

FACTS *on Women Workers*

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EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN AUGUST 1949

The decrease of 92,000 in the woman labor force from June to August 1949 was much smaller than the increase (nearly half a million) from May to June, according to Census monthly reports. Moreover, these summer movements in the woman labor force—both the May-June increase and the June-August decrease—were much less extensive than in 1948. Women's employment declined in agricultural but increased in nonagricultural industries from June to August 1949, in each case by over three-fourths million. The increase in nonagricultural employment reflects the inclusion in the Census August survey of residents of special dwelling places such as transient hotels, trailer camps, and hospitals; women's nonagricultural employment (and labor force) figures are therefore higher by about 200,000 than if these residents had continued to be excluded.

The net result of changes from August of last year was an increase of over a half million women in both the population and the labor force, but a decline of more than 50,000 in women's employment. Women's agricultural employment increased somewhat over last year, but their nonagricultural employment was considerably below last year's.

	August 1949			
	Number of women	Percent women of all persons	Change since June 1949	Change since August 1948
Population (14 years and over)	55,821,000	50.9	+ 111,000	+ 622,000
Civilian labor force	18,474,000	29.0	- 92,000	+ 503,000
Employed	17,303,000	28.9	- 83,000	- 53,000
In agriculture	1,412,000	16.6	- 846,000	+ 21,000
In nonagricultural industries	15,892,000	30.9	+ 764,000	- 73,000
Unemployed	1,170,000	31.7	- 10,000	+ 555,000
Armed forces	18,000	1.2	None	+ 3,000
Nonworkers	37,329,000	83.6	+ 203,000	+ 116,000

(U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

NONWHITE AND WHITE WOMEN WORKERS

In August 1949, of all white women 14 years old and over, not quite a third were in the labor force, according to Census reports. Of nonwhite women, over two-fifths were in the labor force. More than a sixth of the nonwhite women in the labor force were employed in agriculture, compared with less than one-tenth of the white women. Six percent of the white women as compared with 9 percent of the nonwhite women, were unemployed.

MINIMUM WAGE

Two States, Massachusetts and New Hampshire, amended their minimum-wage laws by fixing statutory hourly rates. Massachusetts, effective January 1, 1950, declares it to be against public policy to pay less than 65 cents an hour unless payment of a lesser wage has been, or shall be, established by wage order approved by the Minimum Wage Commission. The New Hampshire amendment, effective July 28, 1949, provides an hourly minimum of 50 cents which applies to all employees, men as well as women and minors; new exemptions are established for men workers in hotels, restaurants, and cabins, and outside salesmen.

North Dakota's revision of its order for manufacturing occupations, effective September 1, 1949, sets 55 cents as the hourly minimum for experienced workers and 50 cents as the minimum for learners.

COST OF LIVING

Connecticut has revised its minimum adequate budget for a working woman without dependents. The cost of commodities and services, as of March 1949, amounts to \$1,609.70. The allowances for group insurance, savings, and applicable taxes bring the total cost to \$1,866.57.

The new commodity and service list, while basically the same as that of the 1946 budget, reflects a slightly higher level of living. Most of the changes are in the clothing, recreation, and transportation categories. The provision of occupational expense, group insurance, and savings are also new features of the State's 1949 budget.

EQUAL PAY

During July California and Connecticut enacted equal-pay laws, each becoming effective October 1. This brings the number of such State laws to 13, of which four (Alaska's, California's, Connecticut's, and Maine's) were enacted in 1949. California prohibits an employer from paying a woman employee "at wage rates less than the rates paid to male employees in the same establishment for the same quantity and quality of the same classification of work." Connecticut's general non-discrimination measure prohibits the employer from "discriminating in the amount of compensation paid to any employee solely on the basis of sex." Both set strict time limits within which a legal action may be brought against the employer — six months in California, one year in Connecticut.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN GREECE AND IN SYRIA

In Greece a recent law grants women 25 years of age and over the right to vote at municipal elections and to seek office as municipal and communal advisors; after December 31, 1953, women over 21 years of age may vote in municipal elections and women over 25 may seek office as mayors, presidents of communities, vice-mayors and municipal and communal advisors. Previously women over 30 years of age have had the right to vote in municipal elections but generally they have not exercised this right.

Syria's new electoral law, ratified by the Council of Ministers September 12, gives suffrage to duly qualified Syrians who were 18 years old on January 1, 1948, including women who have elementary school certificates.

JURY SERVICE

Three additional States now admit women to jury duty, through 1949 legislation. Florida and Massachusetts have voluntary service; Wyoming's law is compulsory, but allows a woman to be excused for urgent household duties or family obligations. The effective dates are: Florida - August 1, 1949; Massachusetts - July 1, 1950; and Wyoming - January 1, 1950.

Only ten States bar women jurors at present. Several of these are actively seeking jury law change, notably Texas, which will be voting in the September 1949 election on a constitutional amendment to this end.

MAJOR OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN JULY 1949

Among occupation groups participating most largely in the decline in women's employment in the year since July 1948 were the operatives, laborers, craftsmen, and foremen groups, which lost nearly 370,000 women, chiefly before April 1949. Domestic service lost nearly 144,000 women workers, most of them between April and July 1949. The clerical workers group lost over 125,000. Sales and professional workers groups also have declined since last year, the latter particularly in summer months when schools were closed. On the other hand, farm workers, service workers except domestic, and the proprietors, managers, and officials groups show marked gains in employment over last year.

	Women, July 1949			
	Number	Percent of all workers	Changes from July 1948	Percent distribution
All occupations	<u>17,298,000</u>	<u>29.0</u>	- <u>328,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Clerical and kindred workers	4,575,000	62.6	- 126,000	26.4
Operatives, laborers (except farm and mine), craftsmen, and foremen	3,434,000	15.1	- 369,000	19.9
Service workers (except domestic)	2,022,000	43.7	+ 99,000	11.7
Domestic service workers	1,544,000	91.3	- 144,000	8.9
Sales workers	1,389,000	36.7	- 51,000	8.0
Professional and semi- professional workers	1,306,000	35.5	- 17,000	7.6
Proprietors, managers, and officials (except farm)	1,009,000	15.7	+ 47,000	5.8
Farmers and farm workers	2,020,000	21.3	+ 233,000	11.7

(U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION OF WOMEN

The Inter-American Commission of Women, of the Organization of American States, held its Sixth Assembly in Buenos Aires, in August at the invitation of the Argentine Government. The twenty delegates (all of the American Republics except Costa Rica were represented) approved a number of recommendations concerning the economic, civil, and political status of women, and reported on the progress of women in their own countries:

The Assembly recommended that two phases of a study on the economic condition of women workers of the American Republics be completed for the 10th Conference of American States, 1953: (1) maternity legislation and practices and problems under this legislation; and (2) the financial responsibility of women workers for their families. A resolution on equal pay requested Governments to strengthen their equal-pay laws and to appoint women and men in equal numbers to committees which make decisions on "equal work;" another was concerned with improving wages of women in woman-employing industries and women's opportunities for supervisory and administrative positions.

Through the Council of the Organization of American States, Governments will be asked to ratify the conventions on political and civil rights for women. Delegates will work in their own countries to eliminate discriminatory clauses against women from civil codes. Other resolutions dealt with the inclusion of civil and political courses in school and adult education curricula, and with the strengthening of women's organizations and making possible an inter-change of women leaders.

The Commission will now have an executive secretary and staff in its offices in the Pan American Union. Miss Mary M. Cannon, Chief of the International Division, Women's Bureau, who is the U. S. Delegate to the Inter-American Commission of Women, attended the Assembly in Buenos Aires.

Report of Women Leaders Program. Mimeo. Women's Bureau,
U. S. Department of Labor.

The Legal Status of Women in the United States of America.
(Revised reports are available for the following additional States:
Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts,
Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Vermont, and Virginia.) Women's Bureau,
U. S. Department of Labor.

The American Family, A Factual Background. Report of Inter-Agency
Committee on Background Materials. National Conference on Family
Life. U. S. Government Printing Office. (\$1.25).

Daughters of Britain, by Vera Douie. A bird's-eye view of the work
of British women during the war. To be obtained from the author,
12 Charlbury Road, Oxford, England. 7s. 6d.

(WB-50-94)