



# Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU  
U.S. DEPARTMENT  
OF LABOR

JUNE 1946

## EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN MAY 1946

Employment of women increased in May for the third consecutive month.

|                                | May 1946        |                         |                      | Percent women |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
|                                | Number of women | Change since April 1946 | Total persons Number |               |
| Population (14 years and over) | 53,730,000      | + 40,000                | 106,200,000          | 50.6          |
| Employed                       | 16,260,000      | + 130,000               | 55,320,000           | 29.4          |
| Unemployed                     | 420,000         | - 40,000                | 2,310,000            | 18.2          |
| Armed forces                   | 70,000          | - 10,000                | 3,430,000            | 2.0           |
| Nonworkers                     | 36,980,000      | - 40,000                | 45,140,000           | 81.9          |

(U.S. Bureau of the Census)

According to U. S. Employment Service records, the large-scale withdrawal of women workers from the labor market has run its course.

## EARNINGS OF WOMEN OFFICE WORKERS IN FACTORIES IN NEW YORK STATE

Average weekly earnings of women office workers in factories in October 1945 were \$33.23, compared with \$33.83 in October 1944. Office workers in war industries averaged \$34.07 in October 1945, compared with \$36.74 in October 1944. In contrast, women in consumer industries gained; their average earnings were \$32.59 in October 1945, against \$30.66 in October 1944. (New York State Department of Labor)

## PROGRESS IN LABOR STANDARDS

The Washington State minimum wage order, effective June 6, establishes for all women, except domestic, agricultural, and certain communications workers, a minimum wage rate of 65 cents an hour for a 40-hour week with overtime at time and one-half the worker's regular rate. It also establishes maximum hours of 8 a day, 6 days, and 48 hours a week, and working condition standards, such as safety, sanitation, lunch periods and other.

Effective July 8, a minimum wage of \$22 for a workweek from 16 to 44 hours must be paid to women and minors employed in Washington, D. C., laundries. An overtime rate of 55 cents an hour after 44 hours is provided. This will supersede the minimum wage of \$14.50 for the same workweek with overtime at 35 cents per hour in force since 1938.

On June 11 the Massachusetts Senate passed an amendment to the present State minimum wage law for women and minors which will extend coverage to men. The House had previously passed this amendment.

#### TRENDS IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

(From "The Labor Market" for May 1946 - U. S. Employment Service.)

In communications equipment women comprised almost half the total labor force of the reporting plants in mid-March. The number of women is expected to increase since employers consider them better adapted than men to this type of work.

In the shoe industry women make up 53 percent of the labor force in 255 major plants, compared to an industry average of 45 percent in 1939. Employers plan to maintain the present ratio.

"VETERANS COME, WOMEN GO" says the U. S. Employment Service about the sharp decline in the employment of women on production jobs in the steel industry, construction, mine and oil field machinery, and railroad cars and equipment. This is due to voluntary withdrawal of women as well as to their displacement by returning veterans.

#### WOMEN IN THE PROFESSIONS

First woman member of the 47-year-old Iowa Engineering Society is Ruth Evelyn Best, 25-year-old civil engineering graduate of Iowa State College who is employed by a Des Moines firm of engineers and architects. Her ambition is to design bridges. ... Soroptimist Clubs of the North Atlantic Region have awarded the first Fellowship in Plastic Surgery ever granted in the United States to a woman doctor who will study in St. Louis. ... Dr. Ruth F. Benedict, Columbia University anthropologist, has been awarded the AAUW \$2,500 achievement award for research on racial questions. ... First woman to be admitted to the French Academy of Medicine since Mme. Curie, is Mme. Lucie Randoin, director of nutrition laboratories in the Ecole des Hautes-Etudes.

#### UNITED NATIONS

Miss Mary Smieton of Great Britain has been appointed head of the Bureau of Personnel of the United Nations at a salary of \$11,000 plus \$3,000 allowances. She is an Oxford graduate, a veteran of twenty years in the British Civil Service, and was formerly Under Secretary in the Ministry of Labor. During the war she helped organize the Women's Voluntary Services and later had charge of all the country's womanpower.

#### WOMEN AROUND THE WORLD

Since 1940, the following six countries have granted women suffrage rights and eligibility with men to public office: Dominican Republic, Guatemala, France, Italy, Japan and Yugoslavia. This brings to a total of 36 the number of countries now giving equal suffrage to women.

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A Human Rights, Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Mimeographed.  
D Available from the Women's Bureau upon request.