

The **WOMAN WORKER**

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United States Department of Labor
Women's Bureau

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, SECRETARY

WOMEN'S BUREAU

MARY ANDERSON, DIRECTOR

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Season's Earnings of Women in Canneries

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WOMEN who can the vegetables and fruits so widely used today often cannot expect to earn from such work more than a cash supplement to other income. Owing to the seasonal factor and the consequent short period during which jobs are available, the industry can furnish but few workers with a year's budget on a health and decency basis, according to a survey recently made by the Women's Bureau. In 1938 women comprised over 60 percent of the workers reported canning tomatoes, green beans, and large fruits, nearly 30 percent in pea canning, and just under half in corn canning. Women's chief occupations in canneries are in the preparation, the general factory, and the canning departments.

Figures on length of the worker's employment and amount received for the season's work were compiled from the plants' records kept for Social Security purposes in 1937, which is considered the best recent canning year. The information secured is being followed by further data for the 1939 season.

Of more than 170,000 employees reporting weeks worked in 1937 in the canning and dried-fruit-packing plants, 63 percent had less than 8 weeks' employment in any one plant; less than 5 percent had worked in the same plant as long as three-fourths of the year. A sample testing in California found that only 6 percent of the wage earners had had work in more than one cannery. Migrants may work in several seasonal-product canneries in several communities, this appearing to be more prevalent in California than elsewhere. However, with the height of the season in all but peas and asparagus coming in August, not many new people will be taken on in a plant when this peak is over.

The maximum number employed in one week by the 567 plants in the 13 important canning States included in the survey of 1938 was about 135,000. Just over a third

of these were at work in California and well over a tenth in Indiana. In Maryland, Wisconsin, New York, and Indiana, three-fifths or more of the plants visited are in rural areas, that is, towns under 2,500. In California and Illinois only a fourth of the plants are in rural areas. Other States included are Iowa, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

Sixty percent of the nearly 190,000 workers reported to the Social Security Board had received less than \$100 for their season's work. Average earnings of those who had worked through the canning season of most usual duration were as follows:

<i>Weeks worked</i>	<i>Percent of workers</i>	<i>Average earnings for season</i>
Under 4 weeks.....	32.5	\$20.10
4, under 8 weeks.....	30.5	75.20
8, under 12 weeks.....	15.4	149.20

The varying amounts received by workers in different States, listed according to the numbers employed in this industry, are indicated in the following average earnings for the season:

<i>State</i>	<i>Under 4 weeks</i>	<i>4, under 8 weeks</i>
California.....	\$23.35	\$95.40
Indiana.....	15.90	64.05
Maryland.....	10.55	40.90
New York.....	20.15	73.80
Wisconsin.....	25.35	64.80
Washington.....	19.70	71.00
Illinois.....	18.55	76.80
Minnesota.....	28.80	78.45
New Jersey and Pennsylvania....	19.15	59.40
Iowa.....	19.25	62.55
Ohio.....	18.25	61.85

Less than one-third of the plants reported put up only one fresh vegetable, and none of these was in operation more than 14 weeks. The average for tomatoes and tomato products (the largest pack) was only 8 weeks; for peas or corn 5 weeks, with most plants operating less than 6 weeks, and the peak or near peak not over 4 weeks in Maryland,

Virginia, and California, 2 weeks in Ohio. About 10 percent of the plants canned two seasonal vegetables, and only a few canned three or more. Usual combinations include peas and green or lima beans; tomatoes and corn or beans; green beans and corn. Though large numbers were at work in two-vegetable canneries for as much as 4 weeks in New York, the pay roll was at peak for only 2 weeks, in California for only 1 week. The length of the season in plants with more than one product was as follows:

Type of plant	Average weeks and days on which canning or packing was done	
	Weeks	Days
Canning 2 vegetables.....	11	49
Canning 3 or more vegetables.....	15	67
Combining seasonal vegetables and fruits (California and New York)...	19	101
Seasonal and nonseasonal products...	32	131

Oral reports from plant officers show that housewives in towns and villages or farmers' wives and daughters usually constitute the chief woman labor supply. Some workers are brought out from the city by the canning company, which houses them in shelters during the season. In New York this includes women, chiefly of Italian families, brought from Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse; in Maryland women from Baltimore and the South. Another type of migrant has worked on earlier crops elsewhere in the State. Only 16 percent of all plants reported employing migrant women, the larger number of these being in California. Girl students constitute a small proportion of the canning force in all States, and a few plants reported women casual laborers, chiefly those available as domestics.

Recent Trends in Women's Wages and Employment ¹

VERY definite improvements in women's employment and earnings are indicated in figures that have just become available. These compare September 1939 with the same month in 1938 in identical plants representing 22 major manufacturing and 2 service industries in the 12 most important industrial States.

Women's Employment.

Women's employment had increased in 19 of the 24 industries; where there were declines they were slight, except that of 5.5 percent in the women's coat and suit and 6.8 percent in the dyeing and cleaning industries. Increases were marked in the following:

	Percent increase
Woolen and worsted.....	6
Paper boxes.....	11
Auto tires and tubes.....	12
Cotton goods.....	12
Knit underwear.....	12
Hardware.....	22
Electrical machinery.....	32
Radios and phonographs.....	50

Women's Earnings.

Women's average hourly earnings had increased in 17 of the 24 industries. Furthermore, women averaged more to live on in the week in 16 of the 24; this was due in most cases to a combination of an increased hourly wage and somewhat longer hours of work, though in a few industries hours were shorter and earnings higher, than a year before, and in a few the hourly averages had declined and the week's rise was due only to lengthened hours.

Where there were declines they usually were small, though the average hourly earnings had fallen over 4 percent in hosiery and in the making of women's coats and suits,

¹ Source: Pay-roll records mailed by employers to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for week of September 15. Included are 365,576 women employed in 22 industries representing nearly two-thirds of all women in manufacturing, and 24,880 women in laundries and cleaning and dyeing plants. The 12 States included employ about three-fourths of all women in manufacturing—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania. Mimeographed tables showing more complete data for September 1939 can be obtained from the Women's Bureau. Earlier data appeared in the *WOMAN WORKER*, March and September 1938, May and September 1939.

and the drop in week's earnings was serious in the following: Hosiery, 7 percent; cotton dresses, 9 percent; undergarments, 11 percent; other dresses, 14 percent; women's coats and suits, 24 percent. The more important gains in women's average earnings are shown in the following:

	<i>Percent increase¹</i>	
	<i>Hourly earnings</i>	<i>Week's earnings</i>
Cigars.....	4	9
Confectionery.....	6	4
Cotton goods.....	1	6
Dyeing and cleaning.....	6	7
Electrical machinery.....	2	16
Glass and pottery.....	3	9
Men's cotton clothing.....	5	2
Paper boxes.....	3	6
Radios and phonographs.....	(²)	6
Rubber boots and shoes.....	5	4
Woolen and worsted.....	7	10

¹ Those listed where increase was 4 percent or more for either week or hour.

² Slight decline.

Many women still received less than an adequate living wage in September 1939, according to the minimum-wage budgets compiled in nine States, the lowest of which found \$17.99 to be necessary for a woman's healthy living. But many women received considerably less than this, according to the wages reported last September, their averages being under \$15 in 9 of the 24 industries, as follows:

Women's cotton dresses.....	\$11.47
Men's cotton clothing.....	12.34
Silk and rayon.....	12.74
Boots and shoes (leather).....	13.12
Knit underwear.....	13.28
Women's undergarments.....	13.35
Cotton goods.....	13.70
Cigars.....	13.75
Laundries.....	14.36

Only in hardware and auto tire and tube factories did women's earnings average as much as \$22.32, the amount found necessary for adequate living in the highest among the nine minimum-wage budgets compiled.

Earnings of Women and Men.

The improvements in average earnings were somewhat more general for women than for men, which was to be expected in view of the formerly very low level of women's wages. Average hourly earnings

had increased for both sexes, but more so for women in many industries, notably confectionery, glass and pottery, paper boxes, men's cotton clothing, and suits and overcoats.

There were declines for men in all textile and some women's clothing industries. Declines for men with either a much less decline or some increase for women occurred in the hosiery, cotton, women's undergarment, cotton dress, woolen and worsted, dyeing and cleaning, and boot and shoe industries. On the other hand, women were at a greater disadvantage than men in book and job printing, hardware, dresses other than cotton, and women's coats and suits.

Striking differences still appear in the wages that men and women have to live on. Highest week's earnings for women averaged \$23.41 in auto-tire plants and \$23.19 in hardware factories. Men's averages were above these highest figures for women in 17 of the 24 industries. Lowest averages for men were \$16.38 in cotton mills, \$18.80 in silk and rayon, and \$18.76 in cigar plants. But in 15 of the 24 industries women received averages below the lowest of these figures for men.

Employment of Women and Men.

Proportional increases in employment had been somewhat more general for women than men, as the following indicates:

Increases for both sexes—

Considerably greater for women than men:

Electrical machinery; hardware; radio; and rubber boots and shoes.

Other increases greater for women:

Auto tires and tubes; glass; knit underwear; paper boxes; suits and overcoats.

Increases greater for men:

Cotton; cotton dresses; laundry; men's cotton wear; undergarments; woolen and worsted.

Declines for both:

Cigars; dresses not cotton; women's coats and suits.

Declines for men, increases for women:

Book and job printing; silk and rayon; and the more striking percent changes:

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Hosiery.....	-0.4	+6.7
Boots and shoes.....	-1.8	+3.5

Decline for women, increase for men:

Confectionery: Men, +3.2; women, -0.8.

Women's Labor Standards and Wars Abroad¹

EVEN countries at war recognize that more effective work is done if some effort can be made to keep up standards of labor. However, exceptional cases do not always permit the highest standards to be maintained. French wartime regulations prescribe normal hours of women's work not to exceed 10 a day, 60 a week, but labor inspectors may permit other hours, including women's night-work employment on work of national importance. Germany restored the 8-hour day as standard, beginning January 1; only where "necessary" may hours be as long as 10, and then with certain exceptions, including nursing mothers, those in the last 3 months of pregnancy, and persons in unhealthy work subject to special hours regulations.

In Great Britain the Factories Act of 1937 had established a 48-hour week for women as a standard. The secretary of state may now exempt any particular premises or operations, or class of premises or operations. An emergency measure permits employment of women telephonists until 10 or 10:30 p. m., or even later if absolutely necessary. The question was asked in the House of Commons last September whether the Government would not set an example to private and municipal employers by applying the principle of equal pay for equal work, but the Financial Secretary to the Treasury stated that the present practice of different salary scales for men and women civil servants of the same grade would not be abandoned.

In Belgium, in case of partial or general mobilization, exceptions may be permitted to the regulation prohibiting women's work at night. In Sweden the War Department has asked for suspension of night-work prohibition.

Extent of Employment.

In Great Britain, in the early days of the war, there was a considerable increase in women registered as unemployed. Causes of this included stoppage or slackening in

industries employing many women, such as service, trade, clothing, and certain textile industries; evacuation of women from their normal places of employment; search for work by women whose usual source of income was cut off. In some lines of work, however, women's activities have increased. Civil-service departments have been authorized to reemploy married women temporarily. The substitution of women for men in munitions factories and in the transport industry is being considered.

Various measures are now being taken to increase women's activities. The Women's Engineering Society is training their sex for munitions work. The Women's Employment Federation, in agreement with the Ministry of Labor, has established an emergency register, noting qualifications of women as accountants, bacteriologists, magistrates, statisticians, engineers, or those with catering experience available for canteen posts. The Women's Royal Naval Service, organized by the Admiralty, is recruiting those capable of office duties, motor transport, cooking, and general work as stewards, messengers, storekeepers, and the like. Chief constables in many parts of the country are enrolling women to take men's places as special constables, drivers of police cars, clerical workers, and telephone operators.

In Germany, at the beginning of the war, the extension of the employment of women to new fields became marked, and women took the place of men in certain jobs considered typically masculine, as postmen, tramway conductors, and so forth. Last traces of the 1933 restrictions on women disappeared when an order of September 1 permitted retention of all married women officials in the civil service.

The French Ministry of Labor appealed early in September to all available women workers, particularly those having experi-

¹ See also *WOMAN WORKER* for January 1940.

ence in certain specified operations in the metal industries, to report to the employment exchanges; the Ministry of Health appealed to women nurses and welfare workers to enter the public services.

Civilian Mobilization.

Laws or orders providing for civilian mobilization in case of war or an emergency have been issued in a number of countries. This is compulsory for women as well as men, with certain exceptions, in Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Rumania, and Switzerland. Age limits usually are set, the lowest for women being 15, the highest 70. Women needed at home to care for children or other persons, and women for certain periods before and after childbirth, usually are exempt. A similar measure has been proposed in Sweden.

Women in Mines in Japan.

Women over 25 years of age now are permitted to work in Japanese coal and gold mines, owing to the present shortage of miners and decline in the amount of metal and coal. A woman miner must be either the wife or some other member of the family of a miner. The number of women thus mobilized is estimated at 14,000. Women's organizations in that country have protested this revival of the work of women in deep mines. Since 1933 women have been prohibited from working underground, except in "thin mines" (about 1½ feet thick) and digging out remaining coal in old mines. Measures to insure workers' health still are recognized as essential. The woman miner must have health examinations at least twice a year, and may not work late at night or if pregnant.

Toward Minimum Fair Wages

Progress Under the Fair Labor Standards Act

Discharged Worker Reinstated.

AN EMPLOYEE allegedly discharged because he complained to Federal authorities that his employer violated the Fair Labor Standards Act has been ordered reinstated, by action in a United States District Court. This is the first such case acted upon by any court under this law. It arose in a Chicago firm making refrigerator and radio parts.

A 40-Cent Minimum for Millinery.

A minimum rate of 40 cents an hour for the millinery industry was approved by the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division and went into effect January 15. The Division estimated that 16 percent of all the wage earners in the industry were paid less than 40 cents. A Women's Bureau study found nearly two-thirds of the workers to be women. On the basis of the 1937

Census of Manufactures, this would indicate more than 13,500 women employees.

Receiving, Grading, and Packing Nuts.

The unshelled-nut industry is not seasonal, according to a decision by the Wage and Hour Division made in response to a request for exemption from the hours provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the unshelled English walnut industry in California, Oregon, and Washington, and unshelled filberts in the two latter States. The decision held that although the receiving at packing houses of new nut crops is directly controlled by climate and other natural factors, the extremely short season for grading and packing is due not to natural factors but to heavy Christmas demand.

Applications for Learners.

Application for learners in the cigar industry was denied, no labor shortage being found. In centers for hand-made cigars large numbers are unemployed.

Where cigars are made by machine, labor shortage is due rather to management methods than to lack of labor supply, since high turn-over accompanies low piece rates and turn-over is low where piece rates are high. A review of this decision has been granted.

Hearings were held on requests for learners in the telephone, hat, and millinery industries. Review of regulations for curtain manufacturing resulted in prohibition of learner rates. Review of the learners' rules in textiles has been granted. (For learners' provisions so far made, see *WOMAN WORKER* for January.)

Back Wages Paid More Home Workers.

The drive continues against undermining wage standards by low pay to home workers. A recent judgment obtained by the Wage and Hour Division in United States District Court required a large New York knitting firm to restore over \$27,000 to several hundred home workers making infants' and children's knitwear in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

Glove manufacturers representing 90 percent of the production in the industry have agreed with the Government to pay home workers back wages, affecting chiefly workers in New York, Wisconsin, Illinois, and 20,000 in Puerto Rico.

Conference of State Wage Inspectors

Methods used effectively in enforcing minimum-wage orders were discussed in detail at a February conference in New York arranged by the Women's Bureau for minimum-wage inspectors of the north-eastern region. Invited to participate in the conference were inspectors from New England and Middle Atlantic States. Subjects considered included: How to secure adequate record keeping by employers; how collections of back wages are made; how violations are followed up; methods of securing the confidence of employees; inspection problems arising from special provisions of the orders, such as the guaranteed wage, or regulations as to learners.

State Minimum-Wage Activities

Connecticut—Administration.

A wage study of laundries has been finished recently, and the laundry wage board is being recalled to reconsider the present wage order, which became effective May 10, 1938.

Under the beauty-shop wage order, mandatory since August 30, 1939, 1,200 inspections and 250 reinspections have been made, and back wages totaling \$1,500 collected. First inspections are generally devoted to teaching the necessity for record keeping. Some proprietors have tried to reduce the pay roll by giving days off, so that investigators have had to give considerable attention to the matter of voluntary and involuntary absence. Other problems met are those of partnership and booth renting.

District of Columbia—Personnel.

Mrs. William Kittle, chairman of the Minimum Wage Board and representative of the public, has been appointed to a second term for a 3-year period. Miss Gwen Geach, executive secretary of the board, has resigned to accept a position with the United States Department of Labor, and Miss Eunice Broyles has been appointed as her successor.

New York—Restaurant Recommendation.

A minimum cash wage of 20 cents an hour for waitresses in New York City and 18 cents outside the city, plus adequate meals and uniforms, was recommended on January 8 by the Restaurant Minimum Wage Board for women and minors in the restaurant industry. All other employees would receive, respectively, 29 and 28 cents.

These rates, for hours over 24 and up to and including 45, would be increased so that at the end of 21 months the minimum throughout the State would be 20 cents for waitresses and 30 cents for all other restaurant workers. Employers who do not provide meals for workers would be required to pay an additional 6 cents an hour and if they do not maintain the uniforms they must pay extra for that also. Should the Industrial

Commissioner, after public hearings, approve the recommendations, they will become the basis for a wage order for the restaurant industry. A large proportion of the women and minors working in restaurants will have their wages raised if such minimum-wage order goes into effect, and approximately 50,000 women and minor restaurant workers will be affected. The part-time rates recommended are 3 cents above the basic rate for every hour up to and including 24. Time and a half the minimum rate is to be paid for hours over 45. No lower rate is fixed for learners, since no extensive training is necessary for most jobs in the industry.

Ohio—Administration.

During 1939 Ohio minimum-wage inspectors made 15,970 investigations. Over \$61,107 in back wages was collected in the year for 1,565 employees.

New York—Enforcement and New Studies.

That the minimum wage has not become the maximum is shown in the laundry and the beauty-parlor industries by a comparison of sworn pay rolls in New York State before and after minimum-wage orders went into effect. Furthermore, the guaranteed weekly wage is undoubtedly responsible for the noticeable decrease in part-time work in the laundry industry.

While the lowest-paid workers reaped the greatest benefits among laundry workers others also were aided, as the following shows:

	<i>Percent receiving under \$12</i>	
	<i>November 1937</i>	<i>November 1938</i>
Zone A.....	14	6
Zone B.....	34	6

	<i>Percent receiving \$15 and over</i>	
	<i>November 1937</i>	<i>November 1938</i>
Zone A.....	46	62
Zone B.....	20	22

Zone A comprises New York City and Westchester and Nassau Counties; Zone B comprises Suffolk County and cities over 18,000 not in Zone A.

Similarly, in beauty parlors, 85 percent of the women receive \$15 or more a week since the order, whereas formerly only 35 percent got so much. Almost a third used

to receive less than \$10 a week, and underpaid beauty operators were found on relief rolls; now fewer than 9 percent get so little.

The upturn in weekly hours in laundries was marked. In Zone A between 40 and 45 hours a week were worked by 49 percent of the women and minors reported in 1937 and 56 percent in 1938; in Zone B by 40 percent in 1937 and 58 percent in 1938.

Back wages collected during the year amounted to more than \$17,000 for 2,800 laundry workers and \$25,000 for some 3,900 beauty-service employees; 759 and 2,384 employers, respectively, were involved in these violations.

Two new industries, retail trade and paper-box making, are now being surveyed in respect to minimum wages.

Rhode Island—Retail Trade Survey.

About 94 percent of the retail firms in Rhode Island, employing 98 percent of the covered workers, are complying with the minimum-wage order for this industry, according to a recent survey made by the Division of Women and Children of the Rhode Island Department of Labor. Since the order is not mandatory, this shows good cooperation and indicates that the minimum fixed is a reasonable one. It also points to the need for a mandatory order so as to eliminate unfair competition by the small minority of firms that do not comply. Before the order was issued, over 36 percent of the women for whom earnings were reported in the larger towns and 65 percent in smaller places received less than the minimum fixed, which is respectively 30 and 27 cents an hour or \$14 and \$13 for a 42½- to 48-hour week. About 80 percent of the employees receiving less than the minimum in each group had wages raised immediately after passage of the order. There also was an increase in employment.

Utah—Recommendations for Retail Trade.

The Minimum Wage Board for Retail Trade in Utah has recommended that the Industrial Commission shall set minimum rates by zone between \$10 and \$15 a week

for a standard week of 48 hours. Part-time employees, those working less than 48 hours a week, would be paid for at least 4 hours a day at 31½ cents an hour; apprentices, workers with less than 1 year's experience, \$2 a week less than the regular minima for the first 6 months and \$1 less for the second. Hearings on these recommendations of the wage board, which was called by the Industrial Commission after the Supreme Court had held the original order invalid on the ground of inadequate hearings, began on

December 8 and were continued on January 10.

Washington—Study of Small Exchanges.

An extensive survey has been made of rural telephone exchanges in this State as the result of several hearings held in connection with small exchanges seeking exemption from the provisions of existing minimum-wage and other welfare orders. The Department of Labor and Industries plans to issue regulations affecting this type of exchange very soon.

Women in Unions

Progress in Textile Industries.

UNIONS are making progress in the textile industries such as they never made before, it has been pointed out by Business Week recently. Wage increases have been secured in more than 100 firms, to a considerable extent due to union negotiations. "Historically, the textile business lags behind other industries in such action: This year it leads. Historically, too, the nonunion mills have the bulk of the business and the union mills cannot get out of line; now the situation seems to be reversed, with the union mills setting the standards." The raises are estimated at about \$5,000,000 a year, for about 75,000 workers.

A study of individual contracts shows the steps being taken to protect the workers. A number raise the question of the work load. In some the union is to participate in setting the amount of work; in one the amount is specifically defined, in another the present study of the work load is to be continued. In one plant, where a wage-incentive plan has been set up, the union aids in its regulation. A number of contracts provide vacations with pay. A usual specification is that in slack times work is to be divided equally. Grievance and arbitration machinery and clauses forbidding strikes and lock-outs are quite usual. In one contract it is provided that a third shift is not to be added until earlier shifts work at 90 percent capacity.

In one of the older rayon-yarn plants, the union has made some concessions in the hope of restoring profitable business, since the firm found itself in an unfavorable competitive position. Wages were adjusted to the level of another plant owned by the same firm and hours increased from 32 to 40 a week. Employees 65 years old and over are to receive a pension based on earnings and length of service; and a dismissal wage, also based on earnings and service, is to be paid to employees under 65 who can no longer be given employment.

Progress in the Wearing-Apparel Industries.

Of outstanding interest is the program to curb substandard production being proposed to buyers and sales representatives by the joint board of the Millinery Workers' Union in New York City. Buyers are asked to agree to handle or sell only millinery made by firms eligible to use the Consumers' Protection Label issued by the Millinery Stabilization Commission, and to sell or handle such goods on a basis to yield the manufacturers a reasonable profit. The proposed obligations, if assumed, would become effective immediately and remain in effect until February 15, 1943. The joint board represents 20,000 workers in more than 600 union shops.

In certain of the important clothing centers, thousands of workers often are covered in a single contract with one or more

employers' associations. No such comprehensive agreement has been negotiated recently, but continued gains are reported for smaller groups.

Some 1,800 workers on women's neckwear in an eastern State, in a new 1-year agreement, have secured a 5-percent wage increase. In an underwear factory in northern New Jersey, employing approximately 1,000 workers, a new agreement provides that under a proposed new piece-work system earnings of workers must aggregate for a full week's work at least 10 percent above total earnings of an equal number of workers under the former time-work method. Otherwise, rates are to be reset. Wages were raised by \$1 to \$4 a week. Vacations with pay are allowed, an extra day's pay to be given if time off includes a legal holiday.

Alteration workers in one of the expensive New York shops gained a union contract and a 10-percent wage increase following a 3-day strike. They were assisted by union millinery and fur workers who refused to go through the picket line.

New York workers on lining fur gloves secured in a recent agreement a 25-percent wage increase, elimination of home work, equal division of work, and a closed shop. The union label is to be put on fur-glove linings.

Progress in White-Collar Occupations.

In addition to wage increases, office and professional workers' agreements are covering such important points as sick and maternity leave, vacations, and severance pay. A comprehensive contract was signed recently with a social-work agency in New

York covering 130 professional and clerical workers. This provides a 10-percent increase in wage scales; 40 days' sick leave with pay; vacations of from 2 to 5 weeks; a 5-day 32½-hour week in summer and a 5-day 37½-hour week the remainder of the year; maternity leave up to 6 months; and severance pay of 1 week for each year of service.

Office workers in a Minnesota company have negotiated an agreement giving a wage increase in addition to restoration of a 9½-percent pay cut, paid vacations, time and one-half for overtime, and sick leave with pay. A contract with a law office in California provides from 3 to 6 months' maternity leave. The renewed contract with a leading news weekly stipulates that confinement is not a reason for dismissal. The employee on maternity leave is to receive double vacation pay. If she chooses not to return, she is to receive severance pay minus any vacation pay already given her. Severance pay is at the rate of 1½ weeks for each 6 months of service and is payable to the estate of a worker who dies.

Progress in Service Industries.

Considerable progress was reported in securing union conditions in Chicago hotels for housekeeping employees—chambermaids, linen-room workers, and so on. Wage increases were obtained for these workers in recent agreements with two hotels, one covering about 90 such employees. In a third hotel 160 workers in the housekeeping division have joined the union, and negotiations on a contract are under way.

Women in the 1940 Census of Population

THE FIRST complete census in a decade that covers population, occupations, and employment for the United States will begin April 1. On that date 120,000 enumerators employed by the Bureau of the Census start out to seek information on every man,

woman, and child in the country in the Sixteenth Decennial Census. In the selection of enumerators, the Bureau of the Census has announced, women will be given equal consideration with men. The gigantic task of sorting and tabulating so much informa-

tion about each of this country's over 135 million inhabitants will take nearly 2 years.

Of particular interest to working women, among the data that will be collected, are facts on occupations and employment. These facts will show what has been happening to the status of women as workers during the past eventful 10 years. They will show whether more women are working now than were employed in 1930 and what shifts have occurred in women's occupations.

In addition, the Census Bureau will collect material on the composition of the American people by sex, marital status, and age groups. Of especial interest will be the comparison of the 1940 with 1930 figures showing the age groupings and indicating changes in the age distribution of women at work in various occupations. The woman who is the homemaker-in-chief for the family also will be designated by the enumerator.

A new question deals with year's income and is designed to reveal the total annual earnings of individuals, and for family units as well, from wages or from salaries. It will give information hitherto not available on so large a scale for the lower-income groups, including, for example, domestic workers and other poorly paid women. This is ex-

pected to help in defining the problem of the below-safety-margin income for single women, female heads of families, and families in which both the man and the woman are at work. Information also will be collected to show the number and the earnings of women engaged in part-time work.

The population schedule contains another new question as to where each individual lived 5 years ago. The resultant picture of internal migration is expected to develop some interesting material on the enforced movement of families due to low incomes and occupational and other shifts.

A question on usual occupation and usual industry will be asked of a 5-percent sample of the people. If sufficient tabulations can be made, this may indicate the number of women not working in professions or trades for which they have been trained, and may aid vocational experts in determining more clearly what jobs are in demand and what are overcrowded or losing in numbers.

The conditions under which American people are living will be revealed further in the results of the Census of Housing, to be taken for the first time in 1940. This census, in addition to enumerating the Nation's dwelling units, will record details as to their facilities and conveniences.

News Notes and Announcements

The White House Conference on Children in a Democracy

A SOUND economic basis for family life in this country was a keynote of the 1940 session of the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, held in Washington in mid-January. "The most significant development in child welfare in the 10 years which have elapsed since the 1930 Conference has been the deepening conviction of public responsibility for children, which has found expression in various Federal and State activities," according to findings of committees that met prior to the Conference. The general report made to

the Conference, which was developed from the work of the Report Committee with Homer Folks as chairman, a research staff headed by Philip Klein, and expert consultants, stated:

It is clear that the safety of our democratic institutions requires that as many families as possible be enabled to earn a decent income on a normal self-supporting basis. It is clear also that measures are required to supply substitute income where there is none or where it is insufficient to meet family needs.

The Conference recommended assuring incomes for adequate standards of living for the working man and his family through measures such as minimum-wage legislation; laws affirming the right of collective bargain-

ing; and far-reaching adjustments in agriculture to keep the farmer and the farm laborer from actual want. Sample surveys were cited indicating that one-half to two-thirds of the city children in this country live in families where the income is less than the equivalent of \$1,260 a year for a family of four.

Recommendations were made for continuing and developing flexible public works programs, low-cost housing plans, unemployment compensation, aid to dependent children, old age and survivors' benefits, and so forth. Though recognizing the responsibility of private industry to provide the main sources of employment, "it is clear that wherever private industry cannot find profitable use for unemployed workers, their time, skill, and morale should be salvaged * * * by increased provision for public employment." The Conference reiterated the generally accepted standards of 16 years as the minimum age for most employment, 18 years in hazardous occupations, and adjustment of school laws to child-labor laws.

The 11 main topics considered in the Conference included: The family as the threshold to democracy; economic resources of families and communities; economic aid to families; social services to children; child labor and youth employment; and so forth. General sessions of the Conference were addressed by President Roosevelt and by Mrs. Roosevelt, each in a broadcast message. Mrs. Saidie Orr Dunbar was appointed chairman of a subcommittee on follow-up work. The plans adopted by the Conference for Nation-wide consideration of the proposed program included action through (1) a national citizens' committee, nongovernmental in character, and (2) an inter-agency committee by which official agencies of the Government could cooperate in carrying forward the Conference recommendations.

Household Employment Symposium

Unsatisfactory working conditions for household employees are a major cause of

shortage of such workers in spite of continuing unemployment, according to findings of a large symposium held in New York to discuss this subject. Five hundred women attended this meeting, which was arranged through the cooperative efforts of 24 organizations, including employer, employee, civic, and social-work groups, and those interested in training.

Speakers included Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt as an employer, who urged recognition of running a house as a business proposition. Miss Mildred Stewart, of Philadelphia, a "trained, experienced household worker satisfied with her job," emphasized that trained household workers demand and get more respect and they take pride and satisfaction in their work.

Besides local unions, training agencies, and many local women's organizations, including the Women's Trade Union League, the following groups national in scope were among those sponsoring the symposium: Federal Council of Churches, National Board Y. W. C. A., National Child Labor Committee, National Consumers' League, National Council of Jewish Women, National Council on Household Employment, and National Urban League.

Recent Court Action

Wife's Gainful Work and Divorce.

The Ohio Court of Appeals has refused to grant divorce to a husband on the ground of his wife's gainful employment (*Winnard v. Winnard*, Nov. 8, 1939). This constitutes reversal of the lower court's decree, which had granted the divorce for the wife's "gross neglect of duty," based on her alleged persistence in gainful employment against his wishes, resulting in her unfitness for home duties. The higher court concluded the husband might have had a good case if he had proved satisfactorily that he was able alone to pay necessary family expenses and obligations, that he was actually inconvenienced over long periods of time, and that he had from the first objected to her outside employment.

Massachusetts Court Opinion.

It was stated in the September issue of the *WOMAN WORKER* that "Replying to questions asked by the legislature, the [Massachusetts] court decreed that 'legislation discriminating against married women in employment would be unconstitutional.'" Because the opinion was rendered in connec-

tion with certain bills that were being considered by the legislature, and not with a law that had been passed, it was assumed that readers would understand that this opinion was advisory. As there has been some misunderstanding of the statement, the Bureau takes this opportunity of stating that the court's opinion was advisory.

Industrial Injuries to Women

Hazards to Women in Five States.

ORGANIC dusts constitute a serious health hazard to which women are likely to be exposed in clothing and textile factories and to a lesser extent in certain other lines of manufacture and in laundries. This is emphasized by studies of industrial hygiene recently made by health departments in five States, with the advice or active cooperation of the United States Public Health Service. The States are Maine, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. Studies such as these are the first step toward pointing out methods of prevention.

Respiratory diseases may arise from constant breathing of dust-laden air. In clothing factories the percent of all workers exposed to such dusts varied from 27 in Maine to 87 in Utah; in textile mills from 59 in Virginia to 82 in Utah. Practically two-thirds or more of the workers reported in the following were exposed to organic dusts: Cigar and tobacco factories in Virginia, wood-turning plants in Maine, and laundries in Texas.

Some control for organic dust was reported as furnished for about one-fifth of the workers exposed in South Carolina, and specified controls were reported in Maine and in Utah. Methods of control of dust include ventilation of various types, enclosure of the process, use of water or other liquid to lay the dust, and respirators.

Reports from Ohio, one of the few States recording occupational diseases by sex, bring to light the following cases of women suffering from respiratory diseases caused by organic dusts not compensable until the amendment of 1939: A wool winder, a pasteboard carton maker, a hard-rubber grinder. A woman sewing on coats was reported as having conjunctivitis due to lint.

Another hazard that must be controlled by ventilation is exposure to extreme heat and humidity, often found in textile mills and in laundries. More than half of the workers in textile mills in South Carolina were confronted with this condition at their workplaces. Though much careful attention has been given to this condition in textile mills, the extent to which it has been controlled cannot be determined. In Utah nearly two-thirds of the workers in laundries were exposed to extreme humidity and more than half to marked temperature changes.

The most common type of occupational disease reported as affecting women workers is dermatitis, inflammation of the skin, which may be caused by almost any substance, and is known to follow contact with dyes and with oils, fats, and waxes. Exposure to dyes is common in the textile and clothing industries, where dermatitis is caused not only in the dyeing of textiles, work done almost entirely by men, but in the handling of dyed goods. A recent Ohio report for a single week listed three women in garment

factories as suffering from dermatitis attributed to dyes.

Industries with a considerable proportion of workers exposed to miscellaneous dermatitis producers were: Maine, fish curing and packing, 70 percent; Texas, candy, 54 percent; fruit and vegetable canning, 36 percent; Utah, confectionery and fruit and vegetable canning, 66 percent in each. Not all workers are equally affected by the various substances. Since new materials are constantly being introduced, the effects of which are not yet understood, a program of control must be supplemented by compensation for occupational diseases under workmen's compensation laws. As yet, the five States studied here have no such coverage.

Industrial Injuries to Women in New York.

Women are the principals in over a tenth of the industrial injury cases compensated in 2 late years in New York. An increase from nearly 8,000 cases closed in 1936 to 8,500 in 1937 may correspond to employment increases. The amount of compensation paid to women in each year was about half that received by men, owing to women's lower wages and to the relatively fewer serious injuries that occur to them as compared to men. Death or some permanent disability was caused each year by about one-fifth of women's injuries, but by well over one-fourth of men's. The average amount paid injured women was \$182 in 1936 and \$174 in 1937.

The average wage in the cases closed was:

	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
1936-----	\$22.01	\$14.51
1937-----	23.25	15.13

As is true of employment, so with compensation, relatively more of the women than of the men were in the younger age groups. However, in recent years a marked change has come in the proportion of very young women receiving compensation: In 1930 one-sixth of all injured women were under 20; in 1937, less than one-tenth.

The Age Factor in Accident Experience.

Does the older worker constitute a greater accident risk and therefore a heavier compensation cost than the younger one? Ethel M. Johnson, Washington representative of the I. L. O., speaking before the 1939 convention of the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions, answered this question by analyzing an extensive investigation of the subject made in Switzerland. Though the situation varies somewhat with the industry, the general conclusions of the study are as follows:

Industrial accident frequency reaches its maximum with the age groups 20 and under 30 years and thereafter declines steadily with age. Accident severity, however, increases with age, as also does the probability that accidents when incurred will result in invalidity or death. These factors largely offset each other, so that the compensation costs remain fairly constant between the ages of 20 and 64 years—that is, for all industrially effective age groups.

THE paramount responsibility of Government is to protect the general welfare. That way lies safety and a progressive evolution of our economy and of our political institutions. No amount of confusing legalistic discussion of limitation of powers can obscure the reality of the choices before us. To protect the general welfare in our times—in an industrialized and urban economy—means, above all else, to build and maintain in good order a sound economic structure.

* * * * *

* * * If the economic organization is such that competitive conditions and practices produce chronic depression in the industry and demoralizing distress among those dependent on the industry, then Government intervenes to seek correction of those conditions and practices.

Report of the National Resources Committee on Energy Resources and National Policy, January 1939.

Recent Publications

Women's Bureau—Printed Bulletins ¹

THE LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, January 1, 1938. Report for Vermont (Bul. 157-44). 1939. (Now in print, 44 States and the District of Columbia.) 5 cents each.

WOMEN WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES. (In Spanish and Portuguese.) 8 pp. each.

Women's Bureau—Mimeographed Material ¹

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON APPLICATION OF LABOR AND SOCIAL LEGISLATION TO THE CANNERY INDUSTRY. 1938. 166 pp.

NINTH MINIMUM-WAGE CONFERENCE, November 13, 1939. Proceedings of Conference, 3 pp. Coverage of State Minimum-Wage Orders, 3 pp. Learners (existing State and Federal provisions), 6 pp. Tips (policy and rulings), 2 pp. Working and Waiting Time (interpretations), 2 pp.

Other Department of Labor Bulletins ¹

CHANGES IN PRICES OF RETAIL ELECTRICITY, 1923-38. Bul. 664, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

BETTER CARE FOR MOTHER AND CHILD. Children's Bureau.

REPORT * * * SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LABOR LEGISLATION. Bul. 35-A. Division of Labor Standards.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR STANDARDS. Bul. 33.

ANSWERS TO WORKERS' QUESTIONS ON THE UNITED STATES WAGE-HOUR LAW. Wage-Hour Division.

EMPLOYERS' DIGEST OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938. Wage-Hour Division.

STUDIES OF FAMILY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is publishing the results of a Nation-wide survey showing the actual living of wage earners and clerical workers—their money receipts and disbursements—in 42 cities of more than 50,000 population, including 2 of major importance. This is the first such study since the one made by the same agency in 1918, though consumption habits have changed greatly. The urban series of the study of consumer purchases is paralleled by studies of families in small cities, villages, and rural counties made by the Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture. Plans for these important surveys were formulated by the National Resources Committee. Technical advice was given

¹ Bulletins may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., at prices listed. A discount of 25 percent on orders of 100 or more copies is allowed. Mimeographed reports are obtainable only from the Women's Bureau.

by the Central Statistical Board and the Works Progress Administration, the latter also making a grant of funds. The bulletins thus far issued are the following:

MONEY DISBURSEMENTS OF WAGE EARNERS AND CLERICAL WORKERS, 1934-36. Bul. 637, North Atlantic Region. Vol. I, New York City; 641, West North Central-Mountain Region (5 cities).

FAMILY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE, 1935-36. Bul. 642, Chicago. I, Income.* II, Expenditure; 647, Southern Cities. I, Income (5 cities); 649, Pacific Northwest (4 urban communities). I, Income.

Other Recent Publications

INDUSTRIAL HOME WORK. By Ruth Enalda Shallcross. Industrial Affairs Publishing Co., New York, 1939. 257 pp. "The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the problems arising out of legislative attempts to control home work. It seeks to attain this purpose by a detailed examination of home-work legislation in the State of New York in comparison with legislative methods tried in other States and in foreign countries, especially in England and in Germany."

VOCATIONAL INFORMATION. The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., is reprinting the vocational articles as they appear month by month in *The Independent Woman*. The series now comprises three pamphlets: Executive Housekeeping, Social Work, and Statistical Work. Plans are laid for articles on Office Management, Penology, and Occupational Therapy. Single reprints are 15 cents, or 10 reprints \$1.25.

ROSTER OF WOMEN OFFICIALS OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA. Compiled by Flora Beals Craton, issued by Louisiana Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. May 1939. "There is no parish in the State that is not served by a woman in some official capacity" (this includes notaries public). Of the 1,353 women officials reported, 57 were elected and 651 were in departments of public welfare.

ALABAMA WOMEN AND THEIR EMPLOYERS, 1938-39. By Minnie Steckel, Ph. D. Alabama Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, in collaboration with Alabama College. July 1939. Employers of women, employed women, college women, and high-school senior girls agreed that the traits most desirable in a woman worker are: Reliability in all business relations; ability to assume responsibility in business emergencies; and tact in meeting and dealing with all kinds of people.

¹ See *Woman Worker*, July 1939, p. 4.