

Facts on Women Workers



MAY 1946*

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN APRIL 1946

Employment of women increased in April for the second successive month.

	April 1946		
	Number of women	Change since March 1946	Total persons Number Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	53,690,000	+ 30,000	106,140,000 50.6
Employed	16,130,000	+ 350,000	54,550,000 29.6
Unemployed	460,000	- 50,000	2,350,000 19.6
Armed forces	80,000	- 20,000	3,840,000 2.1
Nonworkers	37,020,000	- 250,000	45,400,000 81.5

(U.S. Bureau of the Census)

WOMEN'S EARNINGS AND HOURS

Women's average weekly earnings, as reported by the National Industrial Conference Board for 25 selected manufacturing industries, were \$31.16 for October and November, and \$31.49 for December. Women's average hourly earnings for the same months were 77.8 cents, 78.7 cents, and 79.7 cents. Women's average weekly hours for the same periods were 40.1, 39.6, and 39.6.

PROGRESS IN LABOR STANDARDS

Protection for women in the automobile industry received special attention at the UAW-CIO Convention in March. A resolution drawn up by women delegates and passed called for:

- (1) the incorporation of a Model Clause in union contracts which would prevent discrimination based on sex or marital status;
- (2) the disapproval of any local union contracts which discriminate against women members;
- (3) seniority protection for women equal with the seniority protection provided for other members;
- (4) reaffirming the union's position for equal pay for equal work as provisions for union contracts which shall be rigidly conferred;
- (5) inclusion in union contracts of a Model Maternity Clause and provision for rest periods for men and women;
- (6) increased attention to the status of women workers by union officials.

There were 57 women among the 2,000 delegates present.

EQUAL PAY

Rhode Island is the seventh State to adopt an "equal pay" law for women, effective April 25, 1946. It requires "equal pay" for women except where provided otherwise in union contracts. May 19 a Senate Subcommittee on Education and Labor recommended favorable action by the full Committee on the Women's Equal Pay Act (S. 1178).

*/This is the first in a monthly series. Future issues will be mailed out the last week of the month.

MISS MILLER TESTIFIES FOR EXTENDED SOCIAL SECURITY

On April 9, Miss Miller, Director of the Women's Bureau, sent a statement to the House Ways and Means Committee in support of amendments to the Social Security Act which would extend coverage by old-age and survivors' insurance to domestic employees and agricultural workers, and reduce the benefit age for women claimants from 65 to 60 years. High points in her testimony were:

Major disadvantage of household employment is normally low earnings, which prevent building reserves for emergencies or old age. Low rates are further aggravated by the irregular and part-time employment characteristic of domestic service. Furthermore, these workers shift back and forth from covered to noncovered employments, making it impossible for them to benefit from contributions made, because generally they are unable to build up the required reserves.

Agricultural workers suffer under additional disadvantages, resulting from their isolation from industrial centers where jobs might be found during slack seasons. The increasing numbers of migratory farm workers often cannot get public assistance because they cannot fulfill local qualifications of residence.

Reduction in the voluntary retirement age for women from 65 to 60 was recommended because women, more than men, find difficulty in getting work as they grow older. Many have also carried the added duty of homemaker during their years of gainful employment with resulting strain on health and strength. Since supplementary benefits are not now available to elderly couples until the wife reaches age 65, and since the wives of men age 65 are, on the average, 5 years younger, it would appear socially sound to permit supplementary benefits to be drawn when the wives reach 60.

WOMEN'S BUREAU - Inter-American Trainees

After an orientation and study course in the Women's Bureau and other divisions of the U.S. Department of Labor, four women, from Chile, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Brazil, sent by their governments to the Women's Bureau to study women's employment problems, left Washington in March for further study in State labor departments in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New York.

WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Mrs. Bodil Begtrup of Denmark is chairman of the United Nations Subcommission on the Status of Women, and Mrs. Roosevelt, chairman of the Human Rights Commission, is an ex-officio member. The Subcommission held its first meetings in New York in May. Its report calls for energetic work to improve the status of women, especially through achievement of political rights and use of the franchise.

Effects of War Casualties on Economic Responsibilities of Women. (Reprint from Monthly Labor Review, Feb. 1946, by Janet Hooks, Women's Bureau, 6 pp. Serial No. R. 1821.)

Wartime Shifts of Household Employees into Other Industries. U. S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, March 1946. (Mimeo. 2 pp.)

Women in Factories, Oct. 1939-December 1945. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 1946. (Mimeo. 14 pp.)

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