problems of and attitudes toward women under war conditions. This was written by Mrs. Ethel Wood, Honorary Secretary of the Woman Power Committee, and it was based on statistics of the British Institute of Public Opinion and on material collected by the Council of Women Civil Servants.

In the later days of the war when the issue of equal pay had assumed great public importance and had the backing of many organizations, the Woman Power Committee prepared a statement on the general background and history of the equal compensation problem for the use of interested groups.

In another research study, also prepared by the Honorary Secretary in connection with a committee questionnaire to management research groups, provided data on the degree of absenteeism among women workers.

There were several other reports, compiled by individual members or subcommittees, and approved by the Woman Power Committee as a whole. Some were made into pamphlets for propaganda purposes, such as the one on Women in the Foreign Services; others were transmitted as memoranda to government officials; and still others were supplied to members of Parliament for their use in the House of Commons.

### ***Womanpower Problems Treated***

The Committee was quite comprehensive in its consideration of various aspects of women in the war economy. Some of the topics that were considered by the Committee were the problems of training and recruitment, conditions and grievances in the women's services, inequalities in women's war bonuses and allowances, representation of women on government committees and in high-level executive positions, problems of child welfare and child adoption, changes in legislation (such as separate assessment of income tax of married women in the National Service), admission of women into the diplomatic and consular services, and the future status of women in reconstruction and the postwar world.

*Basic Policy on Women* In September 1940 a discussion was incorporated into a memorandum addressed to the Lord Privy Seal regarding the use of womanpower in the war effort. Attention was

drawn to the extent to which vast potential reserves of womanpower had been ignored and to the lack of absorption of available women workers into useful employment. The memorandum urged the need for national planning without "undue regard to sex and other irrelevant factors" to obtain 100 percent efficiency. It recommended the appointment of a woman under-secretary to coordinate all activities regarding the utilization of womanpower.

It stressed the need for representation of women on all bodies concerned with planning for national production. It suggested that the Committee be empowered to act in an advisory capacity on problems of registration, training, and employment of women. The final recommendation was that a resonable proportion of women should be admitted to administrative, executive, and managerial positions.

*Compulsory Mobilization* An example of the Committee's carefulness to reconcile women's interests with those of the manpower program in general dealt with the problem of compulsory mobilization of women. When the first appeals to patriotism were made, the Committee whole-heartedly supported the appeals to women. As time went on, however, and the number of women available for jobs seemed to exceed the demand, the Committee began to inquire as to why women were not being used. Complaints were pouring in from women who had registered at the Employment Exchanges but had not obtained work.

As a result of the complaints and pressures the Committee made a careful investigation of labor needs and found that the Auxiliary Territorial Service was still short of recruits—about 200,000. This fact, together with the knowledge that there were other unmet needs in critical demand areas, influenced committee members to continue their support of the mobilization program regardless of the lags and contradictions which characterized industrial mobilization, particularly at the outset.

*Selection and Training* The inadequacies of the Government's placement and training techniques were deplored and some concrete suggestions for change were offered. To cite one point, it was considered imperative that expert interviewers be hired who were trained to assess the value of the qualifications of the applicants and the job requirements of the employers. This memorandum also emphasized the fact that whereas theoretically all temporary civil-service posts were open to women as well as men, in actual practice this principle was not consistently followed.

This problem was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Labor by the Woman Power Committee and was subsequently followed up by the Women's Consultative Committee. It was finally solved through a cooperative effort making use of the advice and suggestions put forward by the Committee and fitting them into the working of an existing structure, expanded and adapted for its new duties.

*Women in Agriculture* When acute food shortages emphasized the need for increased womanpower on the farms, the discussion revolved about the treatment of regular agricultural workers as compared with industrial women workers. Since the Committee felt that regular workers should look to trade unions for improvement of conditions and pay, it decided not to carry the matter any further.

*Child Day Care* An illustration of the welfare considerations which concerned the Committee was the memorandum dealing with the care of children under 5 years of age. It attacked the system of "minders" (sitters) and stressed the need of increased nurseries so that women could be released for industrial work.

The memorandum further pointed out the problems of child care under war conditions. It recommended the coordination of treatment through establishment of a separate department of child welfare in the Ministry of Health.

In May 1941 a deputation went to the Ministry of Health explaining the need for frequent close inspection of nurseries, for equipment and proper buildings, for recreation programs, and for the raising of standards and skill among those caring for and teaching young children. The Minister agreed with many of the points raised, particularly the need for coordination, and stated that the Committee's memorandum would be quite helpful. However, he doubted that a special body for handling children's matters would be approved.

*Civil Defense* In March 1942, when the threat of enemy invasion was imminent, the Committee proposed that women should be represented on every regional and local committee set up to deal with invasion problems confronting the civilian population. The Committee felt that instruction on methods of self-defense should be given to women. It strongly suggested that greater clarification of the behavior expected of the civilian population in the event of invasion was necessary.

Miscellaneous civil-defense problems were acted upon by the Woman Power Committee, particularly in the early stages of the emergency; for example, the Committee concerned itself with conditions in air-raid shelters.

*Equal Compensation* Probably the most important single topic affecting the status of women in general that was considered and acted upon by the Woman Power Committee—outside of problems directly related to the emergency—was the question of equal compensation. This problem arose in various ways related to the war-employment program, and later, postwar planning.

Mrs. Mavis Tate, M. P., who was a member of the Woman Power Committee, took charge of the campaign for equal compensation and was supported by Members of Parliament of all parties. Early in 1940 a deputation representing several million women, and led by the Woman Power Committee, interviewed the Minister of Pensions on the subject of equal compensation for war injuries. He explained that rates for compensation for war injuries were based on the average earnings of men and women, the rates being 35 shillings for men and 28 shillings for women. The deputation argued that there was no difference in the cost of living of injured persons of the two sexes to justify the inequality in their allowances. The campaign also included a demand for the payment of compensation to a married woman in her own right. The only result of these representations was a slight increase—2 shillings, 4 pence—in the weekly rate of payment to the non-gainfully occupied woman. This occurred when the bill was passed in its final form in May 1941. The opposition was, therefore, maintained.

In November 1941, Mrs. Tate initiated a parliamentary amendment which led to a debate on equal compensation. In the ensuing vote, the Government, which opposed the amendment for equalizing compensation, netted the smallest majority obtained since it took office: 95 votes for the amendment; 229 against it. This strong feeling caused the appointment of a Select Committee (of which one-third were women M. P.'s) to begin a continuing inquiry, and to initiate a new series of actions on an old problem in Great Britain.

## **Evaluation**

One of the serious shortcomings of the Woman Power Committee was the ambiguity of its status. Because it had no official functions and was unattached to any specific government agency, the Committee was never formally recognized. Government agencies, therefore, did not feel compelled to consider seriously the Committee's recommendations.

On the other hand, some of the very factors which impeded the activities of the Committee proved to be sources of strength. Since the Committee was unaffiliated with a government body, the members felt free to criticize official policies and procedures. They were at liberty also to cut across departmental boundaries for the very reason that they were independent and not accountable to any one agency. Then too, there was advantage of pressure which could be brought to bear on the Government by parliamentary means. There was no decision of the Committee which could not be pressed on the Government by question and answer in the House of Commons, and, indeed, three debates especially devoted to women's questions took place in

successive years. Women Members of Parliament took full advantage of their parliamentary rights to ventilate the views held by the Woman Power Committee.

The Committee enjoyed the privilege of choosing its own fields of interest but took care to time its activities with the general progress of the war and to support the general mobilization scheme.

In several respects, the Committee was in the vanguard of initiating reforms. It severely criticized the existing recruitment machinery and offered valuable suggestions for the improved functioning of the employment exchanges; it recommended improvement changes in child-care facilities.

The contacts of the Committee with their parliamentary constituents and women's groups provided more intimate knowledge of conditions on the local level than the government departments had at their command. The Committee was not subject to the pressures of the critical emergencies which often resulted in bogging down community authorities in day-to-day details.

When one of the government departments indicated there would be a departmental investigation of the criticism of conditions in the Women's Auxiliary Service, the Committee urged that the investigation be handled by an independent body on which women were adequately represented. As a result, a special committee was appointed under Violet Markham, with a number of women members.

The interests of the Committee were not restricted to current problems. It was also concerned with formulation of policies which had far-reaching effects. As early as February 1943, the Committee requested the Government to declare a policy on the status of women in the postwar period. It asked for full recognition of women's rights to a proper share in the machinery of Government, including a women of Cabinet rank in connection with reconstruction.

In summary, it may be stated that the Committee was useful in uniting a number of women of various outlooks, and in obtaining an interest in, and some action toward, improvements in the conditions of women's work; and that one of its special contributions was to help bring about a new pattern of cooperation and consultation between government departments and women's voluntary organizations.

## Part III—GREAT BRITAIN

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### The Women's Consultative Committee, 1941–45

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#### *Organization*

The Minister of Labor and National Service appointed the Women's Consultative Committee in March 1941, to advise him "on questions affecting the recruiting and registration of women and on the best methods of seeking their services for the war effort."<sup>1</sup>

The Consultative Committee had a membership of nine women<sup>2</sup> who met twice a month under the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labor. Three women were Members of Parliament, two were trade unionists, and two held high office in the two main political party organizations. All members were appointed as individuals, and not as official representatives of their affiliations. In addition Dame Caroline Haslett, Adviser on Women's Training to the Ministry of Labor, attended all meetings of the Committee.

In November 1945, the Ministry of Labor announced, officially,<sup>3</sup> that the Consultative Committee, having completed its official task, had been dissolved, and was immediately reappointed "to advise the Ministry of Labor and National Service on questions relating to the resettlement of women in civilian life."<sup>4</sup> The new Committee held its first meeting on October 24, 1945, under the continued chairmanship of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Labor and National Service.

*Appointment* The Women's Consultative Committee was appointed at the time when the need for a large contribution from women to war work, which had been foreseen for some time, was becoming actual and practical. There was a strong feeling in the country and among responsible women that greater attention needed

<sup>1</sup> *Ministry of Labor Gazette*, March 1941, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> List of original Consultative Committee members appointed in March 1941: Dorothy Elliott, trade unionist; Mrs. Walter Elliot, Chairman of Nation Girls' Clubs Association; Florence Hancock, trade unionist; General Counsel; Countess of Limerick; Majorie Maxi; Dr. Edith Summerskill, M. P.; Irene Ward, M. P.; Mary E. Sutherland.

<sup>3</sup> *Ministry of Labor Gazette*, November 1945, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup> List of members of the reappointed Committee: Alice Bacon, M. P.; Viscountess Davidson, O. B. E. J. P.; Mrs Walter Elliot; Florence Hancock, O. B. E.; Countess of Limerick, C. B. E.; Lady Megan Lloyd George, M. P.; Majorie Maxi, C. B. E.; Mary E. Sutherland, J. P.

to be paid to the means by which speedy and full use could be made of the resources of womanpower available. This feeling was focused through the activities of the Woman Power Committee which had organized itself spontaneously in 1940 in order to observe, review critically, and safeguard the methods by which womanpower was utilized in the war effort. The Woman Power Committee's discussions in early 1941 reveal that committee members were greatly disappointed by the lack of response on the Ministry of Labor's part to their suggestions regarding recruitment of women and that they were of the opinion that there should be an advisory committee of women working closely with the Ministry. This need was recognized by the Minister of Labor and the appointment of the Women's Consultative Committee took place.

The role of this Committee must be related to that of other consultative machinery established by the Minister of Labor to assist him in general mobilization plans. Organized employers and trade unions were represented on a National Joint Advisory Council which advised the Minister on all major questions of policy affecting men and women, including general questions on wages and working conditions, which are fixed through joint negotiating machinery. The Women's Consultative Committee, while dealing with all questions specially affecting the mobilization of women for war work, was not concerned with negotiations on conditions of employment or wages.

**Procedure** The Consultative Committee's procedure at meetings was informal in character. Papers were circulated on questions on which the Minister desired its advice, or in response to requests from members. It was not the practice to formulate and release precisely worded recommendations. Individual members made comments and the meeting reached conclusions or expressed a consensus according to the nature of the subject under discussion. These conclusions or expressions of view were recorded in minutes and were conveyed to the Minister through the chairman. In addition, the Minister personally attended a considerable number of the meetings and thus maintained close touch with the members.

The Committee was taken fully into confidence on all questions, and there was no public statement made of the nature of their advice on the various matters considered by them. Hence, it is not possible to state their conclusions or to assess the exact extent to which the decisions taken coincided with their advice. The Committee seems to have made clear from the outset that it expected to be consulted on all important questions of policy affecting women *before* decisions were taken. All available information suggests that the members felt that their advice was fully used in policy-making and implementation. There is no evidence that the Committee used outside support or pressure, although it must be assumed that the Minister kept in

mind the close connection of the members with powerful public groups in general and with the Woman Power Committee.

The Minister never released any statement as to what extent he had incorporated the Committee's advice into policy. The only indication of how he actually made use of the Committee's recommendations is the following statement: "I am very grateful for the help I have had from the Women's Committee. . . . Advice and help have been given to me and, to do me credit, I do not believe I have turned down any of the advice; I have acted upon it."<sup>5</sup>

### ***Womanpower Problems Treated***

*Main Area of Interest* The main areas in which the Committee's advice was sought were those concerning the policy which was to govern the Ministry of Labor's action in mobilizing women for war work, the methods of administration of the various orders and controls through which this mobilization was achieved, and the proper treatment of various groups of women whose circumstances needed special consideration.

In addition, the Committee cooperated to a considerable extent with other government agencies. In some instances the chairman acted as liaison and conveyed the Committee's suggestions to other Ministries; more frequently the members requested that representatives from other agencies be invited to their discussions.

A third aspect of the Committee's work concerned the relationships of the Ministry with outside organizations, and the public-relations work which needed to be carried out was an integral part of the whole mobilization plan.

The provision of community facilities and welfare services generally were the responsibility of a separate body, the Factory and Welfare Advisory Board, on which women were well represented. The Committee's consideration of such questions was therefore incidental to its main work.

### ***Mobilization Programs***

In order that the Committee might be fully aware of the background of manpower needs against which their advice was sought, members were given annually a full review of the estimated demands for women in the current year. Thus, at its first meeting and again at its fifth meeting, early in 1941, the Committee was given a paper containing the estimated demands for women in the various women's services and in industry for that year. In the following year a detailed survey of the demands for women was given by the Director General of Manpower, and a similar review was made in July 1943. This was, of course, supplemented throughout the period of the Committee's work

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in "British Policies and Methods in Employing Women in Wartime," by Janet M. Hooks, Women's Bureau Bull. 200, 1944.

by specific information as to the needs of the various services and industries to whose problems the Committee turned its attention, as described below.

The mobilization of womanpower in Great Britain, once the demand for women had reached the practical stage, was carried out through a combination of a clear lead to the women as to their duty and the priorities of the various types of work, and finally, the orderly assessment of resources brought about by a Registration Scheme, the Control of Engagement Order, and the Essential Works Order, backed as necessary by the power to direct women into individual jobs of critical importance. Thus, while the first question on which the Committee's advice was sought was that of registration for employment, the Committee took opportunity at its fourth, and again at its seventh and eighth meetings, to stress the importance of making full information available to women and to the organizations in touch with women about the exact needs of the situation so that the maximum voluntary movement toward desired objectives might be achieved. This system insured that while the power of compulsory orders was there in the background, the actual number of formal directions issued to women was very small, most women undertaking voluntarily the work which they were asked to do.

#### *Registration for National Service*

Against this background the Committee's advice was sought on the many problems arising from the adoption for the first time of registration of women. Should registration be on a national basis covering one age class at a time, or on a regional basis covering a number of age groups? In what way should the women registered be classified so as to group those who could be expected to take work immediately and those who should be called upon only as a last resort? Which age classes should be registered first? Was it desirable to complete a drastic review of all the women in the younger age classes, including women with household responsibilities, before registering any of the age groups over 45? Should women over 50 be registered? Should there be special registrations of women of all ages with skills in short supply, for instance, nurses?

In addition to these general questions of policy relating to the administration of the registration orders, the Committee was consulted about the way in which certain special groups of women should be treated. Fairness in the demands made on individuals was the general aim, but the Committee's advice was needed on how that principle should be applied to such groups as women with domestic responsibilities, the wives of men serving with the Armed Forces and the merchant marine, women engaged in voluntary work, students, religious sisters, women with children at boarding school, women recently widowed.

An example may be given by telling the story of the Committee's examination of the problem of women responsible for a household. Their first discussion on this came at the outset where the classification of registered women was to be decided. Already, in September 1941, the need had arisen to call such women in for interview and ask them, without any pressure applied, to work outside their homes. By March 1942, the Committee was deliberating upon proposals for the tightening up of this procedure and for a careful review of the position of individual women so that a decision might be reached about their availability for full- or part-time work. This procedure was reviewed by the Committee and simplified 3 months later. By February 1943, when the mobilization of manpower was approaching its peak, the Committee was consulted on the policy of directing to compulsory employment women who could be regarded as available for part-time work only. The Committee considered in detail the standards which were to be employed in deciding these cases, and whether the standards should be varied by age groups. A few months later the Committee reviewed the possibility of calling upon women who, although they had young children living with them, were not in fact required to care for the children full time, because of the presence of a relative or other adult in the house. This proposal was, however, abandoned in view of the possible risk to the welfare of the children. A further refinement in standards involved the issue of a letter to married women with children in certain areas of very heavy labor demand, drawing the women's attention to the urgent need for their services but making clear that no pressure at all was placed upon them.

This example of the attention paid by the Committee to one group of women alone illustrates the nature of its work in this area. It would be possible to give a similar analysis with respect to other groups, showing the gradual tightening up of the registration program, resulting both from the increased need and also from the increased experience gained by the Department and by the Women's Consultative Committee in the administration of these far-reaching powers.

*Mobility* Recurrent discussions took place on the problems of classifying women by degree of mobility. Labor shortages were concentrated to a considerable degree in certain areas, and large-scale transfers of workers were involved in meeting them. In addition the Women's Services Auxiliary to the Armed Forces was required to be mobile.

Many women were ready and willing to move away from home. Where it was necessary to require women to do so under compulsory powers there was obvious need for the greatest care to avoid personal hardship, in view of the domestic and personal responsibilities which many single women were found to carry. The Committee's advice was consequently sought upon the standards to be applied.

*The Essential Work Orders* These were the most drastic of the labor controls used during the war since they permitted the Minister of Labor to require an individual to undertake one specific job or to remain in a particular job unless permission to leave was granted by an officer of the Ministry of Labor. Proper safeguards for the worker were of the highest importance. Since they affected both men and women, the detailed discussion and agreement with representatives of employers and trade unions took place in the appropriate consultative body outside the Women's Committee, but the latter were consulted as to any special considerations affecting women. For instance, after consultation with the Committee, the age below which women were not directed away from home was fixed at 20. It was decided also that women who, because of their home commitments, were available only for part-time employment should not be tied to their jobs by the operation of the Essential Work Order.

#### *Conscription of Women to the Armed Forces*

Conscription to the armed forces was one of the major decisions of the war affecting women. For the first time, it was proposed that women should be drafted to serve in the armed forces. The Women's Consultative Committee was fully consulted before the Government's decision was reached, both on the general issue and on the related question of whether the Conscription Act should apply to married women as well as to single women. As a result, it applied only to single women. In practice, an option to undertake certain very limited types of civilian war work was given. But a proper estimate of public feeling on both of these points, both among civilian men and women and among the men in the armed forces, was of the greatest importance. This was an excellent example of the way in which the Women's Consultative Committee could focus for the advice of the Minister the views of responsible women in the country. After the decision was taken, the Committee was consulted on all the detailed arrangements involved in the working of the Act to insure fair treatment and due attention to the personal circumstances of individual women.

*Mobilization Policy Administration* From the first, the Committee played an active part in suggesting to the Ministry ways in which it felt that the administration of far-reaching powers for mobilization of women into essential employment could be carried out with a minimum of friction. The Committee attached great importance to good cooperation between the local staff of the Ministry and the women who were being called for interview to local offices of the Ministry of Labor, many of them for the first time in their lives. Thus, as early as their fourth meeting, the Committee discussed the provision of suitable staff for these inter-

views. Great stress was laid on the need for a strengthening of the supervisory staff: for interviewers of mature age and experience; for adequate training of interviewers and for giving them instructions that would make clear the considerate and careful atmosphere in which the interviews were to be conducted.

As the work progressed, the Women's Committee was consulted about the desirability of the use of the women's panels which were to become a feature of the wartime administration of the mobilization of women. These panels consisted of two or three women of status in the community, combining among them a knowledge of industry and employment and of home conditions of varying kinds. They were first used as a means by which any woman who felt that her personal and domestic circumstances had not been properly taken into account could ask for independent investigation. They were used to determine doubtful cases of mobility, of availability for work, whether full time or part time, and still later they were asked to advise on the extent to which it was reasonable to withdraw domestic staff from households. The Women's Committee was consulted as to the guidance to be given to the panels and as to the methods of selection of their members.

#### *Cooperation With Other Agencies*

*Other Government Agencies* Much of the time of the Women's Committee was taken up with examining the needs of various industries and services, the means of recruitment for them, and the removal of obstacles to such recruitment. Need for such an examination might spring from a request from the Ministry for advice, or from the knowledge possessed by the members that a problem needed attention.

Thus, at their sixth meeting, the Committee discussed with senior officers from the War Office the needs of the Auxiliary Territorial Service for Women and their pay, welfare arrangements, staffing, methods of recruitment, and training. Arrangements were made for the members to visit a reception depot of the Auxiliary Territorial Service. The points raised in that preliminary discussion were followed by a number of discussions with officers of the ATS, on such questions as the training and selection of officers. Similar discussions were held with the other two services.<sup>6</sup> One problem which was closely examined by the Committee with regard to all three women's services was that of the possibility of posting women to employment near their homes in order to minimize the demand which the services made on young mobile women who were in short supply. Throughout the war the Committee maintained a close watch on recruitment to the women's services and the conditions in

<sup>6</sup> Women's Royal Naval Service and Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

these services, and discussed with representatives from the departments concerned the various problems which, from time to time, judging from their knowledge of the feeling in the country, needed attention.

Similar discussions were held with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture as to the Land Army, and with senior officers of the Land Army itself. Representatives from the Ministry of Health attended Committee meetings to discuss problems of nursing shortage, methods of recruitment, publicity, salaries, and retirement plans.

One of the major problems was the recruitment of women for the government shell factories and for aircraft factories. The Committee examined with representatives of the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Aircraft Production the problems of welfare, of the provision of properly trained personnel managers, of supervision, of the arrangements for training for the women concerned, and of similar problems arising from the rapid increases in the numbers employed.

*Cooperation with Employers* Much of the attention of the Committee was directed toward more extensive employment of women in engineering. Its efforts were directed to insuring that women were able to make their full contribution. The Committee asked to meet with representatives of employers' organizations, and this was arranged. For example, the Committee discussed with the Engineering Employers' Federation the extent to which women were being trained for skilled and semiskilled occupations, whether this was being done sufficiently in advance of demand, whether split-shift working was being organized to enable married women with domestic responsibilities to undertake work, whether the age limits fixed for recruitment were too high, the extent of prejudice among employers against the employment of women and what could be done to overcome it. By March 1942, the Committee was considering a proposal for the formation of a Women's Technical Service Register which was to encourage the proper use of women with technical qualifications in industry. This proposal was subsequently adopted.

*Public Relations* From the outset, the Committee members were concerned with the public-relations aspect of the mobilization of women. They welcomed the appointment early in their period of work of a woman press officer in the Ministry who would pay special attention to the mobilization of the women's press, and they received reports on progress. They called for a report at an early meeting on the extent to which use was being made throughout the country of women's organizations. At their eleventh meeting, they discussed the organization of a national conference of women's organizations. The conference took place in September 1942. The Committee continued to pay careful attention to adequate publicity

for recruitment to the various industries and services and was consulted on the publicity campaigns which were undertaken by the Ministry.

*Community Facilities* As explained earlier, welfare arrangements for workers both inside and outside the factory fell within the scope of another advisory body. Inevitably, however, the Women's Consultative Committee discussed from time to time the needs for community facilities which sprang from the efforts which the Committee itself was making to encourage the recruitment of women. The provision of day nurseries, of child guardians, of war workers' clubs, better transportation arrangements, and shopping facilities for women, were recommended; as has already been shown, the Committee, in discussing problems of recruitment for individual industries and services, laid great stress on good personnel management. The views of the Committee on these subjects were conveyed to the Factory and Welfare Advisory Boards.

### **Evaluation**

The Consultative Committee was an integrated staff committee of the Ministry of Labor, with the parliamentary secretary to the Minister acting as chairman and with all liaison and publicity taken care of through regular Ministry channels. The staff character of the Committee relieved it of operating responsibility and left it free to concentrate on formulation of policy and program. The regular Ministry staff relied heavily upon the Committee for advice with respect to all the problems of women workers which came within the purview of the Ministry.

As an integral part of the Ministry of Labor, the Committee did not suffer in efficiency from the lack of a staff of its own. The Committee had direct access to data gathered and analyzed by the Ministry staff and the material available in the Ministry was effectively used for the preparation and information of the members.

Although the members of the Consultative Committee were not appointed as representatives of the organizations they were affiliated with, it may nevertheless be assumed that their close connection with, and their leadership in, political and other public groups enabled them to contribute to the exchange of thinking between the Ministry and the public; they especially served as an informal medium of communication between the Government and their own affiliations. Further, their contacts provided a channel for consideration of, and maintenance of interest in, "grass roots" attitudes. Since the chairman of the Woman Power Committee was a member of the Consultative Committee, it may also be assumed with certainty that, in spite of the lack of official or even formal collaboration between the

Consultative and the Woman Power Committees, a constant informal exchange and flow of thinking took place between the two groups of women.

In conclusion, it may be said that the work of the Consultative Committee effected a definite strengthening of British women's participation in important aspects of womanpower planning. Its appointment instilled confidence in the public generally that the Ministry would have practical and sound advice available to it in the special area of womanpower. The value that the Ministry of Labor itself placed upon the contribution of the Consultative Committee is expressed in the fact that the Minister reappointed the Committee at the end of the emergency to serve in the postwar period and that the Committee has continued to advise the Ministry on programs concerning women workers up to the present time.

## APPENDIX

### Sources

ED. NOTE.—The source materials used in the preparation of this report include both published and unpublished records, listed here. The material was supplemented and clarified through a study of pertinent correspondence and minutes to which the authors had access. Part I, on the United States, received the benefit of personal interviews with Mary Anderson, Director of the Women's Bureau until 1944, and others who spoke from first-hand experience. Parts II and III, on Great Britain, were sent to England for review by Dame Mary Smieton and by women members of the two British committees; the part on the Women's Consultative Committee, especially, was revised and amplified by them to include significant data not previously recorded.

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- Mary Anderson, Director, Women's Bureau, 1920–44.
- Bess Bloodworth, Member of the Women's Advisory Committee, and Chairman, Subcommittee for Public Relations 1942–45; personnel executive and later vice president of The Namm Store, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Field Consultant for Women's Bureau, 1951.
- Richard D. Fletcher, Assistant Chief, United States Employment Service.
- Mrs. Beatrice Blackmar Gould, co-editor, *Ladies' Home Journal*.
- Florence L. Hall, Chief, Women's Land Army Division, Extension Service, USDA, 1943–45; field agent for home demonstration work in the Northeastern Region, Extension Service, USDA, 1946–.
- Margaret A. Hickey, Chairman of the Women's Advisory Committee; lawyer and business executive.
- Don Larin, Farm Placement Service, Bureau of Employment Security.
- Frieda S. Miller, Industrial Commissioner of New York State, 1938–43; Special Assistant to Ambassador John G. Winant in London, 1943–44; Director, Women's Bureau, 1944–.
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In addition, the following were consulted personally through correspondence and interview:

Dame Dorothy Elliott, Chairman, Board of Directors, National Institute of Houseworkers, 53 Mount Street, London, W. 1.

Mrs. Walter Elliot, Chairman, National Girls Clubs Association, Harwood, Harwick, Scotland.

Sir Archibald McD. Gordon, Labor Attaché, British Embassy, Washington, D. C.

Dame Florence Hancock, National Woman Officer, Transport and General

Workers Union, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S. W. 1.

Dame Caroline Haslett, Director, The Electrical Association for Women, 35 Grosvenor Place, London, S. W. 1.

Dame Mary Smieton, Ministry of Labor and National Service, 8 St. James' Square, London, S. W. 1.

Mary E. Sutherland, Secretary, Standing Joint Committee of Working Women's Organization, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S. W. 1.

Irene Ward, Member of Parliament, C. B. E., London.

**Findings from Discussions<sup>1</sup> by  
THE WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE  
MANPOWER**

*on*

**Functions, Goals, and Organizational Structure of a Womanpower  
Advisory Committee in an Emergency Period**

***Introduction***

It has long been the opinion of most women whose advice has been sought in connection with manpower programs that, wherever possible, women committee members who were selected to advise on women's problems, could function more effectively if integrated directly with the manpower agency at the top policy making level. However, it has historically been a practice to set up some special machinery to give appropriate attention to the problems involved in the mobilization of womanpower.

With this experience in mind, the Women's Advisory Committee on Defense Manpower has been studying the American and British womanpower committees which functioned during World War II and has agreed upon certain broad principles which might serve in a national emergency as a guide in the establishment of a women's committee advisory to the agency responsible for manpower.

***Functions of Committee***

A womanpower advisory committee would be advisory and consultative on all policies that affect the integration of women into the work force under emergency conditions, and the resultant problems which will occur in the social and economic structure.

The committee may initiate policy considerations and should follow through on the use of the recommendations and advice given, staying within the framework of its advisory function.

The committee should interpret its role to outside groups and agencies, and carry on an educational program with the public in regard to the manpower agency policy and programs.

The committee should also serve as a focal point and medium through which all women's groups could find adequate expression of their points of view.

<sup>1</sup> The Women's Advisory Committee on Defense Manpower appointed by the Secretary of Labor in the spring of 1951 devoted two sessions to a discussion of the reports on the British and American Committees which functioned during World War II. The discussions were held on September 22 and December 5, 1952. At the second meeting the Committee requested Bess Bloodworth, who had led the discussions at both meetings, to summarize their deliberations and prepare a report of findings. The Committee approved the substance of the report which is presented in this bulletin as an appendix.

## **Broad Goal**

The committee's perspective should be broad and directed towards the coordination of the long-range interest of women with the long-range interest of the Nation, consistent with the immediate needs caused by the emergency.

## **Organizational Structure**

1. *Composition of the committee.*—The committee should be made up of experienced, mature women, able to deal with complex interrelations and to relate special experiences to the total problem. Some members may be specialists professionally, but all should have the capacity for a "generalist's" point of view. Members should be appointed as individuals rather than as official representatives of their affiliated organizations.

Representation should be as broad as possible on a geographic, social, and economic basis, and include the important segments of the public interest, such as labor, business, agriculture, education, religion, etc.

Adequate representation will determine the size of the committee, but it must be small enough to be efficient and large enough to provide an adequate working quorum. Expansion of the committee might be accomplished by the use of subcommittees as needed, to be chosen from outside the committee and to operate under the chairmanship of a member of the main committee.

Experience has indicated that provision for alternate membership is undesirable during an emergency period and that only women who can attend meetings regularly should be selected for membership.

Membership should not include employees of the Federal Government, but qualified members of State and local governments may be considered for membership.

2. *Chairman.*—The chairman should report directly to the head of the manpower authority, and provision should be made for direct working relationships at the policy-making level with appropriate Government agencies.

The chairman should be very carefully selected. She should be a woman of stature in the Nation, experienced in labor and business procedures, with a broad grasp of human relations, a knowledge of and experience with, public and private organizations and agencies.

The chairman should be available to carry on a virtually full-time job, and adequate provision should be made by the Government to take care of all reasonable expenses connected with this obligation.

3. *Executive secretary.*—There should be an executive secretary whose duties would be to assist the chairman in preparing

for meetings, advance preparation of members, and public relations; to coordinate the work of the committee with that of the subcommittees; and to serve as liaison with other Government agencies. It is recommended that the executive secretary be selected on the basis of recent experience in a Federal agency, and that she be detailed or employed to report directly to the chairman of the advisory committee.

4. *Office and staff.*—The committee should have its own office and adequate clerical staff, with the necessary equipment, supplies, and services furnished by the manpower agency.

### ***Coordination With Other Government Agencies***

Care should be exercised to avoid duplication of program. Channels should be established for free communication with other agencies. The committee should make use of technical specialists in other agencies, and the Government should provide funds with which the Manpower Committee can reimburse these agencies for such services.

### ***Public Relations***

The committee should interpret and promote various aspects of the womanpower program. All public relations media represented by committee members should be used after the chairman has coordinated the plans and cleared them with the appropriate publicity channels of the manpower authority organization.