



Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR

MAY 31, 1948

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN APRIL 1948

In April 1948, 31 percent of all women 14 years and over were in the civilian labor force, according to Census reports. Although below the wartime level of nearly 39 percent, this proportion was substantially higher than in April 1940 (27.6 percent) or in April 1930 (25.6 percent). In April 1948, 3.6 percent of the women in the labor force were unemployed, compared with 14.3 percent in April 1940.

	April 1948			
	Number of women	Change since March 1948	Total persons	
			Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	54,969,000	+ 35,000	108,173,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	17,155,000	+ 395,000	60,524,000	28.3
Employed	16,529,000	+ 444,000	58,330,000	28.3
Unemployed	626,000	- 49,000	2,193,000	28.5
Armed forces	16,000	- 1,000	1,236,000	1.3
Nonworkers	37,798,000	- 359,000	46,414,000	81.4

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

COST OF LIVING

The total amount needed for adequate maintenance and protection of health of a woman living as a member of a family group in the State of New York was \$1,990 per year, or \$38.27 per week, as of September 1947. Of this amount \$1,486 was needed to buy the goods and services allowed and \$504 for income and social security taxes and savings. The U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics' all-items consumers'-price index for New York City has risen 1.5 percent from September 15, 1947 to March 15, 1948.

EQUAL PAY FOR TEACHERS

According to figures recently compiled by the National Education Association, considerable progress has been made since the school year of 1944-45 in cutting down differentials in salary scales between men and women. In cities over 100,000 in 1944-45, 13 percent of the salary schedules reported made such differentiation, whereas in 1947-48 this practice had dropped to only 2.4 percent on the basis of approximately the same number of schedules reported. In cities of 30,000-100,000, 31.6 percent made such differentiation in 1944-45, while in 1947-48 this had dropped to 11.4 percent. At the same time the number of schedules reported rose from 171 to 201.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

Railroads. From January 1947 to January 1948 women's employment by Class I steam railways declined by nearly 5,500 - from a total of 72,943 to 67,448. The largest decline in occupational groups was for "professional, clerical and general" (from 57,699 to 54,099), but each of the other main occupational groups decreased also - "transportation (other than train, engine, and yard)," "maintenance of equipment and stores," and "all other." (For further information, write the Interstate Commerce Commission for its release "Number of Females Employed by Class I Steam Railways.")

Older Women in Aetna Life Affiliated Companies. Of the 150 employees 45 years or over who were hired by this group of insurance companies since 1940, 133 are women and 17 are men. A study made of the experience with this older group showed that while not as rapid as the younger group, they are more industrious in their work and are willing to do the simple clerical work (at which more than 68 percent of them are employed) for much longer periods of time than are the younger group. The group showed a smaller turnover than the younger group and no worse experience on absenteeism. It is the company's impression that the older group are out less frequently but may average a slightly longer time when out. A considerable number of the women had never previously held clerical jobs.

PERSONNEL PRACTICES

A new report on personnel practices affecting factory and office workers, based on information received from 2,479 companies employing about 5 million workers, is available from the National Industrial Conference Board. A few of the practices refer specifically to women or show slightly different treatment as between men and women:

Maximum Hiring Age. Practically half the firms reported no top limit on age in hiring men as either hourly or salaried workers. In hiring women, 47 percent of the firms reported no maximum age limit on women applicants as factory workers, while slightly more (49 percent) said they had no top age limit for women applying for jobs as salaried workers.

Married Women. The present report shows that 3 percent of the firms required women factory workers to resign on marriage (compared to 8 percent in 1937), and 6 percent of the firms had such a policy for women salaried workers (compared to 15 percent in 1937).

The 1948 report also showed that 6 percent of the firms have restrictions against hiring married women as factory workers, and 11 percent of the firms do not hire married women as salaried workers.

Pregnant women in factory jobs must resign their jobs in 24 percent of the firms covered by the report, while 30 percent of the firms required women salaried workers to resign on becoming pregnant.

AMENDMENT TO IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924

H. R. 5137, which would permit foreign husbands of American wives to enter the United States on a non-quota basis, provided the marriage occurred prior to January 1, 1948, has been enacted into law. The Women's Bureau testified in favor of the bill but opposed continuance of a limitation as to the date of marriage. Although the present law appropriately relieves a great many hardship cases, it nevertheless continues a discrimination against women in principle. (See February 1948 "fact sheet" for earlier details.)

WOMEN IN UNIONS - Massachusetts, 1947

There were 167,635 women and 423,634 men members of 2,005 local unions in Massachusetts, January 15, 1947, according to reports made by the unions to the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries. In each of the following industry groups there were more than 12,000 women trade unionists: Textiles, 33,992; metal and machinery, 30,427; clothing and garment trades, 23,156; boots and shoes, 13,300.

HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT

The Puerto Rico Employment and Migration Bureau of San Juan reported three training centers for household employees in operation in April, with an enrollment of 90 girls.

This is the most recent development under the new Puerto Rican government project which recently led to the placement of 21 Puerto Rican household workers in the homes of Scarsdale, N.Y., housewives. It represents the insular government's Pilot Project of Training and Placement of Household Workers, a program made possible by the foresight and work of the Puerto Rican commissioner of labor and the cooperation of the Women's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor and the New York State Employment Service.

[For information about the training plan and employment agreements, see the article in the May 1948 Labor Information Bulletin of the U. S. Department of Labor, "Household Workers from Puerto Rico Arrive in New York."]

The outgrowth of consultations between the Women's Bureau and the insular government was a decision by the latter to suspend the migration of women as household workers until a program of selection and training could become effective. The new training program is designed to correct the undesirable features of last year's experience by insuring that girls and women who migrate to the continental United States (born on the Island, the girls are - like all Puerto Ricans - citizens of the United States) have knowledge of at least the rudiments of cooking, housekeeping, and other related skills and are able to speak English.

NINTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN STATES

At the recent Ninth International Conference of American States held at Bogotá, Colombia, several actions taken were of special interest to women:

Two treaties regarding the status of women were voted on:

- (1) "The High Contracting Parties agree that the right to vote and to be elected to national office shall not be denied or abridged because of sex."

The delegates of 14 countries, including the United States, have signed this treaty.

- (2) "The American States agree to grant to women the same civil rights that men enjoy."

The delegates of all the American Republics, except the United States, signed this treaty. [The United States Delegate made a statement in support of the principle of equal civil and political rights but referred to the fact that under the constitutional system of the United States many of the commonly accepted civil rights are matters for State action rather than Federal.]

The statutes of the Inter-American Commission of Women were approved and a resolution adopted charging the Commission with the responsibility of making a study of the economic position of the woman worker in the American Republics, including a study of maternity protection.

Three women were plenipotentiary delegates of their countries: Dra. Blanca Mieres de Botto, from Uruguay; Srta. Minerva Bernardino, from Dominican Republic; and Sra. Maria E. Lopez Cabanillas de Ivanissevich, from Argentina.

HAVE
YOU
READ

"Earnings of Women in Selected Manufacturing Industries, 1946." Bull. 219. Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

"Community Household Employment Programs." Bull. 221. Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

"Women in the New Japan", by Lulu Homes in Journal of the American Association of University Women, Spring 1948. (Address, 1634 Eye St. N.W., Washington, D.C.)

"Women in Banking", - 25th Anniversary Edition (1946 Supplement; 1944 Supplement; 1942 Survey). Published by Association of Bank Women (Miss Catherine S. Pepper, chairman, research committee; c/o The National City Bank of New York, 55 Wall Street, New York 15, N. Y.) A record of women holding executive positions in banks throughout the United States.

"Health of Arc Welders in Steel Ship Construction." Public Health Bull. No. 298. U. S. Public Health Service. A survey made in cooperation with U. S. Maritime Commission and United States Navy, in 1944, based on physical examinations of 2,950 males and 1,700 females employed in 7 United States Maritime Commission or Navy-contract shipyards. About one out of every four persons examined was a nonwelder (the medical findings of this group served to control the clinical observations on welders). Separate data for men and women.