

FACTS

on Women Workers

U. S. Department of Labor
Maurice J. Tobin, *Secretary*

Women's Bureau
Frieda S. Miller, *Director*

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EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN JULY 1950

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In the year from July 1949 to July 1950 the number of women in the population increased by nearly 2/3 million, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. The number of employed women rose by 1/3 million, the net result of a considerable rise in nonagricultural employment and a fall in work on farms.

From June to July 1950, with an increase of only 58,000 women in the population, there was a rise in the number of women nonworkers of about 3/4 million. The drop in number of employed women was chiefly among farm women, since farm operations required less family labor than in June.

	July 1950			
	Number of women	Percent women of all persons	Change since June 1950	Change since July 1949
Population (14 years and over)	56,411,000	50.9	+ 58,000	+ 645,000
Civilian labor force	18,719,000	29.1	- 718,000	+ 171,000
Employed	17,632,000	28.8	- 621,000	+ 334,000
In agriculture	1,463,000	17.3	- 570,000	- 561,000
In nonagricultural industries	16,169,000	30.6	- 51,000	+ 895,000
Unemployed	1,087,000	33.8	- 97,000	- 163,000
Armed forces	23,000	1.7	+ 1,000	+ 5,000
Nonworkers	37,669,000	83.6	+ 775,000	+ 469,000

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

EQUAL PAY

On July 13 the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee voted to report favorably S. 706, the bill providing equal pay for equal work for women. S. Report 2263 states the Committee's position, together with the dissenting views of Senators Taft, Smith, and Donnell.

HOME WORK

Following more than a year of investigation and study, an order designed to put a stop to the recent growth of home work in the direct-mail industry in New York State was signed in July by the Industrial Commissioner and is to become effective September 1, 1950. The order affects employers and full-time employees in the letter shops and mailing-list houses which make up the industry as well as the more than 7,500 home workers, most of them women, the majority of whom have been earning money, on a part-time basis, addressing envelopes or copying mailing lists.

The order limits the number of home workers the employer may employ, provides that he pay home workers the same piece rate as shop workers, reimburse the home worker for transportation if the employer does not deliver and pick up the home work, and either provide a typewriter and its maintenance or add 3 percent to the weekly earnings of the home worker.

WOMEN IN ARMED SERVICES, WORLD WAR II

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, first of the women's armed services in World War II, was created by law in May 1942. At first it was an auxiliary, but on July 1, 1943, it was made a part of the Regular Army, as the WAC. In quick succession followed legal authorizations for the women's services of the other major armed forces--the WAVES of the Navy (July 1942), the SPARS of the Coast Guard (November 1942), and the Marine Corps Women's Reserves (February 1943). Service of all these was confined to Continental United States, except members of the WAAC (later WAC), who also were detailed to overseas posts. An Act of April 1943 provided for commissioning women physicians and surgeons in the medical departments of both the Army and the Navy.

The peak force of women in the Armed Services was reached in mid-1945, with about 275,000. A fourth of these were doctors and nurses (68,000), 84 percent of whom were in the Army. Of the remaining military personnel, 47 percent (97,000 women) were in the WAC, 40 percent (82,000 women) in the WAVES; about 9 percent (18,000 women) in the Marines, the remaining 4 percent (10,000 women) in the SPARS. Declines came immediately after the War, at first slowly, later more sharply, to a low point in September and October 1948 of 13,000, which still was a considerable force for peacetime.

By September 1944 women constituted as much as 2 percent of the Armed Forces; in late 1945 and early 1946, when men were being demobilized, the proportion of women reached a peak of 2.4 percent.

In the mid-period of the war (August 1943) the War Department reported women in the Armed Services performing more than 400 different skills. Among these women were clerical workers, drivers of trucks and convoys, cooks, and dietitians. Also included were 106,700 women in the Ordnance Department, where among other jobs they were testing guns, making ammunition in Government arsenals, inspecting ordnance; 30,000 in the Signal Corps, where they inspected radio parts, for example; and over 25,000 in the Army Air Forces, where they served as mechanics and instructed in elements of flying. In the Quartermaster Corps women were evaluating textiles for uniforms, as well as sewing uniforms. In the Engineer Corps they were examining fabrics and parts for barrage balloons.

NEW HEADS OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Hiram C. Houghton of Red Oak, Iowa, was elected president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs at the Federation's 59th annual convention in May. She succeeds Mrs. J. L. Elair Buck of Richmond, Va.

Judge Sarah T. Hughes, former State legislator and in her 15th year as a District Court Judge in Texas, is the new president of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs for the next biennium. She was elected at the Federation's national convention in San Francisco in July.

The new General Director of the American Association of University Women is Dr. Helen D. Bragdon, former president of the Lake Erie College, Painesville, Ohio. She will take office September 15. Dr. Bragdon succeeds Dr. Kathryn McHale, who has been General Director for the past 20 years.

NOTES FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

New Appointment - Mrs. Mary Tenison-Woods of Australia has accepted the appointment of Chief of the Status of Women Section in the Human Rights Division of the United Nations' Department of Social Affairs, succeeding Mrs. Lakshmi Mandan Menon of India. Mrs. Tenison-Woods was the first woman in South Australia to receive a Bachelor of Laws degree and has since then continued her legal practice intermittently. She also spent over two years, starting in 1932, on a research grant from the Australian Council for Educational Research in the field of juvenile delinquency. She has been a lecturer on the legal aspects of social science at the University of Sidney and is a member of many women's organizations, among them the Council of the Australian National Committee for the United Nations.

Status of Women in Dependent Areas - Attention was given for the first time by the Commission on the Status of Women at its recent session to reports on the status of women in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. The reports demonstrated in a rather striking way that the status of women rises with the economic and educational progress of the community as a whole. With regard to political rights, the reports indicate that in most cases women have the same rights as men, although there may be no formal franchise explicitly provided by written law. In spite of the fact that in a general way women are theoretically entitled to the same civil, educational, and other rights as men, there are in fact many social distinctions and discriminations which prevail.

Appreciation was expressed by the Commission for the efforts of governments administering dependent areas to assure girls their fair share of school and employment opportunities, especially in the educational and health fields. The Commission decided to continue its review of the extent to which women in these territories share in such suffrage and election procedures as have been developed and asked the Secretary General to include pertinent material on this subject in his annual report.

PENNSYLVANIA WOMAN APPOINTED JUDGE

The Governor of Pennsylvania has recently appointed Mrs. Hannah E. Byrd to be a magistrate in Philadelphia to serve until 1952. Mrs. Byrd, a prominent civic leader, is the first Negro woman to be appointed magistrate in Pennsylvania history.

FOUR GIRL STUDENTS WIN ESSAY CONTEST

Peggy Lord, of Cuero High School, Cuero, Texas, was named top winner in the national NEPH Essay Contest sponsored by the President's Committee on National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. Other winners in the contest, participated in by 34 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia, were: second, Anne Manning, St. Xavier's Academy, Providence, R.I.; third, Joan Welsh, Nampa High School, Nampa, Idaho; fourth, Felicie Kenower, R. J. DeLano School, Kansas City, Mo.

The four winners were invited to attend the August 9 meeting of the President's Committee and journeyed to Washington as the guests of the Disabled American Veterans. The Secretary of Labor welcomed the group. At the meeting they met the President who presented them with their prize checks and awards.

MINIMUM WAGE

Washington State revised its 1942 minimum-wage order for Manufacturing and its 1922 Working Conditions order, combining the two into one order entitled Manufacturing and General Working Conditions. The working conditions standards apply as before to all places where women and minors are employed. Effective July 17, 1950, the revision establishes for experienced women and minors a rate of 65 cents an hour, as compared with 35 cents previously; and for learners, 55 and 60 cents an hour in two learning periods, as compared with previous minimums of 25 and 32½ cents, respectively.

Massachusetts revised its 1948 Public Housekeeping order, establishing minimum wages of 65 cents an hour for nonservice employees and 45 cents an hour for service employees, effective August 1, 1950. It permits deductions for meals. In the superseded order, minimum wages for the two groups were 50 cents and 35 cents, respectively, for a week of 40 hours or over and 55 cents and 40 cents for part-time workers.

WOMEN IN FACTORIES, MARCH 1950

Factories in this country employed 3,701,000 women in the spring of 1950, according to quarterly figures recently released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This number includes women in factory offices as well as production workers. Women were an especially large proportion of all the workers in apparel (75 percent), tobacco (59 percent), leather and leather products (46 percent), and textile mill products (43 percent) — all industries in the group known as "nondurable goods." Women also made up a large proportion of the workers in two "durable goods" industries: electrical machinery (37 percent) and instrument making (33 percent).

Employment of women in factories in March 1950 was 105,300 less than in September 1949. The greatest decline was in the food industries, which are seasonal in character. There also were considerable decreases in tobacco, apparel, and chemicals. On the other hand, notable gains in the employment of women in this period were reported in electrical and other machinery, in textile mills, in rubber, and in primary metals.

In March 1950, 26 percent of all factory workers were women. This figure was slightly less than in the preceding September, owing primarily to the decline in the food industries. Notable gains appeared in the electrical industry, in which the proportion of women rose from 34 to 37 percent.

WOMEN MIGRANTS

While about 5.8 percent of the men in the civilian labor force in April 1949 had changed their county of residence since April 1948, the comparable proportion for women in the labor force was slightly lower (4.7 percent). Marital status did not appear to influence the rate of migration of women workers. The proportion of married women workers who were migrants was about 4 percent—not significantly below that for other female workers (about 5 percent).

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS: A History. By Foster Rhea Dulles. (Harper.)
MARGARET DREIER ROBINS, HER LIFE, LETTERS AND WORK. By Mary E. Dreier. (Island Press.)
Maps of United States Showing State Hour Laws, Daily and Weekly. (Desk size, in color.) Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.
Map of United States Showing States Having State Minimum-Wage Laws for Women and Minors. (Desk size.) Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

(The printing of this publication has been approved by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, March 9, 1950.)

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