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Published under authority of Public Resolution No. 57, approved May 11, 1922 (42 Stat. 541), as amended by section 307, Public Act 212, 72d Congress, approved June 30, 1932. This publication approved by the Director, Bureau of the Budget.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., at 5 cents a copy or 25 cents a year.
Statement on Democratic Rights

By Mary Anderson, Director of the Women’s Bureau

Legislative attacks designed to prohibit the members of any minority group from full self-expression and the right to earn a living are an attack on democracy itself. Recently this spirit has manifested itself in proposed legislation in a considerable number of our States, prohibiting married women from keeping their jobs in government service, prohibiting married women from securing such jobs, or requiring that single women who have such jobs must immediately resign if they marry. This legislation is to apply only to women working in State and municipal positions; therefore it concerns the clerical workers and professional women much more than the industrial women workers.

I am sure the proponents of such legislation do not see its implications as an attack on democracy; they see it only from the economic point of view. As a matter of fact, it is an attack on democracy, through a minority group in our society. It constitutes, therefore, not only a danger to the families that would be affected directly but a great menace to one of the cornerstones essential to democracy: The right of individuals to express themselves, to do the things that they find necessary to do, and to hold a job on the basis of their demonstrated preparation and fitness for such work rather than their need of employment.

In a world tending to dictatorships, where individuals and groups of people are regimented and required to do what they are told to do, we should in our democracy be increasingly alert to see that we do nothing that might become the opening wedge of a dictatorship. Employed married women are a small minority group, constituting only about 6 percent of all our employed persons, less than 3 percent of our entire population. But it happens to be a group easy to single out. If these people, in most cases heavily pressed by economic responsibilities, can be attacked, who shall say what minority may next become a target for unjust and undemocratic action?

The married-woman question can easily be used for an opening wedge, and, if that should succeed, such regimentation would be extended to other groups of people, and eventually the dictatorship that had been creeping gradually upon us would be an accomplished fact. We as a people should examine our every act to know its implications beyond those of the immediate present, so that we shall do nothing that will take away or weaken the precious rights guaranteed in a democracy.

Work of Married Women Seriously Menaced

The drive against the employment of married women in State and local governments is becoming more acute. The Women’s Bureau has knowledge of bills against married women’s employment that have been introduced in more than a fourth of the States. In the past such bills have applied to women whose husbands also were in the public service. Now, however, they are becoming more extreme, and in most cases would forbid the employment by State and local governments of married persons (including teachers) whose spouses have any type of employment. In some cases
they apply to married women whether or not their husbands have work. Some even provide for dismissal of married women now employed.

In some States these bills bar the employment of the married woman only if her husband earns as much as a certain amount, say $100 a month, or $1,200 or $1,500 a year. The bill in one State would prohibit employment of any married person whose spouse receives as much as $800 a year from any work, though the W. P. A. study of cost of living reported $1,243 as minimum family maintenance in a city of that State.

The use of "persons" instead of "women" has not had the intended effect of avoiding discrimination against women. Under the "married persons clause" of the Economy Act (since repealed) which applied to the Federal Service, more than three-fourths of those who lost their jobs because of the act were women. Their loss of job also curtailed the employment of other women whom they had paid for services, and in some cases caused relatives they were aiding to be thrown on relief. Thus the dismissal of these married women really increased the burden of the community.

At least one State has taken action to protect married women, in a teachers' tenure law that provides against their dismissal for marriage.

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Employment of Married Women in Sweden

All proposals for limiting the right of married women to work outside the home must be decisively rejected, in the opinion of a committee appointed by the Swedish Government to make a thorough investigation of the problem of women in the labor market. The report of the committee has been published recently in a volume of nearly 500 pages. Comments of Miss Kerstin Hesselgren, chairman of the committee of representative men and women that made the investigation, are included.

About 18 percent of married women in Sweden were found to be gainfully employed, Miss Hesselgren reports, but in few cases were they keeping men out of jobs. Men and women were not the competitors in the labor market that they are generally supposed to be; usually they were working in different lines of employment. Moreover, many lines of work were found in which women were needed.

The gradual entry of women into the economic world must be accepted as a fact, the committee contends in its report. The State may take steps to smooth the process but it cannot stop it nor greatly accelerate it.

Briefly summarized, the principal recommendations of the report include:

All proposals for limiting by law the right of married women to work outside the home, as also all other restrictive regulation of their right to seek work, must be decisively rejected.

All economic measures intended to encourage women to leave their positions on marriage, such as gratuities, marriage loans, payment of pensions in a lump sum or in advance, should be discouraged.

Opportunities for part-time work and substitute work, in public service or in private employment, should be made available for married women as for others who for good and sufficient reasons desire shorter working hours.

Opportunities for married couples to work in the same place, both in public and in private employment, should be arranged when it can be done without infringing on the rights of others.

Institutions for helping mothers to care for their small children should be given public support. These should be equally available, though in different forms, for the mother who is gainfully employed outside her home and for the one who works at home.
Recent Trends in Women's Wages and Hours

The week's earnings of women increased from September 1937 to September 1938 in identical plants in many of the more important woman-employing manufacturing industries and in laundries. This is shown from a Women's Bureau analysis of pay-roll records for more than 298,500 women, employed in 23 large woman-employing manufacturing industries in 12 important industrial States, and for nearly 26,000 women in laundries and dry-cleaning plants. The records were mailed to the Bureau of Labor Statistics by employers.

These are the first figures ever available to show the trend in women's wages over an entire year's period on so large a scale.

Table I.—Averages of Week’s Earnings, Hours Worked, and Hourly Earnings of Men and Women Wage Earners in Woman-Employing Industries in 12 Large Industrial States September 1938

[From reports by employers. Preliminary figures]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Women reported</th>
<th>Average week's earnings</th>
<th>Average hours worked</th>
<th>Average hourly earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent of all reported employees</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANUFACTURING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile Industries</td>
<td>81,757</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>$20.27</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton goods</td>
<td>21,435</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16.06</td>
<td>12.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knit goods</td>
<td>31,339</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28.55</td>
<td>15.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewear</td>
<td>19,556</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29.34</td>
<td>16.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>11,783</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>22.78</td>
<td>12.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk and rayon</td>
<td>11,820</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19.02</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolen and worsted</td>
<td>17,163</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21.92</td>
<td>14.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing industries</td>
<td>99,560</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31.28</td>
<td>16.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's clothing</td>
<td>55,247</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>27.39</td>
<td>14.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits and overcoats, etc., women</td>
<td>25,948</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28.53</td>
<td>16.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton; work; shirts and collars, men</td>
<td>29,299</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22.55</td>
<td>12.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's clothing</td>
<td>44,313</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37.91</td>
<td>18.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergarments, etc., women</td>
<td>12,775</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>29.45</td>
<td>14.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coats and suits, men</td>
<td>3,853</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41.09</td>
<td>23.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses, cotton, women</td>
<td>11,766</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>24.62</td>
<td>12.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses, other, men</td>
<td>15,919</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38.42</td>
<td>23.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Industries—Confectionery</td>
<td>17,273</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26.67</td>
<td>15.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather Industries—Boots and shoes</td>
<td>21,508</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>20.80</td>
<td>13.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Industries—Cigars</td>
<td>11,804</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td>12.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAPER AND PRINTING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and job</td>
<td>11,769</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.70</td>
<td>16.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper boxes (set-up)</td>
<td>6,599</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24.72</td>
<td>14.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical machinery and supplies</td>
<td>22,634</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27.67</td>
<td>16.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radios and phonographs</td>
<td>7,537</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28.63</td>
<td>17.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METAL INDUSTRIES—Hardware</td>
<td>3,716</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.68</td>
<td>14.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUBBER GOODS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto tires and tubes, men</td>
<td>4,196</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34.01</td>
<td>21.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boots and shoes</td>
<td>3,142</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24.68</td>
<td>18.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES—Rayon</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34.42</td>
<td>21.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASS AND POTTERY, men</td>
<td>6,252</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25.73</td>
<td>15.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONMANUFACTURING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAUNDRIES, women</td>
<td>22,246</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27.73</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRY CLEANING, men</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28.40</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Computed from data covering smaller number of employees than total with week's earnings reported. 2 Averages unweighted.

Note.—Except in the cases noted (see footnote 2), averages are weighted for the importance the 12 States have in the entire industry.
THE WOMAN WORKER

They sample the more important woman-employing industries in all the largest industrial States. They are shown in the two accompanying tables.

The increased week's earnings seem to represent somewhat lengthened hours of work rather than higher hourly rates. Women's average hourly earnings had declined in about two-thirds of the industries reported, but their average working hours had increased in practically the same proportion. Hourly averages cannot be corre-

lated exactly with week's earnings, since not all firms could furnish reports as to hours worked. However, hours worked were reported for nearly 90 percent of all workers for whom pay-roll data were furnished in the study.

Wage and hour data obtained from the same plants for men workers show that on both a weekly and an hourly basis men's wages were higher than women's in September 1938 in all the reporting industries. In only two of the manufacturing industries

Table II.—Changes in Employment, Earnings, and Hours of Men and Women Wage Earners in Identical Establishments in 12 Large Industrial States September 1937 to September 1938

[Computed from reports by employers. Preliminary figures]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percent change * from September 1937 to September 1938 in—</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANUFACTURING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile Industries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton goods</td>
<td>-10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knit goods</td>
<td>-15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosiery</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwear</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk and rayon</td>
<td>-18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolen and worsted</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Industries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men's clothing</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suits and overcoats, etc.</td>
<td>-1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton; work; shirts and collars</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's clothing</td>
<td>+9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergarments, etc.</td>
<td>-8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coats and suits</td>
<td>+4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses, cotton</td>
<td>+2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dresses, other</td>
<td>+6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Industries—Confectionery</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather Industries—Boots and shoes</td>
<td>-5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Industries—Cigars</td>
<td>-3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and Printing:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and job</td>
<td>-7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper boxes (set-up)</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Industries:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical machinery and supplies</td>
<td>-35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radios and phonographs</td>
<td>-31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Industries—Hardware</td>
<td>-20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber Goods:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto tires and tubes</td>
<td>-30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boots and shoes</td>
<td>-31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Industries—Rayon</td>
<td>-27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass and Pottery</td>
<td>-20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NONMANUFACTURING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launderies</td>
<td>-4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Cleaning</td>
<td>-6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* Based on identical firms. 1 Computed from data covering smaller number of employees than total with week's earnings reported.

1 Averages unweighted. 2 Less than 0.05 percent.

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reporting, cotton textiles and cigars, did the men operatives average less than 50 cents an hour. In only five of the industries did women's earnings average as high as 50 cents an hour; they averaged below men's by 25 cents or more an hour in 10 of the industries. In all cases women's average hours of work were shorter than men's, though in most industries men averaged less than 40 hours.

Since this information was secured by voluntary cooperation, it is likely that, with pay rolls in such form that the data could be furnished readily, these employers represent the better organized and for the most part the larger firms. Hence the earnings reported tend to overstate women's wages, running somewhat higher than if secured in an intensive cross-section study of all types of firms in an industry.

The reports represent industries that employ, according to the Census of Manufactures, about two-thirds of all women in manufacturing. Women comprise more than 50 percent of the working force in over half these industries, and over a third of the workers in several others. The reports cover 12 leading manufacturing States, employing about three-fourths of all women in manufacturing—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

The week's earnings given are averages for the women who worked during the pay period covered. Of course records for individual women would show a considerable variation around this average, especially as some employees who did not work full time are included.

Proposed State Legislation

Among the reports of bills introduced in State legislatures of 1939 that have come to the Women's Bureau, the following are examples both of progression and of retrogression. Several of them have become law.

Alabama.
To provide a 6-day 48-hour week for females and a half-hour meal period after 5 hours' work.

Arkansas.
To reduce women's maximum hours from 9-54 to 8-48.

Two minimum-wage bills: One provides a minimum of $1.25 for a 9-hour day and authorizes commission to establish a higher wage; the other, $2 a day for experienced and $1.50 for inexperienced workers. (Present law provides $1.25 and $1.)

California.
To include agricultural workers in women's hour and wage law.
To provide a 54-hour maximum week for household workers living in, and an 8-hour day and 6-day 48-hour week for those not living in.

Connecticut.
To provide a maximum of 8-44 hours for nurses in hospitals with State appropriations.
To revise minimum-wage law, eliminating directory period for orders.

Delaware.
Two bills to reduce women's maximum hours, one to 8-48, the other to 8-44, with a 5½-day week. (Present law provides 10-55, with 6 days.)
To limit men's hours in same industries as women's, providing a maximum of 8-48, with a 5½-day week.

Illinois.
To extend minimum-wage law to cover domestic workers.

Maine.
To establish minimum wages for women and minors, providing for wage boards and issuance of wage orders.
To extend women's hour law to cover men; to reduce hours from 9-54 to 8-48; and to extend coverage to laundries.
To prohibit employment of women in workshops, factories, manufacturing, or mechanical establishments between 5:30 p. m.
and 6.45 a. m. "except when any of the establishments are operated on regular shifts, so called," to reduce from 54 to 48 the maximum weekly hours of women in telephone exchanges, mercantile establishments, stores, restaurants, laundries, telegraph offices, express, or transportation companies; to extend coverage of hour law to hotels, camps, tourist homes; to reduce maximum consecutive working hours from 6 to 5, and from 6½ to 6 if employment ends by 1:30 p. m.

**Maryland.**

To establish minimum wages for women and minors, except domestic and farm labor. Provides for wage boards and wage orders.

**Massachusetts.**

To extend to April 1, 1941, the suspension of law prohibiting women's work in textile industries after 6 p. m. (Passed both Houses.)

To amend 9–48 hour law for women to cover private clubs, private hospitals, offices, letter shops, financial institutions, places of amusement, theaters, and garages.

**Montana.**

To provide basic 8–48 hours for hotels, restaurants, cafes. (Approved by Governor.)

To provide basic 8–48 hours for bakery employees. (Passed both Houses.)

To provide basic 8–48 hours in laundry and dry cleaning.

**Nevada.**

To limit hours of State and local employees to 8–56, exempting nurses. (Passed House.)

To amend women's maximum-hour and minimum-wage law to provide: (1) Not more than a 12-hour spread in working day; (2) a minimum wage of $2 for an 8-hour day and $12 for a 48-hour week during probationary period of 3 months; (3) deductions for both food and lodging to be not more than $1 a day, 25 cents for each meal actually consumed, and $1.75 a week for room only. (Approved by Governor.)

**New Jersey.**

To prohibit industrial home work in listed industries, giving labor commissioner the power to prohibit, and requiring employers', home workers', and sanitary permits.

Three bills to amend minimum-wage law:
(1) To shorten wage-order directory period from 9 months to 90 days; (2) to extend coverage to hotel employees; (3) to exempt charitable hospitals or other institutions not operated for profit. (Last named has passed Senate.)

To amend maximum-hour law for women—now 10–54—to provide an 8-hour day (no weekly limit) and to cover beauty parlors, barber shops, and cleaning and dyeing establishments.

To repeal maximum 10–54 hour law for women.

To repeal law prohibiting employment of women at night in specified industries.

To establish 6-day week for workers in numerous employments, including all places selling or serving food or liquor.

**New Mexico.**

To amend maximum-hour law for women to permit 7 days instead of 6. Daily and weekly hours to remain 8–48. (Approved by Governor.)

**New York.**

To extend 1-day-rest-in-7 law to resort or seasonal hotels and restaurants in rural communities and in places of under 15,000 population.

To provide 1 day of rest in 7 for employees of restaurants or eating places in drug stores and pharmacies, and to prohibit employment of females between 10 p. m. and 7 a. m.

**Ohio.**

To exempt financial institutions from 48-hour law for women.

To amend 48-hour law for women as follows: (1) To permit women over 18 in service establishments to work 10 hours on 2 days in a 6-day period; (2) to permit 10–54 hours for 8 weeks during inventory, emergency, seasonal, or irregularly occurring periods; (3) to provide time and a half or equivalent time off for hours worked over 48 a week, so that total hours worked do not exceed 2,496 a year (the 1937 law allows 9–50 hours in laundry and dry-cleaning plants during weeks including certain holidays, 10–50 in mercantile establishments during 1 week in first 6 months of the year and 2 weeks in second 6 months); (4) to exempt women over 21 earning at least $30 a week as private secretaries or in bona fide executive positions (present law reads $35 a week in bona fide executive positions); (5) to require employers to keep records for 2 years; (6) to provide that no prosecution should be begun more than 2 years after alleged offense is committed.

**Oklahoma.**

To amend minimum-wage law to correct technical defects and make clear its application to all workers.

**Utah.**

To extend maximum 8–48 hour law for
women to all industries, trades, and occupations except household employment and, as in present law, packing or canning of perishable fruits or vegetables or manufacture of containers during season. (Approved by Governor.)

**Washington.**

To authorize Director of Labor and Industries to fix hours, wages, and working conditions for home-service employees equal to standards for public housekeeping workers.

To establish an 8-hour day, 5-day week, and $100 minimum monthly wage for employees of public institutions (including hospitals and sanatoriums) receiving public funds; to provide overtime pay of time and a half for more than 40 hours; to require employers to furnish, launder, and repair uniforms; and to limit deductions for meals and lodging to specified amounts.

**West Virginia.**

To regulate industrial home work by prohibiting manufacture of certain articles in homes, requiring employers’ permits and workers’ certificates renewable each year, and labeling of work before delivery to worker. (Approved by Governor.)

Wage and hour bills similar to the Federal act have been introduced, with varying results, in 29 States: Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

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**Toward Minimum Fair Wages**

**Minimum-Wage Law for Men Upheld**

On March 21, the Supreme Court of the State of Oklahoma, by a 7-to-2 decision, upheld the general constitutionality of minimum-wage and maximum-hour legislation for men when it ruled that the provisions of the minimum-wage law of that State could apply validly to men as well as to women and minors. As a matter of local law the minimum-wage provisions of this Oklahoma statute cannot be applied to men and minors, because the title of the act is not sufficiently clear, under the State constitution, to permit such application. The defective title will require amendment by the legislature before minimum wages can legally be established for men in that State. The court also held that certain provisions of eight of the orders issued by the Industrial Welfare Commission under the minimum-wage law are void because of uncertainty. This court decision is of far-reaching significance because it is the first rendered by any State supreme court concerning the constitutionality of minimum-wage legislation for men. (For earlier decision by a State district court in June 1938, which was appealed, see July 1938 Woman Worker.)

**Progress Under the Fair Labor Standards Act**

Correction: In the January 1939 Woman Worker (page 4, par. 1) the statement was made that “telephone operators, even when handling long-distance calls, are exempt from provisions of the act * * *.” This should have read “telephone operators in hotels,” and so forth. The editor regrets the misstatement.

**Textile Committee’s Recommendation.**

Recommendation for a minimum wage of 32½ cents an hour has been made to the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division by the textile industry committee. This includes cotton, silk, rayon, and other synthetic yarns and fabrics. Conservative estimates indicate that 45,000 to 55,000 women will receive pay raises if this minimum goes into effect. More than 95 percent of these will be in the South, where
roughly 43,000 to 53,000 women may be expected to benefit. Hearings will be held jointly on this and on the minimum of 36 cents recommended for woolen textiles. The hosiery industry committee has recommended a minimum wage of 40 cents for full-fashioned hosiery and 32 1/2 cents for seamless hosiery.

**Cases Before the Courts.**

Woman-employing industries are involved in practically all 12 court cases brought, up to March 15, to enforce the Fair Labor Standards Act. In all eight cases settled thus far, Federal courts ruled in favor of the Government.

The first case of criminal proceedings brought by the Government was terminated by a plea of guilty and imposition of fines totaling $1,500. This involved a shoe firm in Lawrence, Mass., charged with failure to pay the 25-cent minimum, falsification of records, failure to keep records, and the placing in interstate commerce of goods produced under these conditions. Evidence was presented that one young woman had received only $2.64 for a week's work, another $2.38. It was estimated that the company had saved between $700 and $1,000 by evading the act. Fines of $1,500 could have been imposed on each of four indictments, but the judge suspended penalties for three of them when assured that restitution would be made to the underpaid employees.

The other two cases where criminal action has been instituted also involve New England shoe manufacturers, another in Lawrence and one in Lewiston, Maine (pending March 15).

The following industries, all but one important as woman employers, are involved in the nine civil cases in which injunction proceedings were brought against individual firms: Men's athletic uniforms (Iowa), men's shirts, pants, and overalls (Georgia), textiles (North Carolina), folding paper boxes (Pennsylvania), laundry and dry-cleaning supplies (Pennsylvania), men's shorts, shirts, pajamas, and women's slips (Virginia), sports hosiery (Tennessee), children's hosiery (Georgia), cigars (Louisiana).

**Three New Industry Committees Appointed.**

Hats and shoes have been brought under the jurisdiction of industry committees of the Wage and Hour Division with a view to setting higher minimum-wage rates than the 25 cents required in the Federal act.

The manufacture of hats is divided into two industries—hats and millinery. The hat committee covers the manufacture of all men's and boys' headwear but caps, of all types of fur-felt or wool-felt bodies, and the manufacture or processing of hatters' furs. The millinery committee covers the manufacture of all headwear (except knitted) for women, misses, girls, and infants. It does not include hat bodies of fur felt or wool felt. About 43,000 wage earners are covered by the two committees.

The boot and shoe committee has jurisdiction over the manufacture of all footwear but knitted and vulcanized products, also of cut stock and findings, and boot and shoe patterns, but generally excepting rubber and wood products. Approximately 215,000 wage earners are employed in the lines covered.

Women serving on the three committees include: On the hat committee, Charlotte Carr, director of Hull House, Chicago, a public representative; for the millinery committee, Rosamond Lamb, of Boston, president of the Consumers' League of Massachusetts, and Elizabeth Brandeis Raushenbush, of the University of Wisconsin, for the public, and Stella Nelson, of Chicago, for the employees; on the boot and shoe committee, Elizabeth S. Magee, of Cleveland, executive secretary of the Ohio Consumers' League, and Elizabeth Morrissy, professor of economics of Notre Dame College of Baltimore, Md., for the public, and Mae Young, member general executive board, United Shoe Workers of America (C. I. O.), of Lynn, Mass., for the employees.

The apparel and hosiery committees held closed meetings in March to receive testimony.
Review of Pecan Decision Denied.

A petition by the company for review of the decision on pecan shells, reported in March 1939 Woman Worker, was denied March 10 by the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. The findings leading to the decision that 25 cents should be paid pecan shellers were found to be supported by the evidence.

More Tobacco Exemptions.

Following partial exemptions of the auction tobacco warehouse and raw leaf tobacco industries from the maximum-hours provisions of the act (see March 1939 Woman Worker), the Wage and Hour Administrator has now awarded a seasonal exemption from the hours provision to the handling of perishable cigar leaf tobacco of types grown principally in the Connecticut Valley, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Florida. The partial exemption allows certain classes of employees to be employed up to 12 hours a day and 56 hours a week for a period not to exceed 14 workweeks in the aggregate per year without payment of overtime. The employees exempted are those in the operations of buying, handling, stripping, sorting, grading, sizing, packing, and stemming prior to packing, of perishable cigar leaf tobacco. The exemption does not affect the minimum-wage provision.

The definition of “area of production” has been amended with respect to establishments located in the area in which Puerto Rican tobacco is grown, so that employees are exempt from both the hours and the wages provisions of the act if they are engaged in handling, packing, storing, and drying Puerto Rican leaf tobacco for market in an establishment that is a first concentration point. The first concentration point as redefined for purposes of this product means a place where such tobacco is first assembled from nearby farms and prepared for market.

State Reports on Minimum Wage

The report for 1937-38 of the Department of Labor and Industry of Minnesota devotes considerable space to the history and recent activities of minimum wage in that State.

In the latest biennial report of the Industrial Commission of Colorado the progress of minimum wage under the State’s first appropriation for such work is described.

In the 2-year period ending June 30, 1938, the Minimum Wage Division of New Hampshire issued orders covering five important industries. Almost complete compliance was secured through education and persuasion, and no case was referred to the courts. Hundreds of adjustments of wages were made and many hundreds of dollars of back wages collected.

The Industrial Welfare Commission of Oklahoma has issued a typewritten report covering the minimum-wage situation for the period from May 15, 1937, to December 31, 1938. Though nine orders were issued during that period, none was enforced because the constitutionality of the law was challenged and the case was taken to the courts. (See page 9.)

The New York Division of Women in Industry and Minimum Wage has told the history of the minimum-wage law of that State as it relates to the laundry industry, under both the law of 1933 and the present one passed in 1937, in a most interesting and informative bulletin, “Minimum Wage and the Laundry Industry.”

Recent State Minimum-Wage Orders

District of Columbia—Office and Previously Unclassified.

A minimum wage of $17 a week of 30 to 44 hours is provided for office workers in the District of Columbia in an order effective March 13. Workers employed less than 30 hours a week or more than 44 must be paid at least 50 cents for each undertime or overtime hour. Besides clerical workers, this provision of the order covers professionals’ assistants and attendants, laboratory mechanics and technicians, messengers, ushers, and telegraph and telephone operators.

For elevator operators a $17 minimum wage is provided for a workweek of 40 to 48 hours, and 40 cents an hour for undertime or
overtime hours. For maids, cleaners, and similar workers, the minimum is $14.50 for 40 to 48 hours, and 35 cents an hour for overtime or undertime.

Adult learners (18 years old and with less than 6 months’ experience) in the first occupation group—office workers and so forth—must receive at least $14 a week of 30 to 44 hours, and 50 cents an hour for overtime or undertime. Not more than 10 percent of the full-time women in an establishment may be learners. There are no provisions for adult learners in the other occupation groups.

**Massachusetts—Knit Goods.**

A directory order effective March 1 fixes a minimum rate of 36 cents an hour, after 36 weeks’ employment in the industry, for women and minors in most lines of knit goods. The rate for learners is 25 cents an hour. Waiting time on the employer’s premises shall be paid for at the individual worker’s regular rate. Excepted from the order are staple lines of hosiery and underwear, but not athletic goods or staple lines such as bathing suits, tights, and infants’ garments.

**Minnesota—The Exempted Industries.**

Separate orders have now been issued for the needlecraft, restaurant, laundry, and telegraph industries, in accordance with the agreement of the Minnesota State Industrial Commission to exempt these industries from the blanket wage order of July 11 and to issue separate orders. (See Woman Worker, May and November 1938.)

The order for restaurants, effective March 1, is identical with the blanket order. The order for the telegraph industry, effective January 10, is identical in its provisions for women and female minors, but in addition it provides a minimum of 25 cents an hour for male minor messengers in accordance with the minimum set in the Fair Labor Standards Act. The order for all needlecraft industries, effective March 1, eliminates regional differences and fixes a flat rate of 35 cents an hour for experienced workers. Learners are to receive 23½ cents for the first 3 months, 26½ cents for the second 3 months, and 35 cents thereafter. The laundry order, effective May 1, sets minimum rates of 32, 28, 25, and 23 cents an hour, by size of city. Rates for learners, those of less than 6 months’ experience, range from 18 to 28 cents an hour.

**New Hampshire—Retail Trade.**

A directory order for retail trade, effective February 15, sets a minimum hourly rate of 27½ cents for experienced workers in cities with a population of 25,000 or more, 25 cents in the remainder of the State. Rates for learners, those with less than 6 months’ experience full time or 1 year’s part time, are 22 and 20 cents in the two population groups, respectively. Weekly rates for 44 to 48 hours are respectively $13.20 and $12 in the two population groups for experienced workers and $10.56 and $9.60 for learners. No part-time worker able and willing to work shall be employed less than 4 hours in 1 day.

The number of learners may not exceed 10 percent of the total number of women and minors employed in any retail establishment.

This order should result in an increase of earnings for a large number of the women in retail stores in New Hampshire, judging from a study made by the Bureau of Labor in 1937. (See November 1938 Woman Worker.)

**New York—Cleaning and Dyeing.**

A directory order, effective May 8, sets minimum-wage rates for women and minors in the cleaning and dyeing industry in New York State. Three zones are set up. In Zone A—New York City and the counties of Westchester, Suffolk, and Nassau—36 cents is the minimum hourly wage for a basic week of 40 hours; in Zone B—all other cities with a population of 10,000 or more—at least 34 cents an hour is to be paid until June 30, 1939, 35 cents from July 1 to December 31, 1939, and 36 cents thereafter; for Zone C—the remainder of the State—the minimum is set at 33 cents an hour. In each case, hours worked over 40 a week must be paid at 1½ times the minimum rate. Any establishment doing business in more than one zone...
must base its payments on the highest rates required in the territory. Workers must be
paid for waiting time and must receive the overtime rate for each hour of any day in
which a split shift is worked. A total of 6,900 women and minors are employed in the
industry.

Women’s earnings should be considerably increased by the order, as the study made in
1937 showed 35 percent earning less than 30 cents an hour, and 60 percent less than 35
cents.

Other Activities in the States

In Connecticut a wage board has been in
session for the beauty-shop occupation fol-
lowing a study of the industry in the State.
The Massachusetts order for canning,
preserving, minor lines of confectionery, and
food preparations, directory since December
1, 1938 (see March 1939 Woman Worker),
became mandatory March 2.

In New Jersey a wage board for the clean-
ing and dyeing industry was appointed in
March.

The New York beauty-service order, di-
rectory since August 1, 1938, (see July 1938
Woman Worker), became mandatory
March 27 except as it applies to manicurists
in barber shops.

The Pennsylvania order for laundry occu-
pations, directory since October 1938 (see
November 1938 Woman Worker), became
mandatory March 20, except for the guar-
anteed-wage feature requiring 30 hours’ pay
at 30 cents an hour for hours worked over
16 and less than 30.

A wage board has been formed for the
laundry and dry-cleaning industries in Ar-
izona. It began its deliberations late in
March.

State Wage and Hour Surveys

Earnings in Pennsylvania Eating Places.

Supplementing the study of women and
minors in hotels and other lodging places
reported in the November 1938 Woman
Worker, the Pennsylvania Department of
Labor and Industry has published a similar
report on employment of women and minors
in eating places, for use of the minimum-wage
board. Workers in food and beverage de-
partments of hotels were excluded from the
earlier study.

Average week’s cash earnings of full-time
waitresses in year-round hotels in Pennsyl-
vania were $6.41, in seasonal hotels $3.55,
and in other types of establishments $8.69,
in a pay period including January 15, 1938
( July 15, 1937, for seasonal hotels). Prac-
tically all seasonal hotel waitresses received
full maintenance, but an appreciable number
in year-round hotels and a considerable num-er in other restaurants received none. For
these the average week’s earnings were $9 in
year-round hotels and $10.17 in others.

Interviews with a 10-percent sample of
waitresses in regular restaurants showed that
nearly two-thirds of them had received less
than $4 in tips the preceding week, and that
more than two-thirds of these same women
received a cash wage of less than $11. The
extent of maintenance for the waitresses
interviewed was not presented.

Other full-time women employees in eating
places, who seldom receive tips, had average
cash earnings of $10.96 in year-round hotels,
$8.50 for those with full maintenance and
$12.33 for those with none; $9.60 in seasonal
hotels (all with full maintenance); and $12.67
in other restaurants, with $6.80 for those
with full maintenance and $12.88 for those
with none.

All told, more than 7,000 women were em-
ployed in the establishments studied, about
a fourth each from store and hotel restaur-
ants and about half from others. The
majority worked 30 hours or more a week,
though in store restaurants about three-
tenths were part-time or extra workers. Few
women were found working more than
44 hours, the legal limit, though the State
law permits 4 hours’ overtime in restaurants,
and in establishments employing not more
than 3 persons, 54 hours a week.

Year’s earnings were obtained for more
than 1,600 women working full time who
had been employed in only one establish-
ment throughout the year. Less than one-tenth of the women whose earnings were recorded had earned as much as $800, though a study by the department had determined that a woman living alone required about $1,100 to maintain herself. Average year’s cash earnings in various types of establishment were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year-round hotels:</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Maintenance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waitresses</td>
<td>8393</td>
<td>$436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other restaurants:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waitresses</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Contracts Wage Order—Bobbinets

A minimum wage of 37½ cents an hour or $15 for a week of 40 hours has been ordered by the Secretary of Labor for workers employed in the manufacture of bobbinets on Government contracts of $10,000 or more for which bids are solicited on or after February 13, 1939. This was found to be the prevailing wage in hearings conducted by the Public Contracts Board.

Testimony was given at the hearings by three employers and a union representative. It was stated that only five companies manufacture bobbinets.

Women in Unions

Gains in Union Agreements

Agreement Covers 12,000 Textile Workers.

An agreement signed by a woolen textile company and an industrial union covers 12,000 employees in four large mills in New England. The union is established as exclusive bargaining agent for all employees. The agreement calls for a 40-hour week for all productive workers, sharing of work, and maintenance of present wage scale. Except by mutual consent in cases of emergency, time and one-half shall be paid for more than 8 hours a day or 40 a week and, with certain exceptions, for Sundays and 7 holidays. There shall be no strikes or lock-outs; comprehensive arbitration machinery with an impartial chairman is set up. Changes in existing wage rates shall be subject to conference and negotiation between parties at request of either party, changes to be based on economic, business, and competitive conditions and effective only on mutual agreement.

The agreement is effective until February 4, 1940, and shall be automatically renewed from year to year until terminated by either party on 60-day written notice.

Other Textile Agreements.

The minimum-wage rate for women employees of an Ohio bag manufacturer is raised from 34 to 40 cents in a union agreement signed recently. Other provisions are 1 week’s vacation with pay, closed shop, seniority rights, and the 40-hour week.

Following a 2-weeks’ strike at a New Jersey textile mill, a closed-shop agreement was signed providing wage increases of 25 to 40 percent, check-off, 40-hour week with a 4-hour tolerance, and time and one-half for overtime. Last year, it is reported, the firm operated on a 75–80-hour basis, 7 days a week, 364 days a year, observing only the New Year holiday. Wages were 60 percent below standard for the velours trade.

Another New Jersey textile agreement provides a 5-percent wage increase, 40-hour week, closed shop, Sundays off, and 7 holidays besides Sundays, with 2 additional holidays permitted on the call of the union.

Vacations With Pay for Metal Workers.

All women employees of a Wisconsin metal company are to receive an increase of 2½ cents an hour as the result of a new agreement signed with the union. Time and one-third is provided after 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week. All employees with 1 year’s service are to receive 1 week’s vacation with pay. Seniority is maintained during lay-off up to 2 years.
Equal Pay for Fruit Workers.

Equal wages for men and women, a 10-percent increase, a minimum of 60 cents an hour, time and a half for Sunday and holiday work, pay for waiting time, and abolition of the speed-up are provided in agreements signed with four large fruit and vegetable sheds in Arizona. The union has sole bargaining rights.

Agreement Ends D. C. Hotel Strike.

A strike for a closed shop, involving 13 leading Washington, D. C., hotels and approximately 1,400 of their 3,000 workers, was settled March 19 after Labor Department conciliators had arranged a compromise settlement giving preference in hiring to union members. Restaurant, kitchen, and service employees and bartenders were affected. The strike was characterized by continual picket lines and some mass picketing.

The agreement is in force until June 1940. It provides that if the union cannot supply qualified workers within 24 hours, the hotel may employ workers from the open market who must then join the union within 2 weeks.

The workers were represented by a joint executive board with members from all unions involved. The 13 hotels also negotiated as a unit through their association.

Minimum Wages in California Hotels.

Union contracts signed with 17 hotels in Santa Cruz, Calif., provide minimum-wage scales of from $2.25 per 8-hour day for both waiters and waitresses to $3.88 for fry cooks and $4.67 for dinner cooks, meals included. Also provided are the 6-day week, an 8-hour day within 12 hours, and time and one-half for overtime, except during July and August, when hours are 8 within 14 on 5 days and 9 within 14 on Saturday and Sunday, the ninth hour being paid pro rata. Union members are given preference in hiring. The agreement may not be changed or amended before it expires, April 1, 1941.

News Notes

Decision on Married Teachers Reversed

The decision of Judge Michael H. Sullivan of the Dorchester, Mass., district court to reinstate married women teachers dismissed by the Mayor of Somerville (see March Woman Worker), has been reversed by Judge James J. Ronan of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, sitting alone. Judge Ronan said the courts cannot override the judgment of a public official in the exercise of his duties unless his act is shown to violate the law or the rights of a citizen. In this case he could not rule that the assigned cause of removal (marriage) was an improper or inadequate cause.

Workers’ School Leaves Bryn Mawr

A permanent home for the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry is being established on newly leased property at West-Park-on-the-Hudson, half way between Albany and New York City, the school’s board of directors has announced. The new home will be known as the Hudson Shore School.

The new plan makes possible expansion to meet the constantly increasing demand for various types of educational, cultural, and recreational programs to supplement the summer session. Though the 2 months’ summer school will be held as usual, the plant will be available to labor groups throughout the year for institutes and conferences. There are housing facilities for 70 persons, summer and winter, and it will be possible to greatly increase the capacity as the need arises.
Economic Status of Women in Professions

Some idea of the extent to which university-trained women are supporting dependents is given in reports received by the International Federation of University Women from some 1,700 of its members. A uniform schedule was used in 12 countries to obtain this information, which was requested, among other data, by the International Labor Office. In addition, a preliminary report has been prepared on some 8,800 university women in the United States of America, for which data were tabulated by the Women's Bureau.

The returns, though far from complete, throw considerable light on the general economic position of university women. Both in the American group and in those of other countries, 60 percent or more of the women were teachers, and the groups next in size were research workers and librarians, secretaries or general office workers, and social welfare workers. Only about 5 percent of those reported in the United States were working on their own account, compared to nearly 15 percent of those reporting in the other countries. Almost two-thirds of those reporting had no personal income other than from their employment. For most of those who had other income this amounted to only small receipts during the year.

About 13 percent of the women reporting in the United States were married; about 12 percent in all other countries combined. There were striking differences in this respect between six European countries, where 21 percent of those reporting were married, and six British countries, where only 7 percent were married.

Detailed reports were given on the extent to which the women were supporting others. Of the single women, well over a fifth in the United States and a third in other countries had dependents. Of these, 10 percent in other countries and 14 percent in the United States had three or more dependents.

In the other countries it was found that a large proportion gave financial assistance to parents or others of the generation older than themselves; 40 percent were aiding their mothers, 14 percent their fathers, 24 percent relatives other than parents or brothers and sisters, in many cases aunts. Over 40 percent of all single women reporting contributed half or more of the entire family budget.

In the United States, 55 percent of the married women and 60 percent of those who were widowed or divorced had dependents. In other countries well over one-fourth of the married women had dependents other than their husbands or children and a number were entirely supporting their husbands.

Recent Women's Bureau Publications

Printed Bulletins


Mimeographed Material


Preserving Existing State Minimum Wage Laws for Women. 6 pages.


An Occupational Analysis of Household Employment. By Mary Anderson. 7 pages.

1 Bulletins may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., at prices listed. A discount of 25 percent on orders of 100 or more copies is allowed. Single copies of 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.