



Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU
U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR

FEBRUARY 28, 1949

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN JANUARY 1949

From January 1948 to January 1949 the number of women in the labor force increased by more than 1/2 million according to the U. S. Bureau of the Census. Women's employment rose by more than 1/3 of a million, practically all of which was in nonagricultural industries. Unemployment rose from 3 percent of all women in the labor force to nearly 4 percent. The reduction in employment from December 1948 to January 1949, however, exceeded seasonal expectations.

	January 1949			
	Number of women	Change since December 1948	Total persons	
			Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	55,459,000	+ 47,000	109,117,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	16,917,000	- 885,000	60,078,000	28.2
Employed	16,264,000	- 1,008,000	57,414,000	28.3
Unemployed	653,000	+ 123,000	2,664,000	24.5
Armed forces	15,000	+ 1,000	1,468,000	1.0
Nonworkers	38,527,000	+ 931,000	47,571,000	81.0

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

INCOME OF MEN AND WOMEN

The Census report on money income of the people of the United States for the year 1947 shows that in the population 14 years of age and over about 40 percent of the women and 90 percent of the men had incomes. Of those with incomes, about 80 percent of each sex received wages or salaries. (Information from an analysis published by the Bureau of the Census February 1949, based on information collected April 1948.)

For those with money income (from any source) the median income was \$1,017 for the women, \$2,230 for the men. Half the women and a fifth of the men received less than \$1,000 in the year. At the other end of the scale, 5 percent of the women and over 30 percent of the men received \$3,000 or more.

COST OF LIVING

Two repriced budgets, each reflecting the minimum amounts needed by a self-supporting woman without dependents to maintain herself on a healthful standard of living, were recently issued by separate agencies. As of September 1948 New York State determined the total annual cost of its budget for a woman living as a member of a family group to be \$2,087, \$492 being for taxes and savings. The Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics, whose survey is confined to one city, San Francisco, reports a budget for a woman living in a boarding house and eating some meals in restaurants. As of September 1948 its total annual cost was \$2,218, \$363 of which is allocated to taxes and savings.

MINIMUM WAGE LEGISLATION

New Jersey's Retail Trade order, digest of which appeared in the December Fact Sheet, will become effective June 6, 1949.

National Parks Regulations Affecting Minimum Wage - An important development in the field of minimum wage administration is embodied in the recently amended "Regulations Governing Standards Applicable to Employees of National Park Concessioners," issued by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, and effective January 1, 1949. The principle underlying the regulations is that:

"The public using the national parks is better served when the employees of the concessioners enjoy the benefits of fair labor standards and when, in this respect, they are treated at least as well as those employed in similar occupations outside such areas, but within the same State."

Concessioners must comply with the standards established by, or pursuant to, the labor laws of the State in question (which would apply to the employees of the concessioner if his establishment were not located in a national park). Minimum wages, child labor, hours of work, and safety laws may be involved.

The regulations establish an hourly minimum of 40 cents unless a higher minimum has been fixed for the occupation or industry by the labor laws of the State of employment, in which case the State law prevails. Overtime provisions require that: (1) During the year 1949, at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ times employee's regular rate be paid for hours over 48 a week; (2) during 1950 and 1951, at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ times such rate must be paid for hours over 44 a week; and (3) on and after January 1, 1952, at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ times such rate must be paid for hours over 40 a week.

For board or lodging furnished to an employee, charges may not exceed the reasonable cost thereof. Employer is required to provide tools, equipment, uniforms, etc., without charge to employees.

Types of employment exempted from the labor standards are listed.

LABOR DEPARTMENT'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Department of Labor, in discharging its duties to "foster, promote, and develop the welfare" of American wage earners, is sponsoring a 15-point legislative program. Many of these measures are of direct importance to women workers. Among the points of special interest to women are: Point 7, "to end wage discrimination against women workers;" Point 12, to "create a commission to investigate the legal status of women and to recommend means of wiping out unfair laws and practices operating against them."

FEDERAL BILLS IN CONGRESS

Equal Pay

Three bills on equal pay have been introduced in the 81st Congress -- S. 706 by Senators Pepper and Morse, H. R. 1584 by Mrs. Woodhouse, and H. R. 2438 by Mrs. Douglas. These bills propose to eliminate wage discriminations against women by prohibiting the payment of a lesser wage rate to women than to men for "work of comparable character on jobs the performance of which requires comparable skills." The bills also grant investigatory and enforcement powers to the Secretary of Labor.

Discriminations Against Women

Six bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives (by Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas, Mrs. Norton, Messrs. Celler, Burke, Wadsworth, Young) to establish a commission on the legal status of women to study and report on the economic, civil, social, and political status of women and the nature and extent of discriminations practiced against them, and to report its recommendations for remedial legislation to the President by March 1950. The bills also direct Federal agencies to bring their practices into conformity with the policy of the Act, and urge the States to adopt similar policies.

Social Security

A large number of bills have been introduced in the 81st Congress proposing amendments to the Social Security Act, the majority in the House of Representatives. Notable are bills which propose to lower age of eligibility for benefits and others to extend coverage under the Act. Bills proposing lower age of eligibility apply in some cases to women only, in others to both men and women. The lowest beneficiary age proposed is 55 for women. Other proposals are for 60 years either for women or for both men and women. Extension of coverage is proposed to include Federal, State, and local government employees, self-employed persons, employees of non-profit organizations, and agricultural workers. Bills have also been introduced which provide for a liberalization of benefits payments.

Maternity Leave

Senator Langer has again introduced a bill (S. 85) to provide maternity leave for Government employees. This bill would entitle a married woman, who has been in the employ of the United States or the Government of the District of Columbia for not less than 10 months, to maternity leave with pay up to 60 days.

WOMEN DOCTORS IN THE ARMY AND NAVY

The Navy now admits civilian women doctors to the Medical Corps of the regular Navy for the first time in history. Qualified women graduates of medical schools are eligible for appointment as lieutenants (junior grade) in the Medical Corps, U. S. Naval Reserve, under the Navy interne program.

Women physicians are not accepted in the Medical Corps of the Regular Army. The Women's Medical Specialist Corps of the Regular Army, created by Act of Congress in 1947, admits dietitians, physical therapists, and occupational therapists.

INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

The UN Commission on the Status of Women is holding its third session in Beirut, Lebanon, from March 21 to April 4. The United States will be represented on the Commission by Judge Dorothy Kenyon of New York City. Australia, China, Costa Rica, Denmark, France, Greece, Haiti, India, Mexico, Syria, Turkey, U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, and Venezuela will also be represented.

The Inter-American Commission of Women will hold its sixth meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on May 15. Each of the 21 American Republics is represented on the Commission by a delegate appointed by the respective governments. The U. S. Delegate is Miss Mary M. Cannon, of Washington, D. C.

SWEDEN - WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

Karin Kock, recently named Minister of Food, holds the honor of having been, as Minister of Commerce, the first woman Cabinet Member of Sweden. She has had a distinguished career as an economist, and has served as a member of several government committees on economic and labor questions. Her special responsibilities in the government were the control of cartel arrangements and in general to guard against monopolistic tendencies, and the control of investments.

Barbaro Selldén, 25-year old graduate of Stockholm University, bachelor of law and specialist in commercial and economic affairs, has become Sweden's first woman attaché and the only woman in its foreign office. After getting her degree, Miss Selldén spent some time at the Consulate in Brussels, and on her return to Sweden obtained valuable commercial experience in the Swedish Export Association. To obtain the post required passing the Swedish Foreign Office examinations, which are among the most difficult given.

Women in the United States - In Jobs - Under Law - In Organizations; material prepared at request of State Department for use at the meeting of Commission on Status of Women, to be held in Beirut. Available on request. Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

The Outlook for Women in Science: A summary report of job opportunities in scientific fields, now available. Completes series of 8 bulletins. Available separately is a mimeographed excerpt from this pamphlet on Opportunities for Negro Women in Science. Available for more than a year has been a similar mimeographed statement on Opportunities for Negro Women in the Medical and Other Health Services. Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor, Fiscal Year 1948. United States Department of Labor.

Women and Their Money, by Maxwell S. Stewart. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 146, published by Public Affairs Committee, Inc. 22 East 38th Street, New York 16, New York.

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