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THE WOMAN WORKER

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DUKE UNIVERSITY
DURHAM, N. C.

(PUBLISHED EVERY TWO MONTHS)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary

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Women's Bureau Surveying Millinery Industry

THE WOMEN'S BUREAU is now conducting a field survey of conditions in millinery manufacture to obtain information that will assist in improving the situation of the industry and its workers. The survey covers New York and nearby New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, the region where most of the industry is located, and also the less important millinery centers in Alabama, California, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, and Texas.

In 1935 and 1936 more than half the millinery firms in the United States did business at a loss and many failed. Wages declined and the busy seasons became shorter and shorter until a bare 6 weeks of work could be counted on twice a year. Hours of work often were excessive, reaching 60 a week, during production peaks. The volume of cancelations and returns of merchandise increased and heavy discounts became the rule.

Late in 1935 New York workers and employers together held a series of conferences on the problem of how to cure this sick industry. At the suggestion of the mayor of New York City they agreed to create a voluntary unofficial body known as the

Millinery Stabilization Commission to help the industry get back on its feet through better planning and better methods.

In 1937, however, when many industries were showing gains in employment, labor earnings, and plant profits, millinery manufacturing continued to suffer losses. The Stabilization Commission then appealed to the Women's Bureau to make a survey of the industry in order to have a base for diagnosing its ills and planning its rehabilitation.

Women's Bureau field agents are now gathering information on fluctuations in employment, hours, earnings, and production. Special attention is being given to employer-employee relationships and manufacturing practices. Variations among the different plants and areas in cost of production, receipts, and labor productivity also are being covered. Methods of selling factory products will be considered, with the cooperation of other government agencies.

The several millinery employers' organizations, the trade-unions, and the Millinery Stabilization Commission, as well as many individual employers and shop chairmen, have aided in furthering the study.

Public Contracts Act Benefits Women Workers

Surveys by Women's Bureau

TO ASSIST the Public Contracts Division of the United States Department of Labor in determining the minimum-wage rates that should be recommended for workers employed on Government contracts, the Women's Bureau is conducting Nation-wide field surveys of four industries—condensed and evaporated milk, drugs and medicines, cosmetics and other toilet preparations, and

cereal preparations. The surveys, which began April 1, cover wage rates, hours, earnings, and employment conditions.

The Bureau will also conduct a survey throughout the country during the canning season. This will cover (1) the canning of fruits, vegetables, and fish, and (2) the processing, canning, and bottling of sauces and miscellaneous food preparations. The data will be placed before the Public Contracts Board but will also assist State minimum-

wage boards in deciding how minimum wages shall be made applicable to this seasonal industry.

Minimum-wage rates established under the Public Contracts Act

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Hourly (cents)</i>	<i>Weekly</i>
Men's welt shoes.....	40	\$16
Men's cotton garment and allied industries.....	37½	15
Learners (not more than 10 percent of all workers in a shop):		
First 4 weeks.....	--	8
Second 4 weeks.....	--	10
Third 4 weeks.....	--	12
Seamless hosiery.....	35	14
Learners, handicapped, or superannuated (not more than 5 percent of all workers in a shop)---	28	11.20
Men's underwear:		
12 southern States.....	32½	13
All other States.....	35	14
Handicapped or superannuated (not more than 10 percent of all workers in a shop)-----	25	10
Men's hats and caps.....	67½	27
Auxiliary workers (not more than 20 percent of all workers in a shop and not including cutters, workers in cutting room, machine workers, blockers, pressers, hand sewers)-----	37½	15
Men's raincoats.....	40	16
Learners, handicapped, or superannuated (not more than 10 percent of all workers in a shop) 25	10	
Men's neckwear.....	50	20
Learners, handicapped, or superannuated (not more than 10 percent of all workers in a shop) and boxers and trimmers.....	37½	15
Men's work gloves.....	35	14
Learners, handicapped, or superannuated (not more than 10 percent of all workers in a shop)-----	25	10
Handkerchiefs.....	35	14
Dimension granite:		
New England, New York.....	57½	23
12 southern States.....	32½	13
All other States.....	42½	17
Barrack bags.....	37½	15
Learners (same conditions as for those in men's cotton garment and allied industries, which see.)		
Envelopes.....	42½	17
Vitreous or vitrified china.....	42¾	17.10
Leather and sheep-lined jackets....	42½	17

Because the Secretary of Labor has selected low-pay industries for first attention in establishing minimum-wage rates to be paid on Federal contract work and because low-pay industries often are woman-employing industries, the Women's Bureau frequently has been called on by the Public Contracts Division to assist in making surveys necessary for determining the prevailing wage rate in an industry. All but one of the industries for which the Secretary of Labor has thus far established minimum-wage rates under the Public Contracts Act, as shown in the accompanying table, are large employers of women. The weekly wage rates may be arrived at either by paying the hourly rate or by paying piece-work rates.

Hearing on Tag Manufacture

At a hearing on wages in the making of tags, held by the Public Contracts Board in April, the Tag Manufacturers' Institute presented data showing a notable increase in hourly wage rates since 1929, beginning with the N. R. A. code period. The data illustrate also the condition characteristic of many industries, that women's rates of pay are considerably below men's.

Whereas in 1929 an hourly wage of less than 35 cents was received by 71 percent of the women surveyed, the proportion paid so little declined to 59 percent in 1933, the first year of the N. R. A., and to only 22 percent in 1938. In 1929 only 15 percent of the women earned 45 cents an hour or more, but in 1938 there were 22 percent with these higher earnings. The proportion receiving as much as 50 cents was practically the same in 1938 as in 1929, about one-tenth of the total.

The proportion of men's rates in the higher ranges showed an advance from 1929 to 1938 similar to that for women. Their earnings, however, ran much above those of women. In 1938, 92 percent of the men had hourly averages of 45 cents or more, and over a third received as much as 80

cents an hour, an amount rarely paid to any woman.

Women's Bureau Urges Home-Work Ban.

At this Public Contracts hearing, the Women's Bureau called the attention of the board to the impossibility of maintaining wage and hour standards within an industry when any part of the work of that industry is carried on in private homes. Since much of the work of preparing tags was done in private homes prior to 1933, and in spite of earnest efforts to eliminate home work, a small amount still enters the home, and since Government orders are a large factor in the tag industry, the Women's Bureau urged that home work be prohibited in the manufacture of tags for the Government.

A survey of home work in the tag industry, conducted by the Women's Bureau in 1936, showed that very few home workers engaged in stringing tags were able to earn the hourly minimum of 33 cents which factory workers received and which the Tag Manufacturers' Institute had claimed could be earned under a schedule of rates that the organized part of the industry had agreed to pay.

In view of the demonstrated failure of an earnest effort to pay to home workers the same minimum earnings as were paid to factory workers, the Women's Bureau recommended that home work be recognized as a method of paying less than standard minimum wages in this industry.

Toward the 40-Hour Week

New York Beauty Operators Benefited

FOR THE first time the working hours of women employed in beauty shops in New York State are to be limited as are the hours of other women wage earners. An act passed at the recent session of the State legislature amends the labor law so as to include women in beauty parlors. It provides that they shall not be employed more than 48 hours or 6 days a week or 8 hours a day. As in the case of mercantile establishments, beauty parlors are given two optional exceptions to the 8-hour day. To make one shorter workday a week they are permitted one 10-hour day; or they are permitted one 10-hour day and four 9-hour days if the sixth day does not exceed 4½ hours and the week does not exceed 48 hours. Employment between 10 p. m. and 7 a. m. is prohibited. Beauty operators in centers of less than 15,000 population are exempt from the provisions limiting daily and weekly hours. The act becomes effective July 1, 1938.

Coverage of New Virginia Law

Of approximately 100,000 women at work in Virginia, about one-third will have shorter hours of work under the new 9-hour-day, 48-hour-week law to go into effect June 19. This was pointed out at a recent meeting of the board of directors of the Virginia Consumers' League. The remaining women, who now have hours that fall within the prescribed limits, are protected against future exploitation by the new legislation.

Figures for the laundry and cleaning and dyeing industries indicate that considerable numbers of the women employed in such establishments will benefit from the law. In these industries 29 percent of the women reported worked more than 48 hours. Commentators in the State point out that one of the major effects of the law will be in stores and restaurants.

In manufacturing industries, about 5,100 of the 45,779 women shown in the report of the Virginia Department of Labor and

Industries for the calendar year 1936 were working more than 48 hours. More than two-thirds of those having long hours—nearly 3,500 women—were in tobacco rehandling, fruit and vegetable canning, and peanut shelling. Women in these seasonal industries will benefit little by the new law, since it permits work for 10 hours a day for 90 days in the year.

According to the State report three-fourths of all women in manufacturing had worked less than 44 hours. The same was true of practically 90 percent of the men and women in textile industries. No women in rayon-yarn factories were reported working so long as 44 hours. In paper and printing industries only six women in the State were reported as working more than 48 hours.

Toward Minimum Fair Wages

Developments Since March 15

HIGHLIGHTS in minimum-wage developments since the March issue of *THE WOMAN WORKER* have been the prompt action of Kentucky in beginning preparations for enforcement of its new minimum-wage law, and the adoption by the District of Columbia Minimum Wage Board of a guaranteed weekly minimum wage for laundry and dry-cleaning workers, similar to that now in effect in New York. The minimum-wage administrators in Colorado, Connecticut, Utah, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania also have taken action on the laundry or laundry and dry-cleaning industries during the past 2 months. New or newly revised wage orders for other industries have been issued in Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and Rhode Island. Wage boards have been called and studies of industries begun or completed in several other States.

In Oklahoma an injunction denying the State industrial welfare commission the right to enforce the minimum-wage orders was issued April 27, 4 days before these orders were to go into effect. The Associated Industries, Inc., and other powerful interests attacking the constitutionality of the act, are particularly opposed to its inclusion of men. If the Supreme Court sustains the law, employers failing to observe it may be subject to prosecution from May 1, 1938, the date that the orders went into effect, so it is widely believed in the State that most employers will observe the law pending the outcome of the case.

Action to Enforce Kentucky Law

First steps to be taken in administering the new Kentucky minimum-wage law, which goes into effect June 1, were discussed in Louisville on April 12 at a committee meeting called by the Kentucky Consumers' League and attended by Kentucky labor leaders, the State Commissioner of Labor Relations, W. C. Burrow, who will administer the law, and a consultant from the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

Ground work of surveying wages and hours in woman-employing industries in the State already has been completed by the Women's Bureau, which recently published preliminary reports on a survey of wages and hours of 21,819 women workers in 359 establishments in 33 Kentucky cities and towns. The survey was made at the request of the Louisville League of Women Voters and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Labor, and Statistics.

Results of Kentucky Survey.

More than two-thirds of the women surveyed by the Women's Bureau were factory workers. Their average week's earnings ranged from \$8 or \$9 in hosiery, wooden boxes and baskets, and miscellaneous clothing industries to \$16 or \$17 in metal products and cigars and cigarettes. For all factory workers the average was \$13. Average hourly earnings for all women factory workers amounted to 36 cents, ranging from 24 cents in wooden-box factories to 46 cents in the men's suit and overcoat

industry. Hours worked usually were 8 a day and 40 or less a week, with the 5-day week.

For the next largest group of workers, those in retail stores, the average week's earnings were \$13.70 in department stores, \$14.40 in ready-to-wear stores, and \$12.40 in limited-price stores. Average hourly earnings were 26 cents in limited-price stores, 30 cents in department stores, and 31 cents in ready-to-wear stores. Hours worked generally were 7½ a day and 45 to 48 a week.

For workers in hotels and restaurants, the average week's earnings were found to be \$8.20 in hotels, \$8.65 in independent restaurants, and \$9.15 in store restaurants. These earnings did not include tips nor the value of meals or lodging furnished. Hours worked usually were 40 to 56 a week and 9 or less a day, with a long spread from beginning to end of the day. In hotels 63 percent of the workers had a 7-day week; the same was true of 23 percent of the workers in independent restaurants.

Average week's earnings in laundries were \$9.05, and in dry-cleaning establishments \$12.65. Hourly earnings were 21 cents in laundries and 28 cents in the dry-cleaning industry. Annual earnings in laundries averaged \$513. Hours worked generally were 44 to 54 a week, with 23 percent of the women in laundries and 38 percent of those in dry-cleaning establishments working 50 or more hours.

Action on Laundry Industry

All but 3 of the 24 minimum-wage States have taken some action toward establishing minimum-wage rates for the laundry industry. The first wage board called under Pennsylvania's 1937 law is a laundry board, now in session and expected to report its recommendations soon. The District of Columbia Minimum Wage Board has adopted wage rates effective July 5. The Colorado laundry wage board has made its recommendations, now being considered by the State Industrial Commission. Recom-

mended wage rates have been announced in Connecticut and Utah. The Rhode Island minimum-wage order for the laundry industry went into effect April 25. The following are the 17 States in which minimum-wage rates are in effect in laundries.

- Arkansas (flat rate in law).
- California (special order).
- Illinois (special order).
- Massachusetts (special order).
- Minnesota (general order).
- Nevada (flat rate in law).
- New Hampshire (special order).
- New Jersey (special order).
- New York (special order).
- North Dakota (special order).
- Ohio (special order).
- Oklahoma (special order).
- Oregon (special order).
- Rhode Island (special order).
- South Dakota (flat rate in law).
- Washington (special order).
- Wisconsin (general order).

New minimum-wage rates for laundry and dry-cleaning industries are shown in the table on the following page.

It should be noted that the \$14.50 minimum wage in the District of Columbia is for a week of from 17 to 44 hours. If a woman works the full 48-hour week permitted by law, her weekly wage will be \$15.90, because she must receive 35 cents for each of the 4 additional hours worked.

Laundry Surveys.

Connecticut.—The recommended minimum wage of 30 cents an hour in Connecticut corresponds to the average (median) hourly wage received by women in Connecticut laundries in the spring of 1937. Half the women surveyed by the Connecticut Labor Department received less than 30.3 cents an hour, and half of them worked less than 41.6 hours a week. The recommended minimum-wage rate therefore should raise wages for about half the women in Connecticut laundries.

The report on the industry made by the Connecticut Labor Department to the minimum wage board was presented in effective question-and-answer form. It showed

New Minimum-Wage Rates for Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Industries

State	Women workers covered	Minimum-wage rate		Hours to which rate applies	Learner or apprentice rate	Special provisions
		Weekly	Hourly (cents)			
Adopted:						
Rhode Island (in effect Apr. 25).	Plant, office, and distribution.	-----	30	-----	None-----	Worker must be paid for at least 4 hours a day when called by employer, except on Saturday.
District of Columbia (effective July 5).	Plant-----	\$14.50	35	17 to 44-----	do-----	
	Office and store---	17.00	40	More than 44. Less than 17. 40 to 48-----	\$14.50 for 2 months.	
Recommended:						
Connecticut (laundries only).	Plant and office-----	-----	30 33	35 to 48----- Less than 35. ¹	do-----	Worker must be paid for at least 4 hours a day when called by employer. Part-time workers shall be paid for at least 4 consecutive hours a day.
Utah-----	All—Laundries-----	-----	30 45 33	24 to 45----- More than 45. Less than 24.	None-----	
	All—Dry cleaning and dyeing.	16.00	40	48----- Less than 8 a day.	do-----	

¹ Not more than \$10.50 a week.

that the median average earnings of women were 30.3 cents an hour and \$12.61 a week, 41 percent of the total getting between 25 and 30 cents an hour. More than two-fifths (43 percent) made less than \$12 in a week.

The average hours worked were 41.6 a week, but 16 percent of the women worked less than 32 hours and 11 percent worked between 48 and 52 hours.

Rhode Island.—The minimum hourly wage rate of 30 cents ordered for women in laundry and dry-cleaning industries in Rhode Island will raise the wage rates of more than one-third of the women so employed, according to a survey of 73 laundries and dry-cleaning establishments by the Rhode Island Department of Labor in March 1937. The results of this survey were published recently by the division of women and children of the Rhode Island Department of Labor under the title, "Conditions of Employment in the Laundry and Dry-Cleaning Industries in Rhode Island."

Half the women in the 73 establishments, all of which employed at least 5 women or minors, earned less than 31 cents an hour, and nearly a fourth were paid less than 27½ cents an hour. Practically 70 percent earned between 25 cents and 37½ cents. Average hours of work of women and girls were 40.8.

A year's wage data were collected for a sample of 59 women from 9 firms, including 7 laundries and 2 cleaners. Year's earnings ranged from \$29.70 to \$866.20. The average woman in this sample worked 40.9 hours a week for 51.2 weeks. Her earnings were \$13.25 for the weeks worked and her year's earnings were \$652.27.

Pennsylvania.—The minimum wage board for the laundry industry in Pennsylvania is now considering the report on the laundry industry made by the division of research and statistics of the bureau of hours and wages, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, and recently published by

the department in mimeographed form. The study was made as of the pay period ending nearest to November 15, 1937. A total of 305 plants were investigated.

The average (median) year's earnings in 1937, including meals and lodging when furnished, were found to be \$614 for women and minor laundry workers. About 16 percent of the workers made less than \$500, 26 percent made \$700 or more, and 3 percent made \$1,000 or more.

For the pay-roll period ending nearest to November 15, 1937, the average week's earnings were \$11.54; 27 percent of the workers made less than \$10 and 18 percent made \$14 or more. These amounts include 20 cents for each meal furnished and 40 cents a day for lodging when furnished.

Hourly earnings in the pay-roll period ending nearest to November 15 averaged 29.3 cents (median). About three-tenths of the women and minor workers earned from 27 to 29.9 cents an hour, one-fourth earned less than 27 cents, and more than one-tenth earned less than 25 cents. One-tenth averaged 40 cents or more.

More than half of the workers for whom hours were reported worked from 40 to 44 hours a week; about 45 percent worked less than 40 hours and less than 4 percent exceeded 44 hours.

Of the 305 plants visited, 56 were working under union contracts covering 2,219 employees, or 47 percent of the women and male minor employees in all laundries surveyed. Union pay rates ranged from 25 to 40 cents an hour for woman-employing occupations, depending on occupation, union, and locality.

Recent Minimum-Wage Orders

District of Columbia—Laundry and Dry Cleaning.

See page 8.

Illinois—Wash-Dress Industry.

Directory Order No. 4 for the wash-dress industry, effective May 1, sets a minimum rate of \$14.80 for experienced workers for a basic week of 40 hours, or 37 cents an hour.

For more than 40 hours a week, the hourly rate is 40.7 cents. Apprentice rates are \$7.40 a week for the first 8 weeks and \$11.10 for the second 8 weeks. Learners and apprentices shall not exceed 15 percent of all employees. Special licenses may be issued for handicapped workers. If uniforms are required, the employer may deduct their actual cost from the workers' pay.

Massachusetts—Bread and Bakery Products.

Minimum rates varying with size of town or city have been fixed for all women and minors in the industry. For cities of 100,000 and over, the rate is \$14 a week; for cities of 25,000 and under 100,000, \$13 a week; and for localities of less than 25,000, \$12 a week. The order became effective May 1.

Massachusetts—Pocketbook and Leather-Goods Industry.

A minimum-wage order for the pocketbook and leather-goods industry went into effect May 1. No woman or minor with 3 or more months' experience in the industry shall be paid less than 35 cents an hour, or \$14 for a week of 40 hours. Workers with less than 3 months' experience are to be paid not less than 26¼ cents an hour, or \$10.50 for a 40-hour week.

Minnesota—Any industry, business, or trade.

Minimum wages of from \$11 to \$15 a week, depending on size of locality, become effective July 11 for experienced women and minor workers employed 36 to 48 hours a week in any industry, business, or trade in Minnesota, by order of the State industrial commission.

The order divides the State into four population groups—class A, cities of 50,000 or more population; class B, places of 5,000 to 50,000; class C, places of 3,000 to 5,000; and class D, smaller towns and rural areas. Minimum hourly rates range from 24 cents in class D to 36 cents in class A for part-time work (less than 36 hours) and overtime work (more than 48 hours).

Rhode Island—Laundry and Dry Cleaning.

See page 8.

Other Minimum-Wage Activity

The Industrial Commission of Arizona is preparing to call a wage board for retail trade occupations.

The District of Columbia Minimum Wage Board will begin public hearings on the beauty-shop industry on May 17.

The division of women's and children's employment of the Illinois Department of Labor reports that a wage board for the candy industry will be appointed soon. Field work has begun on a study of restaurants, to be followed immediately by a survey of retail stores.

In Massachusetts wage boards have been established for the knit-goods and millinery industries. A study of hair-dressing and beauty-culture establishments is under way. The minimum wage commission has returned the recommendations for wages for the paper-box industry for reconsideration by the wage board for that industry. The commission has received requests for action toward setting minimum-wage rates in the curtain-manufacturing industry and for waitresses and theater ushers.

A study of the shoe industry in New Hampshire has been completed and sent to the State Commissioner of Labor. A study of retail trade is being put into final form. Studies of the textile industry and of commercial and resort hotels are in progress.

The New Hampshire Commissioner of Labor reports that there has been a marked rise in the amount of back wages collected since the State was divided into four districts, with an inspector assigned to each. Inspection is more efficient and records have improved. The present plan is to visit all firms under wage orders at least twice a year, and more often if necessary, thus providing a continuous check.

The Rhode Island minimum-wage order for wearing apparel and allied occupations was made mandatory April 25. It has been revised so that the requirement that piece workers must receive at least the minimum hourly rate need apply to only three-fourths of them.

In New York State a wage board for the beauty-shop industry has recommended for full-time workers a minimum wage of \$16.50 for a week of 45 hours or less, with additional pay for hours worked in excess of 45. Part-time workers (employed 3 days or less a week) shall be paid at least \$4 a day. This represents a considerable improvement over actual wages and hours, as shown in the survey that guided the board in making its recommendations. Results of the survey follow.

New York Beauty-Shop Survey

Half of the 5,212 women employed in the 1,608 beauty shops surveyed by the State Department of Labor in 1936 received less than \$13.47 a week, after deductions averaging 72 cents (median) had been made by the employer for job expenses. Nearly one-third of the women earned less than \$10, 43 percent earned less than \$12, and only 15 percent earned as much as \$20.

Variation in hours worked accounted for only part of the differences in week's earnings. Hourly earnings also showed considerable variation, half the workers earning less than 27.6 cents an hour, over one-third less than 25 cents, and nearly one-fifth less than 20 cents. On the other hand, 19 percent of the total earned at least 40 cents an hour.

Employers expected workers to augment their wages by tips, but tips were uncertain.

One factor in keeping wages low was the employment of apprentices or learners and "brush-up" workers—unemployed operators who worked to keep their hand in. Many shops were found to be using such workers as cheap labor and giving them no satisfactory training. Such shops were able to charge lower prices and caused other shops to lower their prices and wages to meet competition.

The great majority of the employers required their workers to be trained. Such training cost \$50 to \$150 for a complete course in half of the schools covered by the survey and more than \$150 in the larger and better-known establishments.

Women in Strikes

Texas Pecan Workers' Union Recognized

The 6 weeks' strike of the pecan workers of San Antonio, Tex., was settled March 10 with recognition of the workers' union, Local 172 of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America. The employers and the union agreed to refer the question of wages and working conditions to an arbitration committee of three, including a representative of the workers, a representative of the employers, and a third person agreeable to both sides. The strike was brought to this conclusion after the union had filed charges against the company with the regional office of the National Labor Relations Board.

The strike, which eventually involved 8,000 workers and 200 pecan-shelling shops and resulted in many arrests, began February 1 in protest against a 15-percent cut in wages. The workers demanded rescinding of the cut, recognition of their union, free health examinations by the companies to protect consumers and workers, and union committees to weigh the shelled nuts.

The Women's Bureau in a survey in 1936 found wages of pecan pickers to average \$2.05 a week (median) in contractors' shops. Pecan sorters in dealers' sheds averaged \$3.55 a week, as compared with \$11 in a large firm in St. Louis.

Reports of the recent strike indicate that the low piece rate in effect resulted in wages as low as 25 cents a day in many cases and that few workers were able to earn more than 40 or 50 cents a day. Before the 15-percent cut, the piece rate was 5 to 6 cents a pound for shelling nuts, and average wages were about \$2.50 a week.

Employers blamed the low factory wages

on the competition of contractors who employed home workers at even lower rates of pay.

Michigan Garment Workers Win Decision

The outcome of a strike of 34 girls against a Michigan garment factory in the spring of 1937 was a decision by the National Labor Relations Board March 31, 1938, ordering the company to reemploy the strikers, on application, and to pay them back wages for the period since they may have applied for and been refused reemployment. The board also ordered the reemployment with back pay of a girl discharged in March 1937 for union activity. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America was named the exclusive representative of the production workers in the plant for purposes of collective bargaining. The company was ordered to bargain collectively with this union and to cease to support a company union.

The Michigan Department of Labor and Industry, which undertook an investigation of the strike, found that many of the girls had been working 44 to 53 hours a week for less than 15 cents an hour. Earnings of as much as 28 cents an hour were exceptional. One of the best-paid girls averaged only \$11.12 a week, as compared with between \$14 and \$15 which she made when the N. R. A. code was in effect. She reported that she sometimes worked 10 hours a day.

The girls organized the union in an effort to improve their conditions. The employers refused to deal with the union and the girls struck. During the strike a staff of 24 extra policemen was appointed for protection of nonstrikers against the 34 girls.

Employment and Earnings

Women's Earnings in Cotton Goods

Average hourly earnings of women in the cotton-goods industry in 15 States in a reporting period in 1937 ranged from 26.7 cents in Mississippi to 47 cents in New Jersey, according to a report recently issued by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most of the figures are for April. Among the eight northern States reporting there was a difference of 9 cents from high to low and the seven southern States showed a range of practically 10 cents in average hourly earnings.

A comparison with average hourly earnings as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1934 shows an increase for women of 16 percent in the North and 7 percent in the South. Increases were slightly greater for men. For both sexes the increases were more than twice as great in the North as in the South.

Hourly Wage Rates of Women and Men

In the cotton-textile industry the lowest hourly rates paid to women in factories studied averaged slightly above the lowest paid to men in September 1937, according to a survey made by the National Industrial Conference Board. This was true in no other industries reporting such rates separately for women and men. Lowest hourly rates paid to women were 94 percent of those paid to men in the furniture industry, 83 percent in foundries and machine shops, and only 55 percent in the printing industry.

More Women in Missouri Factories

Nearly 75,000 women were employed in manufacturing and public-utility establishments in Missouri in 1936, according to the report of the Labor and Inspection Department for that year, recently received. Employment in manufacturing had increased

since 1930 by nearly 2,000, while the proportion that women formed of all workers in manufacturing had increased from 22 to 29 percent. In both years clothing, leather, and food industries were the most important woman-employers, and the concentration of women in these industries had increased by 1936.

	<i>Percent of all women in manufacturing</i>	
	<i>1930</i>	<i>1936</i>
All manufacturing.....	100.0	100.0
Clothing.....	24.9	35.0
Leather.....	22.0	23.5
Food.....	11.5	11.7

Weekly wages were reported for nearly 68,000 women. Just under three-fourths of these had earned from \$10 up to \$20, while one-tenth had earned less than \$10. Proportions of women earning less than \$10 were 11 percent in clothing manufacture, 12 percent in telephone service, and nearly 15 percent in food industries. On the other hand, well over one-fourth of those in telephone exchanges had earned \$20 or more, as had nearly half of those employed by other public utilities.

South Carolina Employment and Wages Improve

The position of women in manufacturing industries in South Carolina greatly improved in the 2-year period ending June 30, 1937, according to the second annual report of the State Department of Labor recently received. From July 1935 to June 1937 the number of women wage earners increased by nearly 23 percent to over 39,000, and the per capita year's earnings increased by nearly 17 percent. Women salaried employees increased by 19 percent to 834. The proportion women formed of all workers in these groups was practically the same in 1936-37 as in 1934-35, about 30 percent of

all wage earners and 18 percent of salaried workers.

In textiles, where 84 percent of the women wage earners were employed, their number had increased by one-sixth and the per capita wage payment by one-fifth.

As is almost invariably the case, the average per capita yearly earnings of men

were higher than those of women in the three major woman-employing industries.

	<i>Average earnings in 1937</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
All manufacturing-----	\$756	\$634
Textiles-----	805	663
Clothing-----	803	504
Tobacco and cigars-----	913	616

Health and Safety

Industrial Injuries and Occupational Disease

Massachusetts.

Two women were fatally injured in the 672 industrial accidents investigated by the division of industrial safety of the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries in 1936. One was employed in shoe manufacture and one in the manufacture of paper and paper products. A total of 56 women, including the 2 fatalities, were involved in industrial accidents, accounting for 8 percent of the total. Of these 56 women, 11 worked in the manufacture of textiles, 8 in shoes, 7 in paper and paper products, 5 in electrical products, and 4 in novelties.

The division investigated 229 cases of occupational disease, of which 49, or over a fifth of the total, involved women, a third of them less than 21 years old. One woman died as the result of asbestosis. She had worked as a weaver for 15 years in the manufacture of brake linings. The other 48 women suffered from some form of dermatitis. A third of the dermatitis infections of women were acquired in shoe manufacture.

Minnesota.

Practically 5,000 women were injured in industrial accidents in Minnesota during the 2-year period ending June 30, 1936, according to the eighth biennial report of the State Industrial Commission recently issued. Wom-

en's injuries formed 9 percent of all injuries reported during the period.

Over three-fifths of women's injuries caused temporary total disability. Over one-third of the injuries to women caused no disability, and 2 percent resulted in some permanent disability. Nine injuries resulted fatally.

Missouri.

Over 10,000 women were injured in industry in Missouri during the year 1936, according to the tenth annual report of the Missouri Workmen's Compensation Commission. Two women lost their lives and 49 women suffered some permanent disability as a result of their work. Women constituted over one-eighth of all the workers injured in the year, but compensation for their injuries amounted to only 3 percent of the total amount paid.

Only four cases of occupational disease affecting women were compensated under the Missouri law, which makes workmen's compensation for such diseases elective on the part of the employer.

Industrial Poisoning in Massachusetts

Women were found exposed to the hazards of volatile solvents in 21 cases, men in 66 cases, in Massachusetts shoe factories, according to a study made by the division of occupational hygiene of the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries for the year ending November

30, 1936. The division made industrial chemical surveys of six industries—lead-storage-battery manufacture, paint manufacture, shoe manufacture, wood-heel covering, rubber-goods manufacture, and fur cleaning.

Of particular interest to women because of their greater susceptibility to the poison is the study of the benzol hazard in the shoe industry. In the 49 establishments visited, 7,970 women were employed, 44 percent of all employees. Of these establishments, 31

used materials containing benzol. Of the six processes involving the use of benzol cements and not equipped with blower systems, all but one showed amounts of benzol vapor greater than 100 parts per million, which is the highest concentration considered safe for all-day exposure, while the three operations equipped with local exhaust systems showed less than 50 parts per million. Four of the plants visited discontinued the use of benzol as a result of the survey, while one installed a blower system.

Reviews of Recent Studies

WHY WOMEN WORK. Based on a study made by The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc. Public Affairs Committee, Inc. Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 17. 1938.

Most business and professional women work because they have to and not just for the fun of it or for the sake of extra luxuries. That is the conclusion of a survey made by the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs early in 1937 in response to a request from the International Labor Office for facts on the "existing political, civil, and economic status of women" in the United States. The I. L. O. has been gathering such information from various countries for the use of the League of Nations. The Federation's survey was particularly concerned with the "family circumstances of gainfully-employed women and their responsibility for dependents." It covered women white-collar workers in 47 States, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Of the 12,043 members of the federated clubs who returned usable answers to the Federation's questionnaire, only 3 percent had contributed nothing to the household in which they lived and were supported by it. The other 97 percent all supported themselves and half of them (48 percent of the total) had other persons partially or totally dependent on them. One-sixth of

the group (17 percent) were the sole support of households of from 2 to 8 persons.

The typical woman covered by the survey was about 40 years old and single, living with relatives in a town or small city. She was most likely to be a teacher, or a secretary, stenographer, or other clerical worker. Her earnings in 1936 were \$1,315.

The women who were the sole support of their households were somewhat older than the others, averaging 44 years; they had higher average earnings, \$1,560 a year, indicating, as the report states, that "as a woman's resources increase, she is likely to assume greater responsibility for dependents."

NATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT ON REEMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND RECENT CHANGES IN INDUSTRIAL TECHNIQUES. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS TO DATE, MARCH 1938. Works Progress Administration. 1938.

Evidence that women are finding a more prominent place in the labor market with the increase in industrial mechanization and in the introduction of automatic machines, and with the consequent decline in specialized skills, is shown in studies made under the National Research Project of the Works Progress Administration.

The data analyzed in the summary of findings indicate the situation and prospects as to production, productivity of workers,

and employment, and show the employment and unemployment experience of workers. The discussion is based on intensive studies of particular aspects of the employment situation in Philadelphia, with additional material from studies of basic industries in cities and towns elsewhere in Pennsylvania, and in New Jersey, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Indiana, and West Virginia.

Unprecedented increase in productivity of the worker has occurred since 1929 in a number of industries that are important woman-employers. The four industries in which the workers' productivity increased by a yearly average of more than 10 percent from 1929 to 1935 were important woman-employers—confectionery, glass, knit underwear, and silk and rayon goods. When mechanization in an industry had increased or automatic machines had been introduced, the proportion of women in the labor force was sometimes found to have increased, as in cigar manufacturing and in candy making in some places.

Another factor tending to increase the proportion of women in the labor market is the loss of jobs, or of the more skilled and better-paying jobs, by other wage earners in the family. In Philadelphia, for example, it was found that the number of women seeking employment was 19 percent greater in 1937 than in 1931.

SURVEY OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICE INFORMATION. Analysis of the characteristics of more than 4,000,000 applicants in the active file inventory, November 1937, and of placements during the period from April 1, 1937, to February 1, 1938. U. S. Employment Service. 1938.

More than 900,000 women were listed in the active file of the United States Employment Service in November 1937, according to the inventory of that date. This number represented a 15-percent decrease from that registered 4 months before. During the same period the number of men in the active

file decreased 16 percent, to somewhat more than 3,000,000 in November.

For every 100 women in the file in July, 46 had left by November to take jobs or for some other reason, 54 had remained on the rolls throughout the period, and 32 new applicants had registered. For every 100 men, 42 had left, 58 had remained, and 26 had been added.

During the 12 months ending December 1937 more than 900,000 women were placed by the Employment Service. The number placed in the last 6 months of the year was slightly greater than in the first 6 months, and was nearly one-fifth greater than in the last half of 1936.

When placements in the last 6 months of 1937 are compared with those in the first half of the year, it is seen that, though more than half the women were given work in domestic and personal service, placements had increased appreciably in other lines, especially agriculture and manufacturing.

HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS. A handbook for round-table discussions among household employers. U. S. Office of Education, Vocational Division. September 1937. (With bibliography.)

This bulletin brings together miscellaneous information concerning the supply, training, and selection of household employees, and summarizes the national and local programs undertaken for bettering conditions in this type of employment and the various standards set up for it.

The study points out that the social stigma attached to household work is a basic difficulty in raising standards. Combined with this factor is the frequency of long hours and low wages. From various sources the hours of work of household employees were found to average 12 a day and more.

Suggestions listed for making this work a more attractive occupation include time study of the various duties, the formulation of a written schedule of work to be completed, a written agreement on hours, wages, vacation, duties to be performed, and length of notice on termination of employment.

News Notes

Michigan Equal-Pay Law Invoked

Violation of a Michigan statute that prohibits paying women less than men for the same work was charged against a Michigan automobile manufacturer April 7. A woman worker in Lansing filed a claim for herself and 28 others seeking to recover an undetermined amount of back wages—the difference between what they were paid and what men would have been paid for the same work—alleged to be due them over a 6-year period. They claimed damages up to \$75,000. The women charged that the difference between their wages and those of men doing the same work amounted to at least 21 cents an hour. The Michigan Department of Labor and Industries reports that it has never enforced or attempted to enforce the statute prohibiting discrimination against women in the payment of wages (section 556 of Act 328 of the Public Acts of 1931).

Though the statute invoked by the Michigan workers is of some value, it can affect only a small minority of employed women, since the two sexes, by and large, work at different occupations. Moreover, this type of legislation is most difficult to enforce, even with a sufficient appropriation for administrative purposes, since it often is difficult to determine whether or not two individuals are performing the same process in industry.

Textile Piece Workers Protected

Managers of Rhode Island textile factories are now required by law to post, in every room where the employees are on piece work, legible and accessible specifications of each kind of work done, with its rate of pay. Where looms are operated on the piece-rate system, the manager must place pick clocks on each loom in operation and each weaver shall be paid according to the number of picks registered on the clock. The law became effective January 1, 1938.

Recent Women's Bureau Publications¹

Printed Bulletins

- STATE LABOR LAWS FOR WOMEN, December 31, 1937. Part I.—Summary. Bul. 156. 1938. Price 5 cents. 16 pages.
- THE LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, January 1, 1938—Parts that report for Alabama (bul. 157-1), Connecticut (bul. 157-6), Florida (bul. 157-9), and Iowa (bul. 157-14). 1938. Price 5 cents each.

Mimeographed Material

- STATE MINIMUM-WAGE ORDERS FOR RETAIL AND WHOLESALE TRADE OCCUPATIONS. March 1938. 36 pages.
- WAGES AND HOURS OF WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING ESTABLISHMENTS IN KENTUCKY. Report of a survey of 155 manufacturing establishments in the fall of 1937. 17 pages.

- WOMEN'S EARNINGS IN RETAIL STORES IN KENTUCKY. Report of a survey of 93 stores in the fall of 1937. 16 pages.
- WOMEN'S EARNINGS IN HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS IN KENTUCKY. Report of a survey of 18 hotels and 45 restaurants in the fall of 1937. 18 pages.
- WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN KENTUCKY, 1937. Report of a survey of 359 establishments. 12 pages.
- A YEAR OF THE MINIMUM WAGE. (From the *American Federationist*, issue of April 1938.) 7 pages.
- WOMEN'S HOURS AND WAGES IN STORES—ARIZONA. 1938. A series of mimeographed charts. 13 pages.

¹ Bulletins may be ordered from the Superintendent of Public Documents, Washington, D. C., at prices listed. A discount of 25 percent on orders of 100 or more copies is allowed. Single copies of the bulletins or several copies for special educational purposes may be secured through the Women's Bureau without charge as long as the free supply lasts. Mimeographed reports are obtainable only from the Women's Bureau.