



Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR

Washington 25, D. C.
March 31, 1949

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN FEBRUARY 1949

About 400,000 more women were in the labor force in February 1949 than in February a year ago, as shown by the Census monthly reports. The number of unemployed was not materially different from the level of February 1948.

Since January 1949, women's employment rose slightly while men's declined slightly. Most of the additions to the civilian labor force were women.

	February 1949			
	Number of women	Change since January 1949	Total persons	
			Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	55,506,000	+ 47,000	109,195,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	17,159,000	+ 242,000	60,388,000	28.4
Employed	16,356,000	+ 92,000	57,168,000	28.6
Unemployed	804,000	+ 151,000	3,221,000	25.0
Armed forces	16,000	+ 1,000	1,508,000	1.1
Nonworkers	38,330,000	- 197,000	47,298,000	81.0

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

MINIMUM WAGE

The District of Columbia's recently revised minimum-wage order for office and miscellaneous occupations (the last of the District's 6 orders revised since V-J Day) will become effective April 25, 1949. The revised order sets a minimum of \$31 for a workweek of 32 to 40 hours and requires payment of not less than 86 cents an hour for working time of less than 32 hours or in excess of 40 hours in week. These same rates apply to elevator operators and janitors, but the weekly hours for them are from 32 to 44, the overtime rate beginning after 44 hours. The minimum rate for maids and cleaners under the revised order is \$29.75 for a week of 32 to 44 hours with an hourly minimum of 78 cents for working time of less than 32 hours or in excess of 44 hours in week.

The order specifies amounts that must be added to the minimum wage if employee furnishes and/or launders her own uniform; it also requires that 95 cents extra be paid for any day on which employee works a split shift or the spread of hours exceeds 11, or both these situations occur.

WOMEN'S HOUR LAW - Wyoming

An amendment to the Wyoming hour law, approved February 25, 1949, requires two rest periods of not less than 15 minutes, one before and one after the lunch hour, for women employees whose duties require continuous standing. The Wyoming hour law provides maximum hours for women of 8 a day and 48 a week.

EARNINGS IN HOSIERY MANUFACTURE

Average hourly earnings in the full-fashioned hosiery industry for five major production areas studied in October 1948 have recently been reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Among 8 women's mill jobs studied, two-thirds of the area averages fell in the \$1.05-\$1.35 range. For the major women's group, seamers, area averages ranged from 98 cents an hour in Statesville-Hickory, N. C., to \$1.39 in Reading, Pa. Average earnings of hand menders ranged from \$1.10 in Statesville-Hickory, N. C., to \$1.33 in Charlotte, N. C. Earnings of folders, the lowest-paid mill workers studied, ranged from 95 cents to \$1.13 among the 5 areas. Men knitters, comprising about a sixth of the mill work force, averaged from \$1.36 to \$2.75 an hour.

In seamless hosiery, women loopers, the largest job group, averaged 85 cents in lowest-paid areas and 97 cents in the highest, in October 1948. In men's seamless hosiery women knitters operating automatic machines averaged 83 cents an hour in Reading, Pa., and Statesville-Hickory, N. C. areas, and 98 cents in Winston-Salem-High Point, N. C.; in children's hosiery mills they averaged 91 cents in Chattanooga, Tenn., and 86 cents in Winston-Salem-High Point, N. C. Men knitters operating automatic machines averaged from 5 to 9 cents an hour more than women on similar work in the same area. Average area earnings for women on other knitting jobs ranged from 72 cents for transfer knitters on men's hosiery in Statesville-Hickory to \$1 for string knitters on men's hosiery in Winston-Salem-High Point.

WOMEN IN UNIONS

California Union Membership in 1947

Of 2,125 local unions in California replying to a questionnaire sent out by the California Department of Industrial Relations, 2,059 reported the number of women members. Women formed about 16 percent of the total membership — a slight drop from the 18 percent reported in 1946.

The proportion of union members who were women was higher in manufacturing industries (22 percent) than in nonmanufacturing (13 percent). Women comprised nearly three-fourths of the membership reported in the textile and apparel industry, 44 percent in hotels and eating and drinking places, and 36 percent in food and kindred products.

The influx of women into industry has had a marked effect on the sex composition of unions, according to the California Department's report. In 1940 only one-fourth of the reporting locals had women members. By 1947, this proportion was 45 percent.

Canada Union Membership, 1947

Each year all local unions are requested to report to the Department of Labour in Canada the number of their members who are women. Of the 4,221 locals which reported December 31, 1947, 1,267, or 30.0 percent reported women members. Women numbered 86,603, or 11.0 percent of the total membership of the reporting locals. These figures probably underestimate the real facts as many locals do not differentiate between men and women workers in their records, states the report.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR'S LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Below is listed the 15-point basic program sponsored by the Department of Labor to improve the economic status of those who work:

- 1.Repeal the Taft-Hartley law and re-enact the original Wagner Act; advocate additional legislation to promote the public interest, fair to labor and industry alike.
- 2.Increase the minimum wage under the Fair Labor Standards Act to at least 75 cents an hour with increases up to \$1 an hour under industry committee procedure; extend the Act to large numbers not now covered or who are now exempt; improve and extend bans on child labor.
- 3.Provide Federal aid for labor education through a labor extension service in the Department of Labor.
- 4.Centralize Government labor functions in the Department of Labor.
- 5.Control inflationary tendencies.
- 6.End job and wage discriminations against minority groups in interstate industries by enacting a sound Fair Employment Practices Act.
- 7.End wage discrimination against women workers through a Federal equal pay law.
- 8.Provide Federal aid to the States to promote industrial safety.
- 9.Enact a law establishing a fair policy for admitting displaced persons.
- 10.Amend the Social Security Act to provide higher old-age and survivors insurance and unemployment compensation and extend coverage to many people not now entitled to its benefits.
- 11.Provide for rehabilitation, job counseling, and placement for handicapped workers through effective laws administered in the Department.
- 12.Create a commission to investigate the legal status of women and to recommend means of wiping out unfair laws and practices operating against them.
- 13.Promote in the United States the labor standards set by the International Labor Office.
- 14.Regulate private employment agencies and labor contractors operating in interstate commerce.
- 15.Protect American workers outside the country under Government contracts.

Current status of certain of these measures as of March 26, 1949 is:

"Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1949" (H.R. 3190), was reported with an amendment by the House Committee on Education and Labor, March 16 (H. Rept. 267).

"National Labor Relations Act of 1949" (S. 249), was reported with amendments by the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, March 8 (S. Rept. 99).

"National Labor Relations Act of 1949" (H.R. 2032) was reported without amendments by the House Committee on Education and Labor March 24. (H. Rept. 317). These two bills would repeal the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 and re-enact the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 with certain amendments.

Labor Extension Service (S. 110), was reported without amendment by the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, March 4 (S. Rept. 92).

Hearings on proposed amendments to the Social Security Act opened before the House Ways and Means Committee February 28. The first portion of such hearings concerned the establishing of more adequate public-welfare programs (H.R. 2892). Extending coverage under the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance program (H.R. 2893) will be taken up next.

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT

United States - Indian Ambassador

Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's Ambassador to Russia, has been appointed Ambassador to the United States, succeeding Sir Benegal Rama Rau. She is the sister of India's Prime Minister, Jawaharial Nehru. At present Mrs. Pandit is India's delegate to the United Nations Assembly.

United Nations - Korean Representative

Miss Helen Kim, President of Ehwa College, Korea, has been appointed Korean representative to the United Nations by President Rhee.

Puerto Rico - Women Mayors

Puerto Rico has four women mayors: Mrs. Blanca E. Colberg, of Cabo Rojo; Mrs. Esperanza Ydrach viuda de Quiñones, of Guánica; Mrs. Victoria Mateo Serrano, of Salinas; and Mrs. Felisa Rincón de Gautier, Mayor of the Capital, San Juan.

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D
- The Legal Status of Women in the United States of America. (Individual State material constituting a part of a compilation to show the present legal status of women in the United States.) Reports are now available for 17 States: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Nevada, New Jersey, New York State, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. } Women's Bureau U. S. Department of Labor
- Suffrage for Women in Countries of the World. A one-page supplement to Bul. 217, revising Appendix C, International Documents on the Status of Women. } of Labor
- The Occupational Outlook Handbook. A new basic source-book of occupational information. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor. May be obtained from Supt. of Documents, Washington 25, D.C. \$1.75 a single copy.
- Nursing for the Future, by Dr. Esther L. Brown. A report prepared for the National Nursing Council. New York Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East 22nd Street, New York 10, N. Y. 1948. Outlines recommendations on what is needed to improve the status of nursing service and nursing education.
- Facts About Nursing, 1948. Brochure published by the American Nurses Association, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.

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