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Women's Interests at the Lima Conference

The Eighth International Conference of American States, held recently in Lima, Peru, has resulted in much closer cooperation of the women of these countries, as well as definite resolutions in the interest of women.

The first woman ever to preside over a committee of this conference, which has met once every 5 years since 1903, was one of the delegates from the United States, Elise F. Musser, of Utah, who was vice chairman of the Commission on Political and Civil Rights of Women. Other women connected with the United States delegation, headed by Secretary of State Hull, were Kathryn Lewis, one of this country’s labor delegates, and Louise Leonard Wright, of Chicago, a technical adviser.

The Lima Declaration of Women’s Rights

The conference officially issued the Lima Declaration of Women’s Rights, which called for high commendation from the Latin-American press. The declaration resulted from three resolutions introduced by delegates from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and the United States, respectively, and was strongly supported by Argentina, Peru, and Chile. The Eighth International Conference of American States resolved:

1. To declare that women have the right:
   a. To political treatment on the basis of equality with men;
   b. To the enjoyment of equality as to civil status;
   c. To full protection in and opportunities for work;
   d. To the most ample protection as mothers.

2. To urge the governments of the American Republics which have not already done so to adopt as soon as possible the necessary legislation to carry out fully the principles contained in this declaration, which shall be known as “The Lima Declaration of Women’s Rights.”

The resolution that came from the United States called for full protection in and opportunities for work. The inclusion of this was insisted on by representatives of those Latin-American nations in which there is a growing movement for industrialization.

Woman Suffrage in Pan-American Countries

A proposal introduced by the Cuban delegate, representing the recommendation of the Inter-American Commission of Women, provided for woman suffrage. It was not adopted by the conference, chiefly because it was in the form of a treaty rather than a resolution, and delegates thought this was a subject for consideration by the individual countries rather than for a treaty. However, that part of the official Lima Declaration of Women’s Rights that advocated political treatment on the basis of equality with men would cover suffrage for women.

Of the 21 countries that are members of the Pan-American Union, 5 besides the United States have granted full suffrage to women—Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay. Suffrage in municipal elections is granted to Peruvian women who are of age, or to those who are married or are mothers even if not of age. In Chile, also, women may vote in municipal elections, and the new president has expressed himself in favor of full suffrage. It is of interest to note that Chile is the first country in South America to have a woman as the mayor of its capital city (Santiago). In Argentina, women in 1 province have full suffrage; in 2 others they may vote in municipal elections.

The subject of abstract “equal rights,” though unofficially discussed, was at no time a part of the agenda of this conference,
but it was incidentally referred to in the consideration of other matters. The Inter-American Commission of Women reported, as examples of the recent extension of civil rights, the right of married women in Chile to ownership and management of their earnings, and extensive revisions in Bolivia of the laws affecting the rights of married women. A recent measure in Argentina prohibits the dismissal of women from their work because of marriage.

**Inter-American Commission of Women**

The conference continued, on an official and reorganized basis, the Inter-American Commission of Women, an action of equal importance with the Lima Declaration of Women’s Rights, since this body serves between the conference periods to develop a background of information on women’s problems. The conference resolved:

1. To give a vote of approval and appreciation to the Inter-American Commission of Women for its 10 years of work in the compilation of data regarding the civil and political rights of women.

2. That the Inter-American Commission of Women shall continue its work. The Commission is charged with the permanent study of all the problems concerning American women and shall act in an advisory capacity. It shall report to the Governing Board of the Pan-American Union, before each conference, on the problems concerning women in which its judgment should be considered.

3. That the governments which as yet have not appointed their representatives on the Commission, or whose representatives are not active, appoint such representatives as soon as possible, in order that the 21 American Republics may participate in the Commission, and, in the future, fill promptly all vacancies which may occur.

4. That the Pan-American Union shall designate as chairman of the Commission one of the members thereof, who shall preside over it until the next International Conference of American States.

5. To entrust the Pan-American Union with the study of an organic statute for the Commission, to be submitted to the Ninth International Conference of American States for approval.

(Approved December 22, 1938.)

The next conference will be held 5 years hence (December 1943) at Bogota, Colombia.

Miss Mary N. Winslow, of Washington, D. C., has been appointed by President Roosevelt as the representative of the United States on the Inter-American Commission of Women. In connection with the new status of the commission, Mrs. Musser said in an interview:

We felt the commission should be placed on a stabler basis. We wanted its continued existence and the cooperative help of the various governments assured to it and its work. For this reason, we favored inclusion of a strong recommendation to all governments which have not appointed members of the commission to do so immediately.

If all the members of the Pan-American Union carry out this recommendation, it should result in having a commission composed, for the first time, of women serving in an official capacity.

In this way the work of the commission, its reports, and its recommendations would carry greater weight with the home governments which must, in final analysis, put them into effect if the commission’s labors are to bear fruit.

The Inter-American Commission of Women was created by the Sixth Conference of American States, held in Habana in 1928, to prepare juridical information on women’s civil and political status for consideration at the seventh conference; it was appointed by the Pan-American Union and was composed of seven women, the number to be increased until the various countries all were represented. At the seventh conference, held in Montevideo in 1933, the work of the commission was continued, to report at the next conference (Lima). The Montevideo Conference declared it “unwise to conclude a treaty” on equality of civil and political rights to men and women, believing this the exclusive right of the individual countries. However, the delegates of four countries signed such a treaty independently of official conference action—Cuba, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Uruguay; this treaty has not been ratified by these four countries, though all but Paraguay have granted suffrage to women by national law.

**Women Leaders at the Lima Conference**

Outstanding among the women of the Lima Conference was the only woman accompanying the Mexican delegation, one of its technical advisers, Dr. Esperanza Balmaceda de Josefe. In Lima, she brought the
women together in an informal and unofficial group, which resolved to continue after the conference its exchange of information. She insisted on the need for special labor laws for women in newly industrialized countries. Closely associated with her in advancing the cooperation of the women of these various countries were Senora de Ruiz Moreno, wife of the chairman of the Argentine delegation, and Senora Festini de Ortiz Ocampo, president of the National Council of Women in Peru. Senora Mercedes Gallagher de Parks, technical adviser to the Peruvian delegation, was anxious for the countries to include women in their delegations, but agreed with Mrs. Musser in the desire for an official body to continue between conferences with the study of the status of women. The only other country besides the United States with a woman official delegate (not technical adviser) was Brazil, which sent Senora Rosalina Coelho Lisboa de Miller. One of the younger women leaders present was Senorita Graciela Mandujano of Chile.

**Women in the United States Approve Conference Action**

At a luncheon given in Washington by the National Women's Trade Union League to honor Mrs. Musser on her return from South America, the satisfaction of women in this country with the accomplishment of the conference was expressed by officials of the National League of Women Voters, the Young Women's Christian Association, the National Council of Catholic Women, the American Association of University Women, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the National Consumers' League.

The following statement in appreciation of the action of the conference was issued by the National Women's Trade Union League:

The declaration is of the utmost importance to all American women. It states clearly and specifically what we all want for women, which is the fullest political and civil equality with men and full opportunity for work, while at the same time it safeguards the special legislation that has been found necessary in all countries to protect women as mothers and to put them on a more nearly equal basis with men in the industrial field. This is a great advance over the originally proposed "Equal Rights" Treaty, because it is specific in its terms and because it definitely recommends the protective legislation for women which any blanket statement such as "Equal Rights" would jeopardize.

The resolution on the Inter-American Commission of Women is especially important to the women of the United States, because the women of the United States will at last be represented by an officially appointed woman who really represents our interests, instead of by a member of the Commission who was not appointed by our Government.

We hope that further controversies on feminist issues at the conferences of American States will be eliminated by that section of the resolution which incorporates the Women's Commission in the Pan-American Union and provides that it shall report its recommendations to the Union before the conferences. Almost every women's organization in the United States has deplored these controversies and has felt that they have been a real handicap to the advancement of women's interests.

**Labor Legislation for Women in Latin-American Countries**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Protection before and after childbirth</th>
<th>Some prohibitions of night work</th>
<th>Protection from forced labor</th>
<th>Prohibition of underground work in mines</th>
<th>Prohibition of work in occupations</th>
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X indicates national legislation of some type.
1 Ratified convention of International Labor Organization on this subject and passed national law putting it in force.
2 Banned for minor girls.
3 Legislation in progress to implement International Labor Organization convention on this subject, which was ratified.
4 By multilateral agreement.
5 Since withdrawn from International Labor Organization.

Legislation applying especially to women exists in all Latin-American countries except the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Paraguay, though in Honduras the only such measure is a multilateral agreement with
several other countries for restriction of night work for women. The tabulation on page 5 indicates the more important lines in which working women receive some legal safeguards, though of course the coverage and other specific provisions differ in the various countries. It will be noted that conventions of the International Labor Organization exist on several of these major points, and that a number of these countries have ratified these conventions and enacted laws to put them into effect.

Fourteen Latin-American Republics have taken some action in regard to fixing minimum wages for women and men, and four of these have recognized this need in their constitutions—Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. The laws authorize wage commissions in Costa Rica and Mexico; wages fixed directly in the law in Bolivia; and both methods for fixing wages in Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, and Venezuela; wages to be fixed by other government bodies in Peru; and all three methods in Argentina and Uruguay. Guatemala, Panama, and Haiti also have taken some action.

Equal pay to women for equal work is provided by law in Bolivia for salaried employees, in Brazil and Mexico for wage earners, in Cuba for both, and in Peru for home workers. Home workers also are protected by wage laws in Argentina, Cuba, Peru, and Uruguay. Wages of agricultural workers are protected in Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, and Uruguay.

Maximum working hours have been fixed for men and women on some basis in all the Latin-American countries but Peru and Salvador.

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**Proposed State Legislation**

Bills to benefit women workers had been introduced in the legislatures of a number of States when *The Woman Worker* went to press in early February. At present the trend seems to be toward approaching the Federal standard of shortened hours and protected wages, and toward assuring domestic workers some of the advantages of other employments. Prediction cannot be made as to what laws will pass, but the following are among the bills introduced:

**California.**
To reduce the 48-hour week for women to a 44-hour maximum;
To fix a maximum 5-day 40-hour week for State employees;
To increase the minimum wage from $1.60 to $2.00;
To prohibit counting tips as part of the wage;
To fix a maximum 10-hour day, 6-day week, for domestic workers;
To add to Labor Code by prohibiting industrial home work in certain industries and by permitting State labor authority to prohibit such work in additional industries (requires employer’s permit and home worker’s certificate and labeling of all home-work material);
To include cleaning and dyeing in coverage of 8-48 hour law.

**Connecticut.**
To fix a maximum 8-hour day, 40-hour week, for employees in State printing;
To provide a maximum of 48 hours a week for employees in State institutions.

**Illinois.**
To establish a 5-day week (except in emergencies) in most industries (excluding specifically only executive and supervisory occupations and persons in public employment).

**Indiana.**
To provide for a minimum wage of 25 cents an hour (except farm and domestic service and “those whose income is derived from taxes upon the people”).

**Massachusetts.**
To extend the 48-hour maximum week to office and clerical forces;
To provide a maximum of 48 hours a week for public employees;
To abolish contract employment of female prisoners;
To extend coverage of the 9-48 hour law to hospitals and nursing or convalescent homes;
To bar married women from public service;  
To provide minimum wage of $14.40 for 40 hours' work (with exceptions, but including domestic service).

**Nebraska.** 
To extend the 9-54 hour law to entire State (formerly applied only to certain cities).

**New Hampshire.** 
To prohibit employment of women and minors between 11 p. m. and 7 a. m.

**New York.** 
To extend coverage of minimum-wage law for women and minors to domestic employees; 
To provide a maximum 60-hour week for domestic employees; 
To strike out paragraph giving commissioner of labor power to permit shorter meal period than law specifies for employees in factories and mercantile and other establishments, and for women conductors or guards; 
To provide for workers' annual vacations of at least 1 week with pay; 
To extend exemption from night-work law to linotypists and monotypists in commercial printing establishments; 
To provide 5-day 40-hour week in hotels and restaurants and bring resort or seasonal establishments in smaller places under coverage of present hour law.

**Rhode Island.** 
To prohibit night work in manufacturing and mechanical industries.

**South Carolina.** 
To extend the law providing a maximum 8-hour day, 40-hour 5-day week, in cotton, rayon, silk, or woollen mills, from May 1, 1939, to October 23, 1940, and to bring under it all formerly exempted employees including supervisory staff, engineers, firemen, watchmen, shipping and outside crews, repair shop crews, carpenters, mechanics, and electricians. (Office forces remain exempted.)

**Washington.** 
To provide a cash minimum wage of $30 a month for domestic employees.

In many States the governors in their messages to legislatures have advocated improved labor conditions, most frequently some type of labor relations organization. Progress made in fixing minimum wages for women, or advocacy of strengthened efforts along this line, was mentioned in messages of the Governors of Arizona, California, Illinois, Kansas, Nevada, New Hampshire, and New Jersey.

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**Toward Minimum Fair Wages**

**Progress Under the Fair Labor Standards Act**

For November 1938, the first month of full operation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, Department of Labor figures show increased employment in 31 of the 48 States and increased pay rolls in 17 States over October. The total Nation-wide increase in employment was 1.2 percent and in pay rolls 0.2 percent. Usually in November there is a decrease in employment of 0.05 percent and in pay rolls of 3.2 percent.

Almost everywhere new placements exceeded lay-offs and only a minor proportion of such lay-offs were attributed locally to the operation of the act. The United States Employment Service reported the number of new placements in November to be the largest of any single month in its entire history.

Latest estimates give 300,000 as the number in manufacturing who were earning less than 25 cents an hour prior to October 24, when the 25-cent minimum wage went into effect. The number working more than 44 hours a week is estimated at 1,384,000.

**More Industry Committees Appointed.**

There are now four industry committees at work considering the possibility of establishing minimum-wage rates higher than 25 cents in the industries covered. The first industry committee covers textiles made of cotton, silk, and synthetic fibers; knitted fabrics, originally under this committee,
have been removed from its jurisdiction and the processing of textiles into various products such as bags, sheets, blankets, and so forth has been added. The second committee is for the apparel industry, excluding knitted wear, hosiery, hats, furs, and shoes. The third—Industry Committee No. 1A—is for the woolen-textile industry. The fourth, Industry Committee No. 3, has jurisdiction over the hosiery industry.

The woolen textile industry committee is the first to bring in a recommendation for a minimum wage. It has recommended a minimum of 36 cents an hour. This will be accepted or rejected by the Administrator after public hearings.

Petition for Pecan Learners Denied.

A petition of a Texas pecan-shelling company, supported by the pecan workers' union, to employ shellers at 15 cents an hour for a 3-month learning period has been denied by a representative of the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. A public hearing in San Antonio in December brought out the fact that no such learning period is necessary.

It is estimated that 7,000 to 10,000 pecan workers were employed formerly by San Antonio contractors in shelling nuts chiefly for one large company. Their meager earnings—usually $2.50 to $3.50 a week—were supplemented by public relief, church aid, and private charity.

After the Fair Labor Standards Act went into effect, most of the pecan workers lost their jobs and continued to be supported by relief. The company stated that it was now installing machinery for cracking the nuts and would employ 2,500 to 3,000 workers at 25 cents an hour, but first wanted a learning period in which shellers could learn the new conditions resulting from the introduction of machines.

Investigation disclosed, however, that the shelling of machine-cracked nuts was no more difficult than shelling hand-cracked nuts, in fact, was simpler, and that a week was sufficient to learn the process under any conditions.

No Learners' Wage for Throwsters.

On January 31 the silk-throwing industry was denied its application to employ learners at less than 25 cents an hour. The chief of the hearings and exemptions section of the Wage and Hour Division found that no learning period is necessary, as beginners reach efficiency in a short time, most plants have no learner classification, and workers can learn skilled operations while working as unskilled or semiskilled labor.

The throwing industry normally employs about 50,000 persons, preparing and spinning silk and rayon or mixtures of silk and rayon into threads. It is the only textile branch that did not withdraw its application for the right to employ learners after hearings on the question in November.

At the hearings a representative of the industry said that most of the employees were women ranging in age from 18 to 25, often the wives and daughters of workers in heavy industries in the same areas. There are approximately 300 plants in some 200 towns in 23 States.

Testimony indicated that approximately 10,000 of the 50,000 normally attached to the industry were unemployed and part of the unemployed in other sections of the textile industry could qualify also as throwsters.

New Rulings on Industrial Home Work.

New regulations have been issued, effective for 6 months beginning March 15, requiring special records to be kept by employers of industrial home workers.

The Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division has found home work a serious threat to the operation of the act because of the difficulties of enforcement. At hearings in January representatives of trade bodies, labor unions, and State governments agreed that home work was an old evil that recently had shown a tendency to increase, notably so in men's neckwear, leather goods, and certain other items.

The new regulations require employers of home workers to keep detailed records showing hours worked per lot and per week;
wages paid per piece, per lot, per week, and for overtime beyond 44 hours; deductions for social security taxes; and other details. A separate handbook must be kept by the employer for each home worker and entries must be made each time work is given out or returned. These books are to be provided by the Wage and Hour Division and once in use must remain in the possession of the home worker.

It is felt that the regulations will test the practicability of this kind of control of industrial home work and possibly answer the question as to whether the Fair Labor Standards Act as it stands now can be enforced for home workers.

Exemptions for Tobacco Workers.

The auction tobacco warehouse industry has been partially exempted as a seasonal industry from hour regulations of the Fair Labor Standards Act. It was found that warehousemen hold the product no more than 24 hours after the sale at auction and that at very few warehouses is the tobacco stripped and graded.

The handling of raw leaf tobacco also has been partially exempted from the maximum-hours provision of the act as a seasonal industry. The exemption applies only to the buying, handling, stemming, and redrying of raw leaf tobacco and its packing and storing, and does not cover manufacturing.

The exemption is applicable during periods of not more than 14 weeks in each calendar year. Employees must be paid time and a half during such periods for hours worked in excess of 12 a day and 56 a week.

Some Bean Pickers Exempted.

The definition of “area of production” (see January Woman Worker) has been amended by the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division in order to take into account the women bean pickers whose employment was a subject of hearings last November. An employer of bean pickers is regarded as operating within the area of production if he is engaged in an establishment which is a first concentration point for the processing of dry edible beans into standard commercial grades for marketing in their raw or natural state. By “first concentration point” is meant a place where the beans are first assembled from nearby farms for processing, but does not include any establishment normally receiving a portion of the beans assembled from other first concentration points. Under this definition some of the women bean pickers may be exempted from the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Recent State Minimum-Wage Orders

Connecticut—Cleaning and Dyeing.

A minimum rate of 35 cents an hour for women and minors in Connecticut cleaning and dyeing plants went into effect January 9. Women and minors in office and delivery occupations must be paid at least 35 cents an hour for less than 41 hours, and $14.40 for a week of 41 to 48 hours. Learners must be paid at least 30 cents an hour during their first 4 months in the industry.

Massachusetts—Certain Food Industries.

A directory order, effective December 1, 1938, provides a minimum wage of $14.25 for a 44-hour week, or 32.4 cents an hour, for women and minors of 6 months’ experience in the canning, preserving, minor lines of confectionery, and food-preparations industries in Massachusetts. Learners and apprentices must receive at least $11 a week of 44 hours, or 25 cents an hour. Clerical and nonproductive as well as manufacturing workers are covered.

Kentucky—All Industries.

A minimum-wage rate of 25 cents an hour for the first 48 hours in a workweek and 37½ cents an hour thereafter is provided for all women and minor workers in Kentucky except those in household or farm labor. The supervisor of the Kentucky minimum-wage law has estimated that more than 50,000 workers will be affected.
State Minimum-Wage Surveys
Connecticut—Underwear and Nightwear.

Nearly one-fifth of the women in factories making underwear and nightwear in Connecticut should be benefited by the Fair Labor Standards Act, even though no minimum be fixed for the industry above the 25 cents set in the law. A study made by the Minimum Wage Division of the State Department of Labor covering the latter part of 1936 and the early part of 1937 showed 19 percent of the women earning less than 25 cents in 4 busy weeks and 18 percent in 4 slack weeks.

Pay-roll data for the busy season and the slack season showed that average hourly earnings in each period were the same, 33.7 cents. However, since average hours had decreased by nearly one-fourth, from 41.5 to 31.4, week’s earnings had fallen from $13.59 to $9.93.

A serious competitive situation is shown in the range of earnings from one plant to another. In 19 plants reporting, average hourly earnings during the busy season ranged from 24.3 to 37.7 cents, and average weekly earnings ranged from $9 to $16.54.

Women comprised 92 percent of the entire work force. Most of these women, 70 percent, operated power-driven sewing machines that required considerable skill. Learning periods ranged from 2 to 8 weeks, and guaranteed rates for learners from $6.50 to $10 a week. Actually the rates were not always guaranteed; in some shops learners were put at once on piece rates, a practice that resulted in extremely low earnings during the learning period.

New York—Cleaning and Dyeing.

Average (median) earnings of 2,475 women in the cleaning and dyeing industry of New York in a sample week in April or May 1938 were $14.74. Year’s earnings, obtained for 1,333 women who were on the current pay roll and had also been on the pay roll 51 weeks earlier, averaged $722. This is $470 less than the cost of living for a woman worker living alone as determined by a recent study by the New York Division of Women in Industry and Minimum Wage.

Average hourly earnings for women were 32.8 cents, but earnings of individuals showed wide variations. More than 8 percent earned less than 25 cents an hour, while 23 percent earned 40 cents or more. For the largest single group, store clerks, average earnings were 29.6 cents.

For the first time in making an industry study for a wage board in the State, data were gathered for office employees. These showed 229 women, whose earnings averaged $16.93 for a week of about 47 hours.

The industry is not highly seasonal, but one problem is the short week. One-fifth of the women had averaged only 4 days’ work a week during the year.

Other Activities in the States

In Arizona the laundry and dry-cleaning industry is the next for which a wage board will be appointed. The retail-trade order, directory since December 1, 1938, became mandatory on February 1.

In California the attorney general recently reaffirmed the interpretation of the State minimum-wage law to require the payment of at least $16 for a “regularly worked” week, whether 44 or 48 hours. The question had been raised as to whether the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act would compel a reduction of the minimum wage in California, since it would reduce the maximum workweek from 48 to 44 hours. This was denied by the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor, which pointed out that the Federal law does not replace or change any State law that requires higher wages or shorter hours than the Federal law. California manufacturers can comply with both laws only by reducing hours to 44 and paying to women at least the State minimum wage. Any hours worked over 44 a week must be paid for at time and a half the usual rate.
In Connecticut the Minimum Wage Division is completing an investigation of wages in beauty shops as the result of a number of petitions for a minimum-wage rate for the industry from both employers and employees.

In Massachusetts there is being formed a wage board for jewelry and related lines of manufacture. Reports are being awaited from the wage boards for knit goods, beauty culture, and office and other building cleaners. Orders formerly issued as directory have been made mandatory for druggists' preparations, proprietary medicines, and chemical compounds; bread and bakery products; pocketbook and leather goods; paper boxes; and millinery.

In New Jersey minimum-wage boards have been appointed to consider the apparel and the light manufacturing and novelty industries. The latter include dolls, toys, pocketbooks, luggage, buttons, brushes, brooms, razor blades, umbrellas, compacts, hair pins, tags, lampshades, and various other articles.

In Rhode Island a survey of retail stores is under way for the use of a minimum-wage board.

Public Contracts May End Learners' Wage in Hosiery

Proposing to discontinue the lower wage for learners, handicapped, or superannuated workers employed on Government contract work in the seamless-hosiery industry, the Administrator of the Division of Public Contracts set January 19, 1939, as the final date on which to file briefs showing cause for continuing the lower rate.

A decision of the Secretary of Labor as of July 28, 1937, set 35 cents an hour or $14 for a 40-hour week as the minimum that may be paid to seamless-hosiery workers engaged on Government contracts of $10,000 or more. The special minimum wage for learners, handicapped, or superannuated workers, which could be applied to not more than 5 percent of all workers in a shop, was set at 28 cents an hour or $11.20 for a 40-hour week.

Women in Unions

Gains in Union Agreements
Hotel and Restaurant Workers Affected.

A wage and hour agreement between about 100 New York hotels and a group of unions in the hotel and restaurant field was signed January 18. About 20,000 workers are said to be affected. Provisions include a union shop, check-off, a general wage increase of $1 a week and another increase next July, and minimum-wage scales of $9 for waiters, $8 for waitresses, $17-$19 for elevator operators, $18 for telephone operators, $15 for dishwashers, and $12.50 to $14.50 for chambermaids.

An agreement has been negotiated with a large concessionaire at the Santa Anita Race Track in California, involving more than 400 culinary workers. In San Francisco agreements have been signed with all dairy lunches, extending for the duration of the Fair and 12 months thereafter. Cafeterias in San Francisco have been organized.

White-Collar Workers in Union Actions.

An office workers' union has signed its third annual agreement with a Chicago bank employing 50. A 6-percent wage increase is provided, amounting to at least $5 a month for practically all employees and $10 for tellers and some others. The 40-hour week, closed shop, job security, and arbitration clauses are renewed.

A New York department store has signed an agreement providing an aggregate increase of $150,000 a year for 3,000 workers, vacations with pay, seniority, extra pay for overtime and holiday work, and a 45-hour week, except in the summer when a 37½-hour week shall be in force. The retail, service,
and wholesale divisions of the store are affected.

Two-Year Contracts in Dress Industry.

Agreements with four dress manufacturers' associations were ratified by the unions involved and signed January 10 at the New York City Hall. The contracts replace those due to expire January 31, and are to run for 2 years. They cover more than 2,000 firms and 100,000 workers.

The contracts provide for no change in the 35-hour week nor in the wages, which are fixed largely on a piece-rate basis according to the process. They provide for technical reforms in the interest of stabilization of the industry and of greater uniformity in the enforcement of labor standards and conditions. They also establish an industry-wide employment bureau.

Wage Increases in Clothing.

A minimum wage of 25 cents an hour is provided in an agreement with a Texas baby-clothes manufacturer producing for a New York firm. Some 500 shop and home workers are affected. Formerly the home workers, mostly Mexicans, who hand-embroider the garments, were paid 3 to 4 cents an hour.

After brief strikes, about 100 cotton-dress makers employed by two Chicago firms won agreements providing the closed shop and a $14 minimum wage.

More than 200 workers who had never before belonged to a union, including white-collar as well as shop workers, have won an agreement with a New York manufacturer of infants' headwear, providing wage increases. Also won were the 35-hour week, job security, and equitable distribution of work.

A New Jersey men's-clothing manufacturer has signed an agreement that provides for negotiations for upward revision of wages on 10 days' notice "in view of the uncertainty of the value of the dollar." The plant is reported to have paid as little as $3.09 for a 40-hour week and to have moved at least twice to escape the union.

A national clothing manufacturers' association in a renewed contract with the union has voluntarily agreed to eliminate home work on scarf bands, including sewing-machine work, turning, slip stitching, and pressing, but not hand rolling. The contract is in force for 1 year and provides that the 37½-hour week remain, gives the union the right to reopen the question of wages whenever advisable, and makes jobbers responsible for union conditions in their contract shops.

New Contract for Pecan Shellers.

Before their status under the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act had been decided by the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division (see p. 8) the 8,000 pecan shellers formerly employed by the largest shelling company in San Antonio had signed a 1-year agreement through their union providing for a minimum-wage rate of 25 cents an hour when the plant reopens.

Piece rates to enable workers to earn at least 25 cents an hour shall be arrived at by joint conference between the union and the employer and shall be based on average hourly productivity of an efficient worker, neither the least nor the most efficient.

The agreement further calls for a closed shop, the check-off, shop representatives, and machinery for adjustment of grievances. It marks long strides forward since January of 1938 when there was no organization in the industry. The strike against the wage cut beginning February 1, 1938, and discussed in the May Woman Worker, eventually involved 8,000 workers and led to practically complete unionization of the industry in San Antonio.

At other Texas shelleries workers have been striking in recent months to win improved conditions similar to those provided in the agreement with the large San Antonio company.

Food Workers Sign Contracts.

A 1-year agreement negotiated with a large biscuit company in Atlanta recognizes two unions as exclusive bargaining agencies.
for the workers and provides an 8-hour day, 40-hour week, and time and one-half for overtime. The company agrees to furnish and launder all uniforms.

More than 2,500 fish-cannery workers in the State of Washington have won a closed shop contract with wage increases of 2.5 to 15 cents an hour, also improved working conditions and grievance committees. The contract will run for 1 year.

**Union Probes New Spinning Methods**

A union of textile workers has asked for immediate hearings on technological changes in the spinning departments of a textile company with which it has agreements at several plants. The petition for review is filed with the permanent arbitrator between the union and the company.

The new methods of spinning threaten to displace 1,500 workers and reduce the work-week to 32 hours without any compensating adjustment of wages, the union claims. They are "inequitable and in conflict with the protection assured the workers in the agreement." They "have increased the work load and work task of the workers, have resulted in insufficient personal time for them at such tasks, and have accentuated the existing hazards from carbon bisulphide and hydrogen sulphide poisoning."

**Labor Relations Board Decisions**

**Citrus Growers Must Reemploy Women.**

A final cease and desist order has been issued by the National Labor Relations Board against the California citrus growers mentioned in the November Woman Worker, who had been interfering with the self-organization of their employees while claiming that the board had no jurisdiction in the case as the workers were agricultural laborers.

The growers were told to reinstate with back pay 27 packing-house workers, most of them women, who had not been rehired following a cessation of operations in August 1937. All were union members who had begun organizing in the latter part of July and had been met with immediate interference and threats on the part of the growers. Their discharge was taken as evidence that they were fired so as to discourage union activity. They were engaged in washing, grading, and packing oranges, lemons, and grapefruit and were not agricultural laborers, the board ruled. The growers were ordered to cease interfering with employees' organization and spying on union meetings.

**Louisiana Decision Final.**

The proposed findings against a Louisiana cotton mill mentioned in the September Woman Worker have been issued in the form of an order. The company has been directed to reinstate 50 employees (half of them women and girls) with back pay, to bargain collectively on request with the workers' union, and to stop recognizing a company union.

**Virginia Box Workers Get Jobs Back.**

A Virginia manufacturer of wooden baskets, hampers, and crates has been ordered to reinstate with back pay 12 men and 1 woman, and to award remedial wages to another discharged worker not desiring reemployment. Complaints of discharges and lay-offs of 27 other employees were dismissed. The employees lost their jobs in the late summer or early fall of 1937 because of union membership and activity. The woman discharged worked on the midnight shift in the crate department for 10 cents an hour. An election has been ordered to determine the union by which the workers wish to be represented.
Employment and Earnings

More Jobs in Missouri Factories

Employment of women in Missouri factories and public utility establishments in 1937 was found by the Department of Labor and Industrial Inspection to be about 1,700 above that reported in 1936. Nearly one-third of the women in 1937 were in clothing factories, one-fifth in leather factories (chiefly shoes), and one-seventh in food manufacture, including canneries. In each of these important groups women's employment had increased since 1936. In telephone establishments there was a considerable decrease. Though total employment of women had advanced, the figure for St. Louis had declined.

The level of wages seemed somewhat below that of 1936. Nearly 14 percent of the women received less than $10 a week, compared with 10 percent in 1936. The proportion earning $20 or more had declined by about one-half of 1 percent. Nearly three-fourths of the women in canneries in 1937, 15 percent of those in other food factories, and 12 percent of those in clothing factories had earned less than $10 a week.

Higher Earnings in Oregon

Earnings of women in Oregon factories in 1937 were in most cases above the level of 1936, according to the biennial report of the State Bureau of Labor. The statistics show that almost two-fifths of the women were in textiles and textile products, over one-third in the food industries, and one-seventh in wood or wood products.

In most of the important woman-employing industries reported, women were earning $1 a week more in 1937 than in 1936; in some cases increases were larger. For women who had averaged between $15 and $16, average earnings increased by $1 in candy, bakery, woolen, and linen plants, and by $2 in paper and paper-product plants. They had increased by $1 in box and basket making, where formerly they were between $16 and $17, and in wearing apparel and knit goods, where they had been between $17 and $18. The highest average, as well as the greatest increase, was in the making of shingles, veneer, and so forth, where the 1936 average of between $18 and $19 had advanced in 1937 to between $21 and $22. Only in fruit packing and drying did the average remain at the same level in 1937 as in 1936, between $16 and $17.

Less Employment in South Carolina

In 1938 there were reported more than 38,000 women in factories in South Carolina. This is a slight decrease from the number reported in 1937, with the proportion of women remaining practically the same, 30 percent of all workers. The decrease was greater in textile mills, where almost 85 percent of the women were employed. There was a slight increase in employment of women in tobacco factories and a considerable one in canneries.

The average year's earnings of women in all factories, which were $634 in 1937, decreased by $63 in 1938. In textile mills per capita payments to women decreased from $663 to $609; and in clothing factories, employing about 2,400 women, from $504 to $410.

New York Office Workers’ Earnings

Average earnings of 44,000 office employees of New York factories in the fall of 1938 were $34.19 a week, 26 cents more than in the fall of 1937, the State Department of Labor reports. As the reporting firms employed 2,400 fewer office workers than last year, the slight increase in earnings may be due as much to the laying off of low-paid employees as to a rise in salary scales.

In seven industry groups the average week's earnings of office workers were above
the average of the year before. In four cases they were more than $1 higher, and in one case almost $1. These industries were stone, clay, and glass; printing and paper goods; furs, leather, and rubber goods; textiles; and food and tobacco. With the exception of the first named, all five had reduced the number of office workers by more than 5 percent. Several groups reported substantial decreases in total pay rolls, but in every instance the percentage decrease in pay rolls was much less than the decrease in employment, which suggests that the majority of the persons laid off were in the lower salary brackets.

A study in the spring of 1938 of clerical workers in New York City indicated an opposite trend, salaries in May-June being slightly lower than in May of 1937. This survey, made by the Industrial Bureau of the Merchants' Association of New York, covered 316 employers in 1938 and 297 in 1937.

In 1938 the average weekly salary of over 5,600 women stenographers or secretaries was $30.37, nearly $1 lower than the year before. The average for nearly 400 men stenographers or secretaries was $34.94, about 60 cents lower than in 1937.

Average earnings for all telephone operators and file clerks, regardless of sex, had declined, but for the total number of typists there was a trifling increase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average weekly salary</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone operators</td>
<td>$25.83</td>
<td>$23.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File clerks</td>
<td>22.77</td>
<td>21.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typists</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>22.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lowest salary reported for typists had advanced by $2; that for telephone operators had declined by $2; and the minimum for file clerks and female stenographers remained the same.

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News Notes

Married Women May Teach

The married women teachers of Somerville, Mass., who had been dropped from the city pay rolls because their husbands were gainfully employed, have been ordered reinstated by Judge Michael H. Sullivan of the Dorchester district court. When first dismissed, the six women, under the civil-service law, were given a public hearing by the mayor, who decided that the dismissal should stand. The women then appealed to the district court.

Judge Sullivan, in his decision, stated: "I find the petitioners have been employed for many years under the protection of the State civil-service laws; that they were experienced and skillful in their work, and had performed their duties with ability and fidelity; * * * that the only reason for removal of the petitioners was that they were married women whose husbands are gainfully employed and that the other causes assigned to their removal were not justified. "I, therefore, find that the petitioners and each of them were removed without proper cause, although I believe the respondent acted in good faith. * * *"

The ruling is to be contested by the city.

56-Hour-Week Law Unconstitutional

The South Carolina act of 1938 that provided maximum hours of 12 a day and 56 a week for men and women in a number of industries has been declared unconstitutional in a lower court and appealed to the State supreme court. The law was challenged by numerous drug stores, filling stations, retail groceries, dyers and cleaners. Because of many inequalities in the coverage of the act, "The court is of opinion that the act is
fatally defective by reason of the unconstitutional discriminations contained therein." Among industries covered were mercantile, restaurant, laundry, dry cleaning, and some manufacturing.

**Home-Work Order Upheld in New York**

Home-work order No. 3, prohibiting industrial home work in the artificial flower and feather industry in New York, went into force again on December 19. The order was issued last March by the State department of labor and suspended in July after petition had been filed challenging its validity (see Woman Worker, March and September 1938). After hearings, a temporary injunction against the order was denied in December. A final hearing was held on January 20 on a petition for a permanent injunction.

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**Review**


It was the women dressmakers of Local 25, the Waist and Dressmakers' Union, that back in 1913 launched the educational program in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union which today is known nationally for its brilliant achievement in the musical revue "Pins and Needles." From the beginning, the garment workers of New York thought of education in terms of music, dancing, and good times, as well as of study courses in economics and history. They began with lectures and courses in trade-unionism, English, and physical training. In 1916 they opened their first summer home in the Catskill Mountains, to be followed by other homes in the following year, until Unity House was established as a permanent summer camp for workers in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania.

Under the stimulus of Local 25, an educational department was established in the International in 1917. Then began the Workers University in New York, with systematic courses in labor problems, American government and history, and industrial economics. Educational activities spread to locals in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Montreal, Newark, Philadelphia, and Worcester, Mass. In 1918 the American Federation of Labor at its national convention appointed a committee to investigate the educational program of the union and later urged other labor unions to follow suit.

Today there are three general divisions of educational activity: Mass education in the form of lectures, sports, dramatics, music clubs, excursions, etc.; class education in the form of courses in economics, history, journalism, public speaking, labor economics, etc.; and training for trade-union service in the form of practical instruction for union functionaries.

The annual report for the year ending May 31, 1937, showed a student body of more than 20,000 workers in union classes and educational groups; 25 locals had their own educational directors; and 18 workers had scholarships to workers' summer schools and colleges.

This record in "Growing Up" is presented in a form which itself is an outstanding example of workers' education at its best. The story is told in words and pictures, with a striking use of photographs, pictographs, and novel type arrangements.