



Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR

DECEMBER 31, 1948

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN NOVEMBER

There were about 1 1/2 million more persons in the civilian labor force in November than a year ago, according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census. Women accounted for about 900,000 of these additional workers.

	November 1948			
	Number of women	Change since October 1948	Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	55,361,000	+ 54,000	108,948,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	17,942,000	+ 18,000	61,724,000	29.1
Employed	17,342,000	- 29,000	59,893,000	29.0
Unemployed	600,000	+ 46,000	1,831,000	32.8
Armed forces	14,000	+ 1,000	1,414,000	1.0
Nonworkers	37,405,000	+ 36,000	45,810,000	81.7

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

Age changes - Over the past 7 years, perhaps the most significant development in the labor force has been the increased proportion of women workers in the middle and older age groups. In November 1948 women constituted 28½ percent of the labor force including the armed forces; in November 1941, 26 percent. For women in the age group 35 years and over the change is even more substantial, the proportion in the labor force rising from 11 percent to 14½ percent between these two dates. Due partly to the increased proportion of older persons in the population, the change also reflects the historical rise in labor force participation of women.

COST OF LIVING

The latest cost-of-living budget for minimum-adequate needs of an employed woman without dependents in the District of Columbia, based on prices of August 1948, is \$1,509 a year for commodities and services; \$1,915 for total budget including savings and taxes.

MINIMUM WAGE CONFERENCE

The Women's Bureau held its 14th Annual Conference for State Minimum Wage Administrators in Washington on December 6-8. Sixteen States and two Territories were represented. The representatives reported on minimum wage activity in their States in the past year. The central theme of the Conference was how to expand and speed up the setting of realistic minimum wages and improved working conditions standards. Several States reported that they had reached or almost reached the potential of coverage under their laws. How other States could achieve that goal was fully discussed. Representatives were particularly interested in ways of selecting effective wage board members, planning a time-saving schedule, the taking and recording of evidence before wage boards, and initial steps in publicizing and enforcing new wage orders.

The Bureau was requested to undertake specific investigations in relation to administration and enforcement in preparation for next year's conference, and the representatives, by resolution, requested the Secretary of Labor to provide for more extensive technical and informational services by the Women's Bureau. The conference also discussed the relative merits of minimum wage and wage and hour laws, and expressed its conviction that the minimum wage type of law was preferable to meet the low wage and working conditions standards in the service industries.

MINIMUM WAGE ORDERS

New Jersey has issued a minimum-wage order covering, for the first time, retail trade occupations in the State. The order approved by the State Commissioner of Labor after public hearing on November 30, sets minimum-wage rates of 60 cents an hour for the 9 industrial counties, and 55 cents an hour in the rural and seashore counties, with time and one-half after 40 hours and 44 hours a week, respectively.

The State of Washington has set 65 cents as the minimum hourly rate for women and minors in office occupations in an order to become effective early in 1949. It also provides for a 30-minute lunch period, for a 10-minute rest period in each 4 hours of employment, and for several other working conditions standards.

HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION ADOPTED BY UN ASSEMBLY

The Declaration of Human Rights was finally approved by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on December 10, 1948. The vote for adoption of the Declaration was 48 to 0, with the Soviet bloc, Saudi Arabia, and the Union of South Africa abstaining. After adoption, the Assembly accorded an ovation to Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, first chairman of the Human Rights Commission, for her tireless efforts in the long process of drafting the document.

In addition to the basic civil and political rights the Declaration lists such economic and social rights as the right to social security, the right to work, the right to health and security, the right to education, the right to rest and leisure, and the right to participate in cultural life. Included in the right to work is the right of everyone, without any discrimination, to equal pay for equal work.

Attention will now center on the Covenant on Human Rights, which is still in the drafting stage. It is a proposed treaty which will be legally binding on the countries that ratify it and is expected to include only the basic civil rights. When it is completed by the Human Rights Commission, the Covenant will be reviewed by appropriate United Nations bodies, including the General Assembly, and then sent to each member of the United Nations for approval.

NATURE OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Of 17 1/3 million women employed in November 1948, nearly 16 million were in nonagricultural industries, not quite 1 1/2 million in agriculture, according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census. There were 14 1/2 million women wage or salary workers, chiefly in nonagricultural industries. Nearly 1 1/2 million were self-employed. The remainder, 1 1/2 million, were unpaid family workers, about three-fourths of whom were farm workers. Women formed a much higher percentage of the nonagricultural than of the agricultural workers, a relationship that held true for each general type of worker.

	Employed women	
	Number	Percent of all persons
Total employed	<u>17,342,000</u>	<u>29.0</u>
Employed in agriculture	1,489,000	18.7
Wage or salary workers	303,000	17.0
Self-employed workers	284,000	6.1
Unpaid family workers	903,000	58.6
Employed in nonagricultural industries	15,853,000	30.5
Wage or salary workers	14,304,000	31.5
In domestic service	1,465,000	88.0
Government workers	1,848,000	33.9
Other wage or salary workers	10,991,000	28.7
Self-employed workers	1,193,000	19.6
Unpaid family workers	355,000	91.3

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

WOMEN IN UNIONS

The American Federation of Teachers (AFL) at its recent convention recommended unanimously the following resolution, which, among others, was subsequently adopted by AFT Executive Council at its post-convention meeting: "Resolved: That the AFT support the position in each State, all teachers having equal training and qualifications should receive equal salaries, regardless of race, color, or sex; and that equal educational and class room facilities likewise should be provided." The new AFT Executive Council of 17 members includes 9 women.

Attending the 5th biennial conference of the Textile Workers Union of America (CIO), held in April 1948, were 255 women delegates (out of a total of 1,682 delegates); of 122 alternates, 36 were women [count based on examination of names of delegates listed]. Of 3 trustees elected for a two-year term, 1 was a woman, Dora Heald, of Webster, Mass.

In England, a landmark in the history of cotton trade unionism is the election of Miss Alice Foley as secretary of the Bolton Weavers' and Winders' Association, an important district association. Although women for generations have formed the bulk of the members of most of the unions in this industry, the principal offices traditionally have been held by men.

WOMEN IN 81ST CONGRESS

The following women were elected to the 81st Congress — the Senate and the House — which convenes in January 1949. Two are new members.

Mrs. Margaret Chase Smith, Maine (R), formerly a member of the House of Representatives (elected in 1940, 76th Congress; re-elected to each succeeding Congress). Elected to Senate in 1948. Mrs. Smith is the first woman in the history of the country to serve in both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate. She is also the first woman to be elected Senator on her own.

Mrs. Frances P. Bolton, Ohio (R), first elected to 76th Congress in 1940, and re-elected to every succeeding Congress.

Mrs. Reva Beck Bosone, Utah (D), newly elected to 81st Congress.

Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas, California (D), first elected to 79th Congress in 1944. Re-elected to the 80th Congress.

Mrs. Cecil M. Harden, Indiana (R), newly elected to 81st Congress.

Mrs. Mary T. Norton, New Jersey (D), first elected to 68th Congress, 1924, and re-elected to every succeeding Congress.

Mrs. Edith Nourse Rogers, Mass. (R), first elected to 69th Congress in 1925, and re-elected to every succeeding Congress.

Mrs. Katharine St. George, New York (R), first elected to 80th Congress in 1946.

Mrs. Chase Going Woodhouse, Conn. (D), first elected to 79th Congress in 1944; re-elected to 81st Congress.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE PASSES CHILEAN CONGRESS

On December 21, 1948, the Chilean Senate passed the bill extending suffrage to women. The house had passed it earlier in the month and the bill will become law after it is signed by the Chilean President.

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A	The Outlook for Women in Architecture and Engineering)	U. S. Depart-
V	Handbook of Facts on Women Workers)	ment
E	Working Women's Budgets in 12 States)	of Labor
Y	United States Replies to United Nations' Inquiry on the	
O	Legal Status and Treatment of Women: (Women's Bureau,	
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