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The **WOMAN WORKER**

JULY 1940

**United States Department of Labor
Women's Bureau**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
 FRANCES PERKINS, SECRETARY
 WOMEN'S BUREAU
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Keep Up Standards For Women's Work¹

NOTE.—The Women's Bureau has called together a Labor Advisory Committee on standards for women workers in defense industries.

WOMEN WORKERS are, in the main, the most severely affected by relaxed labor standards. They have been in the lower wage levels, often close to economic disaster, among those most helped by safeguards. The President's strong plea to keep minimum wages and short hours of work and to hold living costs at a reasonable level should lead to a wise use of human energies as well as raw materials. The Women's Bureau was created following an emergency, to prevent the inefficient exploiting of women workers that had taken place in 1917 and earlier. Today this Bureau is called on more and more to advise as to standards for women's work and to investigate existing conditions.

Rapidly increased production now is essential, and facilities are at hand to carry this out. Hours of work need not be lengthened. The United States Employment Service has 6,000,000 unemployed workers in its active file. Many other workers also are available. Because of improved machinery, industry can produce much faster and with fewer man-hours than earlier. For example, in the textile industry from 1919 to 1939, production increased by 25 percent but man-hours declined by 20 percent. In rubber-tire plants, over a recent 16-year period, production increased by 39 percent but employment fell by 30 percent. Other industries show a similar picture, and many have not been producing to full plant capacity.

Organization to safeguard human needs in industry is stronger both in the Government and in the ranks of labor than in 1914-18. For example, in the United States Department of Labor the Public Contracts Division exists to assure suitable labor conditions on goods made for the Government. For industries engaged in interstate business, a

floor for wages and a ceiling for hours are required on a Nation-wide scale by the Fair Labor Standards Act, administered by the Wage and Hour Division. This machinery is flexible enough to provide for emergencies. Labor is in a better position than formerly to assure the success of such safeguards.

However, it still is well to realize the dangerous labor conditions in 1917, so that we shall not go back to them. For in that period several States actually passed laws allowing the Governor or a board to weaken their own State laws for labor. The Governor of New York vetoed such a bill.

Serious conditions were found in plants making explosives and munitions. In 1918 the Women's Bureau (then the Woman in Industry Service) made a survey of plants in Niagara Falls, highly important in the manufacture of chemicals and gases used in explosives, storage batteries, and various products necessary for the machine industries. It was found that known precautions in such work had not been taken, and hence workers were seriously affected by the use of lead, arsenic, mercury, and other powerful poisons. They also were subject to irritating dusts, dangerous explosives, and spurting liquids.

In a munitions-making center, Bridgeport, Conn., girls had hands maimed by breaking punches, fingers crushed in unguarded presses. In a 6-month period in 1916, 25 women in one plant made claims to the

¹ See the WOMAN WORKER, January 1940. See also:
Women's Bureau (then the Woman in Industry Service):
Bul. 1. Proposed Employment of Women in Niagara Falls. (In Monthly Labor Review, January 1919.)
Bureau of Labor Statistics:
Bul. 219. May 1917. Industrial Poisons.
Bul. 221. April 1917. Reprints from Memorandum of British Health of Munition Workers Committee.
Monthly Review—May 1917; August 1917.
Report of the (British) War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry. 1919.
Files of American Labor Legislation Review and The Survey.

State compensation commission, and under the law disability must have lasted more than 10 days before a claim could be made.

The 1940 bill for Army supplies and equipage includes the making of uniforms. In the war of 1914-18 these often were

made in insanitary homes, until child labor on them was forbidden in the contracts in 1917.

Such conditions as these can be prevented now. We must not go back to these earlier dangers.

Women in Service Industries in Maine

WHERE the earnings of workers in service and trade industries are low, this situation is the special concern of each State. These employees usually cannot be aided by the Wage and Hour Administration. In Maine, at the request of the League of Women Voters and the Commissioner of Labor and Industry, the Women's Bureau made a survey early in 1940 of employees in stores, beauty parlors, laundries and dry-cleaning plants, and hotels and restaurants. The earnings and hours worked in 1 week, usually in October 1939, were copied from pay-roll records generously made available by the employers in 433 establishments in 33 cities and towns. Information was obtained also for all persons employed by these firms in 1939, giving the number of weeks worked and the total earnings of each employee.

The study as a whole covered over 4,600 women. More than half (2,500) were in stores, 1,200 in hotels and restaurants, 650 in laundries and dry-cleaning plants, and almost 300 in beauty shops. Of the more than 2,000 men reported, almost half were in hotels and restaurants.

Many of these women had very low earnings, measured by available standards. For example, the week's pay of many women was below \$12. In this respect the best situations were in apparel and department stores, among office workers, and in beauty shops, while laundries, limited-price stores, and hotels and restaurants showed up less well. The minimum set by Federal law for workers in industries doing an interstate business is 30 cents an hour; this would be \$12.60 for a week of 42 hours, more if longer

hours were worked. The following indicates the wage situation of the women reported in Maine:

Industry	Number of women	Percent with week's earnings of—	
		Under \$12	\$18 or over
Stores: ¹			
Department; dry goods.....	688	10	21
Limited price.....	412	56	(?)
Apparel.....	332	9	29
Office workers in foregoing.....	295	11	27
Laundries; dry-cleaning plants...	554	52	8
Beauty shops.....	276	30	36
Hotels ²	119	50	0
Restaurants ³ (store and independent).....	111	61	2

¹ Regular workers only.

² One-half of 1 percent.

³ Only workers who received no supplement to wages. About three-fourths were given meals, or meals and lodging, and had still lower cash wages.

Earnings were somewhat higher in Portland than elsewhere in the State. They were lower for women than for men, as is usually the case in such studies; this is why efforts to fix minimum wages have in most States been directed first to women's wages. In 60 percent of the restaurants, including practically all store restaurants, tips were not received or were very rare. The workers bore the entire expense of furnishing and laundering uniforms in more than half the hotels and restaurants that required their use. In store restaurants, uniforms generally were supplied and laundered by the employer.

In stores many women work only 1 or 2 days in the week, or for only a few hours daily. In Maine these part-time workers comprised nearly 50 percent of those in limited-price stores and more than 20 percent of those in department and dry-goods stores and in apparel shops. A surprising

proportion of these women were given only a few hours of work in the week, but even for the hours they did work their earnings were lower than those of other women.

Type of store	Average hourly earnings (cents)	
	Regular employees	Part-time employees
Department; dry goods.....	31.3	28.3
Limited price.....	25.2	22.0
Apparel.....	34.0	28.9

The Maine law that regulates women's hours of work allows their employment for 54 hours a week, which is extremely long by present-day standards. Approximately half of the States (4 of them in New England) and the District of Columbia have a maximum week of 48 hours or less; and no one covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act may work more than 42 hours unless paid time and a half for the extra hours.

In several industries in Maine large proportions of women worked over 48 hours in the pay-roll week taken: In department and dry-goods stores 26 percent, in limited-price stores 11 percent, in apparel stores 16 percent, in laundry and dry-cleaning plants 13 percent. Scheduled hours were over 48 for 26 percent in hotels, 53 percent in

independent restaurants, and 12 percent in store restaurants. Men's hours were even longer.

The effect of seasonal activities in Maine is evident from this survey. Resort hotels were not scheduled, but other hotels are affected by the summer trade, as are restaurants, laundries, stores, and beauty shops. Many women in these establishments had employment for *less than six months*. A year's work was available to only 1 in 5 of the women in stores, 1 in 4 in beauty shops, 1 in 2 in hotels and in the various offices, and 2 in 5 in laundries. Earnings of the women who worked all year—49 to 52 weeks—indicate the maximum that women in these industries have to live on as follows:

Industry	Number	Women working 49 to 52 weeks	
		Percent with earnings of—	
		Under \$1,000	\$600 or over
General mercantile and apparel shops.....	739	12	16
Limited-price stores.....	315	55	3
Laundries and dry-cleaning plants.....	409	37	6
Hotels and restaurants ¹	125	50	(²)
Beauty shops.....	132	14	30
Office work.....	282	9	20

¹ Workers receiving no wage supplements.
² Only 7 women received as much as \$800.

Toward Minimum Fair Wages

Progress Under the Federal Act

Wage-Hour Act Upheld Again.

ADMINISTRATIVE power to issue wage orders for specific industries has been upheld by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. Appeal had been made to the court by 16 cotton mills in the South that the 32½-cent textile wage order be set aside. The court denied the appeal. It upheld both the wage order and the procedure set up by the Wage and Hour Division for industry committees. This is the first time that the power to issue orders has been brought into question. Every Federal District Court before which the constitutionality of the act has been chal-

lenged has sustained it as a valid regulation of interstate commerce by Congress. The act now has been held constitutional in nine cases. Among the determinations of the Wage and Hour Administration that also have been upheld are its prohibition of wage deductions for uninhabitable and uninhabited company houses; its right to examine records and to use them as evidence without violating the Constitution; and its definition of agricultural workers requiring Puerto Rican sugar mills to pay the minimum. Groups of employees for whom the act has been enforced without court contest include home workers; workers for wholesalers selling goods in the stream of interstate commerce though customers are in the

same State; workers making crates sold locally for packing produce to be shipped outside the State. The Administration has prevented various types of wage-rate manipulation to prevent payment of overtime, and schemes to deduct employee "contributions" to pay cost of factories; it has secured reinstatement of workers discharged for filing complaints.

New Orders for Three Industries.

With the approval of rates for the apparel, wool, and hat industries, minimum-wage rates above 30 cents now have been fixed in nine industries. These provide increases for about 525,500 workers who formerly received less than the new minimum fixed. In addition a 40-cent minimum has been recommended for the leather industry, 36 cents an hour for employees of most railroads, 33 cents for short lines; and committees have been appointed for the carpet and rug industry and for the making of luggage and leather goods.

Minimum-wage rates of 32½, 35, 37½, and 40 cents an hour for 26 branches of the wearing-apparel industry have been approved and will become effective July 15. Some 650,000 workers are engaged in the industry as defined by the order, and it is estimated that 200,000 of these will have their wages raised. Women comprise at least two-thirds of all workers on clothing and probably a larger proportion of those who will receive increases. The rate for the apparel industry in Puerto Rico is to remain at the statutory minimum of 30 cents.

The rate of 36 cents an hour recommended by the wool industry committee has been approved, effective June 17. The industry employs about 140,000 persons, probably some 60,000 of them women. Wage rates may be raised for about 11,000 workers.

Several lines of hat manufacture are covered by an order that goes into effect July 1. This fixes a minimum of 35 cents for straw and harvest hats made on the mainland and 30 cents for those made in Puerto Rico. For the processing of hatters' fur and the making of other hats except men's cloth

hats and millinery (covered by other orders) the rate is 40 cents.

Attempt to Amend Wage-Hour Act.

Congress has made no amendment to the Wage-Hour Act, though three major bills were proposed and debated at length. Efforts centered largely around exempting agricultural and white-collar workers from coverage of the act. At present the act exempts some 256,000 workers from the 30-cent minimum provision and 969,000 workers from the 42-hour maximum. At various times proposals were made to exempt, either fully or partially, from the act's protection home workers in rural areas; workers in dairy processing plants in limited areas, livestock dressing and packing plants, small banks, newspapers with circulation under 5,000 (those under 3,000 already are exempt), convict-grown cotton and cotton seed; students gaining clinical or professional experience in recognized schools; service employees in offices and apartments. One proposal sought to exempt agricultural workers by defining them exactly as in the Social Security Act, which would have taken some 200,000 from the protection of the act; another tried to provide flexibility of salaried workers' hours by "leveling off" overtime over a 26-week period, similar to the hour-averaging provision that caused such confusion under the N. R. A. Representative Mary T. Norton of New Jersey, Chairman of the House Labor Committee, who worked valiantly to keep the act from serious weakening, stated that canners, packers, and others engaged in processing agricultural products were the principal seekers of the exemption of workers in processing industries outside the "area of production."

Seasonal Industries.

Twenty industrial operations have been found by the Administrator of the act to be seasonal because climatic conditions limit the time in which raw materials are available. Final determination has been made in 18 of these cases. Among the latter are

stemming and redrying of green leaf tobacco and stripping of cigar leaf tobacco, work done by women to a large extent. Seasonal industries may work their employees 12 hours a day or 56 hours a week for 14 weeks in a calendar year before the requirement of time and a half pay for overtime applies.

Executives, Professionals, Salespeople.

Executive, administrative, and professional employees, outside salespeople, and employees in a local retail capacity are excluded from the benefits of the act. The Administrator has defined these types of employees, but a resurvey of the definitions is being made which may result in exempting some 1½ million white-collar workers now considered covered by the law. Representatives of the wholesale distributive and of the manufacturing and extractive industries have been heard. A survey of professionals in the moving-picture industry is under way, and the situation in other groups will be investigated before further determinations are made.

To be exempted under the present definitions of these three groups, the employee must be "customarily and regularly" engaged in the exempt occupations and must do "no substantial amount of work of the same nature as that performed by nonexempt employees of the employer." To be excluded as executive or administrative, the salary must be at least \$30 a week.

Proposals for change have sought to eliminate the qualification that exempt employees do no substantial amount of the type of work done by nonexempt employees. Some have sought to omit also the phrase "customarily and regularly." Other than this, changes in the definition of professionals have not been suggested. For outside salespersons, effort was made to omit from the present definition the stipulation that exempted salespersons should not include those engaged in routine deliveries.

For executive workers, one definition proposed that this term cover employees responsible for the method by which and the time during which they execute their own

work, and for important policy determinations, and having special skills not technical or manual. Another suggested separate classifications for executive and administrative workers, defining the latter so as to exempt such workers from the act if they received \$25 or more a week. A third proposal would take out from coverage of the act, by including them as administrative workers, practically all who ordinarily would be classed as clerical, regardless of how low their salaries, providing only that they be regularly employed on a straight salary basis and given vacations and sick leave with pay.

Retail Establishment Further Defined.

A new rule to determine whether an establishment is a "retail establishment," and as such specifically exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act, has been issued. According to this definition a retail establishment is one in which 50 percent or more of the dollar value of sales is retail sales, that is, sales to individual consumers. Heretofore, if more than a minor part of an establishment's business was wholesale, it has been treated as a wholesale establishment.

Learners in Independent Telephone Exchanges.

A determination was issued early in April allowing independent telephone exchanges with 500 or more stations to employ a limited number of learner operators for 320 hours (about 8 weeks) at 25 cents an hour. This was based on the one reason the act permits, the finding of an insufficient number of skilled workers in the community. Learners allowed in relation to total operators are: One learner with 8 or fewer operators; two with 9 to 18 operators; three with 19 to 30 operators; four with 31 to 44 operators; and one additional learner for each additional 15 operators.

Evidence at the hearing showed that of 12,000 independent exchanges in the country, 9,900 have less than 500 stations and therefore are entirely exempt from the act. The determination applies only to 2,100 exchanges with about 12,500 operators. In

general, more than nine-tenths of all telephone operators are women.

Learners in Silk Throwing.

The learning period in the silk-throwing branch of the textile industry has been increased from 6 to 12 weeks. The number of learners allowed is changed also. Establishments with 30 or fewer workers in specified occupations may employ 3 learners; those with 31 or more workers may employ 5. In most branches of the textile industry, learners are limited to 3 percent of all production workers. (See *WOMAN WORKER* for January 1940.)

Minimum-Wage Progress in the States

Colorado—Hotel and Restaurant Hearings.

Public hearings have been held in the restaurant and hotel industries of Colorado, and an order covering them has been issued. In 1930 more than 5,000 women were employed in these industries. In 1937 earnings reported for all women so employed averaged \$9 and under \$11 a week.

Connecticut—Order for Laundries.

A minimum rate of 32½ cents an hour for any number of hours up to the legal limit of 48 became effective June 3 for women and minors in the laundry industry in Connecticut. Permission to work more than 48 hours may be secured in emergencies; in such cases time and a half, or 48¾ cents, is to be paid. The new order was made necessary by the repeal of the original minimum-wage law in 1939, when a new law covering men was enacted. The majority of the board for this industry felt that the wages of men did not afford a real cause of complaint, though 15 percent of those in a sample survey received less than 30 cents an hour, and it was decided to make no recommendation with respect to a minimum for men. Under the new rate women working 33 or more hours a week will receive more than under the old order, which fixed a more complicated series of rates. A board for the cleaning and dyeing industry was scheduled to be called in June.

Massachusetts—Beauty Shops.

The Massachusetts beauty-shop order became mandatory June 1.

New Hampshire—Order for Dry Cleaning.

A directory order for the dry-cleaning industry in New Hampshire, effective May 20, places the minimum at 28 cents an hour, the same as for laundries. No deduction from the minimum may be made (except for Social Security) and waiting time must be paid for. Learners, defined as those with no experience in the industry, are allowed up to 10 percent of the working force and at a 25-cent rate; application for each learner is to be made to the Labor Commissioner. Three months is the period permitted for learning. In the survey prior to issuance of this order, about a fourth of the adult women (21 and over) received less than 28 cents; about 3 percent received less than 25 cents.

New Jersey—Making Orders Mandatory.

The New Jersey order governing the employment of women and minors in cleaning and dyeing was made mandatory May 6. This order fixed basic rates of 26 to 33 cents an hour, by geographic area. Hearings have been held to consider making mandatory the orders for apparel and light manufacturing.

New York—Minimum-Wage Developments.

The guaranteed weekly wage in New York's laundry order has been upheld in the State Supreme Court of Erie County. The judge expressed the opinion that in passing a law for women's wages "sufficient to provide adequate maintenance and protect their health" the legislature must have had in mind that an hourly wage, regardless of amount, does not accomplish that purpose unless the employee is given enough hours of work to produce a week's living wage at the hourly rate set.

The soundness of minimum-wage orders is again shown in a recent survey of wages in the New York cleaning and dyeing industry. An upward movement of the entire scale of hourly earnings from the lowest to

the highest raised the average earnings of women and male minors from 33.1 cents before the order went into effect to 37.9 cents soon after. Average week's earnings were increased from \$14.81 to \$15.33. At the same time there was a marked decrease in hours. Before the order almost half the employees reported had worked 48 hours or more, while after the order only 15 percent had done so. Of 5,448 workers studied after the order, 88 percent were receiving the legal minimum or more.

A wage board for the hotel industry, the sixth to be convened under the State minimum-wage law, was organized in May.

Ohio—Minimum-Wage Activities.

In the first quarter of 1940 nearly \$28,000 was collected under the three wage orders in effect in Ohio—those covering laundries, dyeing and cleaning plants, and hotels and restaurants. A wage board has been in session for the beauty-culture industry.

Pennsylvania—Laundry Order.

A directory order for the laundry industry in Pennsylvania, effective June 1, sets a minimum of 27 cents an hour, without geographic distinctions. The chief effect will be in the rural districts, since wages in the cities exceed this. The minimum applies to the office force and store clerks as well as to plant workers. Waiting time must be paid at employee's regular rates. With every wage payment, employees are to be given an explanatory statement of rates and earnings. Where uniforms are required, employers are to supply them at a fair charge and are to launder them free.

Rhode Island—Benefits of Apparel Order.

Women's earnings and employment have increased since a minimum rate was set for the apparel industry in Rhode Island. Their average (median) hourly earnings, which were 33.7 cents in October 1936, 1 year before the order went into effect, were 37.6 cents in December 1939, 2 years after the order became effective. The order set a basic rate of 35 cents an hour, but as applied

to productive piece workers it was sufficient that three-fourths should receive at least that amount, the remaining one-fourth to receive not less than 30 cents.

The study shows that not only were wages of the lowest-paid workers increased by the order, but earnings of workers above the minimum also increased. For example, in 1936 only 21.3 percent of the women earned 40 cents or more, but in 1939 as many as 40.3 percent had such earnings. Average weekly earnings had risen from \$13.10 to \$14.70.

Total employment had increased by about 6 percent, and women comprised more than three-fourths of the total in 1939 as they did in 1936. Relatively fewer women worked as much as 44 hours, and more worked 40 but under 44 in 1939 than in 1936. At the time of inspection the great majority of the firms were in compliance with the order.

Men's earnings also have increased since the wage order became effective. Their hourly earnings averaged 49.3 cents in 1936 and 58.3 cents in 1939.

Utah—Retail Trade; Restaurants.

A mandatory order went into effect June 3 in Utah setting minimum rates in retail stores of \$10 to \$15 for a standard week of 40 to 48 hours. The rate is \$15 in Salt Lake City, \$14 in Ogden, with lower rates for other places. Part-time employees, those working less than 40 hours, are to be paid an amount proportionate to the minimum for the standard week, but in no case for less than 4 hours a day. The rate for learners for the first 3 months of employment is \$2 less, and for the second 3 months \$1 less, than the basic minimum.

The State authorities report that "the majority of the retail stores in Salt Lake City, and all those in the rest of the State, appear to be willing to support the order." However, a minority group of employers filed a petition for a rehearing on the order. On May 18 the Industrial Commission denied this petition, because (1) The commission did not act without or in excess of its

powers, and (2) the order was not procured by fraud—the only grounds, under the law, on which a rehearing may be granted.

Minimum rates of \$10 to \$14 for a 48-hour week, by locality, have been set for women and minors in restaurants. Learners, defined as employees with less than 3 months of recognized experience, may be paid \$1 a week less than the established minimum. The furnishing of meals is to be a matter of mutual agreement between employer and employee. Other provisions of the order cover record keeping, part-time workers, the split shift, rest periods, vacations, wage deductions, uniforms, and so forth. The order is mandatory and goes into effect August 5.

Studies of women's earnings made late in 1939 give some picture of the improvement

in wages that may be expected to result from the retail-trade and restaurant orders. One survey covered 428 women in stores and in service employment in 17 small towns, in most of which the minimum of \$10 will apply. Almost 30 percent of the women in stores and 80 percent of those in restaurants had received less than this. A survey of earnings in restaurants covered 721 women in Salt Lake City and 136 in Ogden. In Salt Lake City 75 percent earned less than \$14 and in Ogden 80 percent earned less than \$13, 24 percent and 31 percent, respectively, receiving less than \$10, the lowest minimum for any locality.

Hearings have been held on recommendations for the laundry and public-housekeeping industries.

Women in Tampa Cigar Industry

LOW earnings for both employers and workers, together with much unemployment and underemployment, characterize the Tampa cigar industry, according to a study made last summer by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research of the University of Florida. The shifting of some of the younger workers to other industries is proposed, and suggestions are made for training them for building up new lines of business. Tampa factories have lagged behind others in the introduction of modern machinery and methods, and the practice of spreading work has been carried too far. Both these conditions need to be changed gradually, with older workers being given preference in assignment to new processes.

The study covers 19 hand cigar factories, in which the more than 3,100 women workers comprised 51 percent of all the employees. Census figures indicate a rapid development in all Tampa cigar factories in the two decades 1910–30, with total employment doubled and that of women increased nearly four times.

Earnings of women in the 19 plants in

1939 must be judged by earnings in specific occupations. The largest group of workers were cigar makers, and half of these were women. Next in importance as woman-employing occupations were strippers and banders, with very few men. Average earnings of all workers in these occupations were as follows:

Cigar making.....	\$13.86
Stripping.....	9.06
Banding.....	11.07

That women's earnings have declined in recent years is indicated by earlier studies of Florida industries made by the Women's Bureau. While these figures are for the State as a whole, Tampa is the most important cigar center. In 1928, white women in cigar factories averaged \$16.65 a week; a much smaller number of Negro women, \$7.10. In 1937, women averaged \$13.35 in cigar factories, men \$18.20. In each of these years the industry gave employment to more women than did any other line of work studied, and in each year these earnings were exceeded only by those of store employees.

Women in Unions

Women's Auxiliaries.

THROUGH auxiliaries to national and international unions, women, even when not gainful workers, have an opportunity to aid the labor movement. All that is required is relationship to a union member. Such organizations have long been active. Recently there has been a national federation formed, under the auspices of the Union Label Trades Department. The tie-up with the union-label movement is a logical one. Women are to a very considerable extent the purchasing agents for their families. For this reason it is important that they should be familiar with the labels and be educated to watch for them when buying for the family. Even baked goods may carry such a label, if made in union shops under sanitary conditions. Some 15,000,000,000 of these labels have been issued by the bakers' union in the past 5 years. Interest in these activities is being stimulated by an essay contest sponsored by the union-label department. The subjects included are:

- Why I Buy Union Label Goods.
- Why I Use Union Services.
- Why I Am a Labor Unionist.
- Why I Joined a Women's Auxiliary.

Progress in Wearing Apparel.

A review of recent contracts covering at least 5,000 in clothing factories and more than 1,000 in hat factories shows that many wage increases have been secured. In the case of two first contracts, negotiations on wage rates were to follow signing of the agreement. One contract covering 3,000 corset workers in New York City gives the union the right to inspect records to see whether work has been sent out of town when New York workers are idle. This practice was forbidden in the former contract, but violations were hard to prove. In this same agreement all packers, boxers, and folders are brought into the union.

Workers in an unorganized plant in Indiana approached the union for assistance in securing their legal rights under the Fair Labor Standards Act. As a result \$700 in back wages was collected, the shop was organized, and a closed-shop contract was signed.

A firm in New Jersey went out of business, leaving 80 workers unemployed and \$2,000 in back wages unpaid. The union brought in a new factory under union conditions to employ the stranded workers, and will help to collect the back wages due.

A local union in New York is paying to members unemployment benefits totaling an average of \$1,000 a week. Workers eligible are those who earned less than \$300 in the recent season.

In a St. Louis plant, recently, executives and over 120 workers celebrated 25 years of continuous union-management relations.

Progress in Textiles.

Recent new or renewed contracts in the textile field cover at least 12,500 workers. The frequent use of the phrases "automatic renewal" and "standard terms" indicates that stability and continuity of practice is being achieved. Large sums have been added to workers' pay through negotiated increases. In Philadelphia increases in 15 mills added about \$200,000 a year to the purchasing power of the workers.

One contract provides a minimum of 45 cents an hour for unskilled labor and 70 cents for spinners and doffers, with the right to open the wage question on 30 days' written notice. It also has the following provisions: An 8-hour day, with time and a half for overtime or for holidays or scheduled days off; a week's vacation with pay; at least 4 hours' work or 2 hours' pay if asked to report; seniority rights; grievance and arbitration machinery; no loss of seniority by workers leaving the plant for illness, accident, or maternity.

Progress in Other Manufactures.

The largest peanut concern in the world, situated in Virginia, has about 1,000 workers, two-thirds of them Negroes. Their third agreement has recently been signed, establishing an hourly minimum of 33 cents, and giving 10- or 11-percent raises to a vast majority of the workers, 5-percent increases to the others. About \$50,000 will be added to the pay roll. Other terms include a 40-hour week, seniority, arbitration machinery, and improved sanitary conditions.

In a rubber factory in Massachusetts employing 900 workers, wage increases aggregating approximately \$20,000 a year were secured; the minimum rate is increased by 5 cents an hour for men and 2 cents for women. Time and a half for overtime and double time for holidays is provided. An improvement in the contract allows 1 week's vacation after 1 year's service, and 2 weeks after 5 years. The company agrees not to renew any contract with a firm involved in a strike with the union of rubber workers.

Workers on pocketbooks have renewed their contracts for 1 year with 5 firms in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Each contract provides for a 40-hour week, a minimum of \$14 a week, and a closed shop. About 300 workers are covered.

Progress Among White-Collar Workers.

A strike of newspaper workers in Chicago has been ended after 17 months. It is agreed that 115 union members are to be returned to their posts, and 52 others are to receive about \$24,000 in severance pay.

An agreement with a St. Paul newspaper is the first in that area to cover all employees, including accounting and building maintenance departments. Pay increases are secured for editorial, circulation, and accounting department workers. Severance allowance is increased to a standard of 1 week's pay for each 30 weeks of service up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

Employees of independent grocery stores in Chicago have received wage raises that

will total about \$500,000 a year. All salespersons will receive an increase of \$1 a week, bringing the minimum to \$21 for men and \$19 for women. This is in sharp contrast to wage figures for retail food stores in Illinois reported recently by the State Department of Labor, in which not the minimum but the average was \$21.11 for men and \$14.32 for women. A vacation with pay of 1 week will be given after 1 year, 2 weeks after 3 years.

Not all union work consists of negotiating agreements. A nurses' union in New York recently secured the following adjustments for its members: Compensation and free medical care in 76 cases of primary infection of tuberculosis; a vacation for a nurse who had had none for 2 years; an advance posting of vacation schedules; improvements in dining rooms after complaints were received of poor food, improper diets, lack of cups, teaspoons, and napkins.

The teachers' union in an Indiana city has helped to secure an increase of \$150 in the maximums on the salary schedule. The maximums become as follows: Two years' training, \$1,800; three years', \$2,000; four years', \$2,400; and five years' \$2,700. The local union is working on a plan to provide sabbatical leave and exchange of teachers. New York teachers and parents, after a 4-month campaign, have had the 4-day ban on substitutes rescinded. To save money, it had been ruled that 4 days must elapse between the first absence of a teacher and the calling of a substitute. During the 4 days the absent teacher's classes had to be handled by his colleagues.

Following a strike, 115 office workers in New York City returned to work with wage raises, a union shop, paid vacations and sick leave, and arbitration machinery. Workers paid less than \$16 received an increase of \$1.25, this raising the minimum to \$15.25; other workers got a raise of \$1.

Progress in Service Industries.

The agreement covering 25,000 laundry workers in the New York City area, signed

late in 1939, provided for a 5-day week after a period of adjustment. The new schedule went into effect April 6, and since that date no laundry may be picked up or delivered on Saturday.

No contract enforces itself, and a compliance department has been active in the laundry field. In one month 50 cases were handled, involving such problems as overtime pay for holidays, seniority, discharge

for union activity, and so on. In one case rates were reduced following the introduction of new machinery in the shirt-pressing unit. At hearings, certain clauses of the agreement were brought up which allow employers to make any changes that may be required in the interests of efficiency. However, in all such cases, employees affected by the change must have their former earnings guaranteed to them.

News Notes and Announcements

Woman's Centennial Congress

A CONGRESS of women will be held in New York in the last week of November to commemorate the "Woman's Century," 1840-1940, and to plan wisely and well for the century to come. Delegates from all parts of this country will "look backward at achievements won; look outward at discriminations still existing; and look forward to the emphases imperative for the advancement of mankind." The announcement of the congress emphasizes the following historical event that led women to combine for social welfare:

One hundred years ago the first World's Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London. Antislavery organizations in every country were urged to send delegates. Organizations in the United States elected eight women, who carried the same credentials as the men. The convention refused to admit these women, explaining that "God's clear intention" would be violated if "promiscuous female representation be allowed." These women, seated behind a curtained bar and incensed by the action taken, made plans to call a woman's convention in the United States, upon their return, to consider how women might act collectively to remove the injustices done them.

"The National Women's Trade Union League, founded in 1903, has been the labor wing of this movement" says the *Life and Labor Bulletin*. It has fought for rights for women in industry and encouraged industrial women to exercise the privileges of citizenship.

Recent Legislation

Legislatures in Kentucky, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia had adjourned before THE WOMAN WORKER went to press; that of New Jersey had recessed. Still meeting or shortly expected to convene or reconvene were regular sessions in Alabama, Louisiana, and South Carolina, and special sessions in California, Maine, and Illinois. Special sessions in California and Illinois were limited to consideration of subjects for which called.

Approved after the May WOMAN WORKER went to press were the following two bills:

Kentucky.

An act relating to employer-employee relationships and including a provision for a 6-day week for all employees (with certain exemptions, including all persons working not over 40 hours a week) unless time and a half is paid on the seventh day.

Rhode Island.

An act empowering the State Department of Labor to assist and cooperate in the enforcement of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

The following bills were introduced but not acted on:

Mississippi.

A bill providing maximum weekly hours for retail trade in certain municipalities according to wage groups—44 hours for persons

receiving \$10 a week or less, to 60 hours for those receiving over \$30 a week.

South Carolina.

A bill to provide a minimum wage of 30 cents an hour and maximum hours of 8 a day, 40 a week, unless time and a half is paid for overtime. Special certificates may be issued for the employment of learners, apprentices, and handicapped workers at less than the minimum wage. Agricultural and domestic service are exempt.

More Women Work in South Bend

Increasing economic pressures are pushing more women into the labor market, and young women are remaining longer at work than formerly, according to indications from additional figures tabulated in the sample census of South Bend. In 1939 women in the labor force¹ comprised 31.1 percent of the woman population; in 1930 the gainfully occupied women were 28.6 percent of the woman population. This is not surprising in view of the Women's Bureau findings in depressed years as to unemployment in that city. For example, the Bureau found that more than a third of some 2,700 households surveyed in the depression had less than their usual number of wage earners; in more than a fourth of those that normally had 2 to 6 wage earners they had been reduced to 1 or none. Under these circumstances, it is natural that the women of the family should try increasingly to add to its income.

In the sample census of 1939 the increase in women in the labor force had been considerably greater than their increase in the population, though they had advanced, while men had declined slightly, in the general population. Especially significant are the differences between the sexes as regards age of the workers, and the changes from 1930 to 1939 at the various employment ages. Over one-third of the males of 14 to 19 years and practically all men from 20 to 59 years were in the labor force. A somewhat smaller proportion of girls of 14 to 19 than of boys were in the labor force;

¹ For definition, see WOMAN WORKER for May, p. 5.

the maximum was reached in the 20-to-24-year group, 58.2 percent of whom were employed. At later ages, the proportions of women in the labor force became less than among younger women, though relatively more older women were workers in 1939 than in 1930. This indicates a tendency for young women to remain at work longer than formerly, as well as for the older women to return to the labor market because of family financial need.

Indiana Women Lack Protection

Indiana women in intrastate industries have no protection against long hours and low wages. The ones most affected are in laundries, restaurants, taverns, small commercial establishments that pay low salaries and commissions, and curb service that pays no wages at all but expects young women to depend on tips. An effort was made in the last legislative session (1939) to pass a State wage-hour law, but without success.

Home Work in California

A decision by the Appellate Division of the Superior Court has sustained enforcement of the new home-work law in California. This resulted from the effort of certain clothing firms to obtain an injunction against the Division of Industrial Welfare. The injunction was denied. This law, which became effective last September, gave the Division of Industrial Welfare increased power of regulation.

Time studies are now being made to determine what piece rates will insure to a normal, experienced worker 33½ cents an hour. The division has succeeded in raising many of the very low prevailing rates. These activities follow logically from the power given by the new law "* * * to determine whether the wages and conditions of employment of industrial home workers in the industry are injurious to their health and welfare or whether the wages and conditions of employment of the industrial home workers have the effect of rendering unduly difficult the maintenance of existing labor standards * * *." There has been

a decided upswing in applications for employers' licenses and home-workers' permits, but the division hopes soon to hold hearings and issue orders forbidding additional types of home work, a power also given them by the new law.

Accomplishments of the W. P. A.

A recent report of work done by the Division of Professional and Service Projects of the W. P. A. gives an imposing picture of service to many communities and to millions of men, women, and children. Besides provision of food and clothing, these include educational activities, preparation of books for the blind, and other library facilities, and so forth. This is the division in which practically all women are found, and certain of its projects give employment almost exclusively to women. During the week of May 20, open house was held in all professional and service projects throughout the country. Since the beginning of the program more than 218,000,000 garments and more than 43,000,000 quarts of canned food have been produced. More than 17,000,000 visits to families have been made by housekeeping aides. At a recent date lunches were being served in more than 11,000 schools, 1,500 nursery schools were operated, nearly 10,000 libraries operated or assisted. More than 68,000,000 books have been renovated and nearly 4,000,000 pages transcribed in Braille.

Services giving employment to both men and women include health and educational activities. In a 2-week period in January 1940 more than 1,000,000 persons were enrolled in adult education classes; nearly 225,000 were receiving music or art instruction. Nearly 243,000 medical or dental examinations and treatments in clinics, schools, or homes were reported in this same period.

The workers' service program has been set up recently as one of the special community service projects. The plan of this is to furnish, on request, teachers in various lines, leaders for forums and discussion groups, and for music, drama, and other leisure-time

activities. It is expected that the program will be in demand especially by farm and industrial groups and by employees of other W. P. A. projects.

The District Needs a Labor Department

This was the conclusion of Mrs. Roosevelt after making a tour of the labor agencies in the District of Columbia in the spring. She discovered: That the District has no safety code to protect workers in private employment, and that the frequency of accidents is greater than in comparable employment elsewhere; that there is no agency that collects labor statistics; and that 5,000 to 10,000 women workers are not covered by the present 8-hour law, which was passed in 1914 before there were so many large apartment buildings and beauty shops.

Industrial Hygiene in Montana

There was established recently in the Montana State Health Department a division of industrial hygiene, which will be concerned with the health of the industrial population of the State. The 32,000 employed women reported in 1930 were chiefly in white-collar and service jobs, with about 400 in factories.

Jobs in Chemistry for Women

An interesting picture of the opportunities for women chemists is presented by a report received recently on the work of such women in Cincinnati.¹ The Cincinnati section of the American Chemical Society lists 10 women in a total of 300 members. Four of these teach in colleges, and 1 in a high school; 2 are librarians; the others are a graduate assistant, an industrial engineer, and a worker in medical research. Of special interest also is the work of 2 other women, biochemists, one of whom supervises the production of serums, toxins, antitoxins, and the like, and the other does research

¹ Prepared by Muriel E. Coffin, assistant librarian of the Proctor & Gamble Co.

on cancer and teaches in the cancer clinic. The indications are that the greatest numbers of women chemists in Cincinnati find work in hospitals. These report a total of 44 in their clinical laboratories and 16 in the research laboratories. At present, only 8 women chemists are reported in industry in the city, 4 as librarians. Some women have left the field of chemistry proper to teach foods in high schools or go into nursing.

Recent Publications

Women's Bureau—Printed Bulletins¹

- STATE MINIMUM-WAGE LAWS AND ORDERS: 1939. Supplement to Bul. 167. 1940. 15 pp. 5 cents.
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND EARNINGS OF WOMEN WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES. Reprint from Labor Information Bulletin, February 1940. 2 pp.
- PROGRESS OF STATE MINIMUM-WAGE LEGISLATION, 1939. 13 pp. (Prepared by Women's Bureau. Published in Monthly Labor Review, Bureau of Labor Statistics, February 1940. Reprint obtainable from Women's Bureau.)

Women's Bureau—Mimeographed Material¹

- EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS IN CITRUS FRUIT PACKING, 1939. 24 pp.
- EMPLOYMENT IN SERVICE AND TRADE INDUSTRIES IN MAINE, 1939. Preliminary Report. 35 pp.
- MAJOR LEGAL DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SEXES, BY STATE. Condensed from Survey of the Legal Status of Women in the United States, January 1, 1938. 9 pp.
- REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE MINIMUM-WAGE INSPECTORS (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island), New York City, February 2 and 3, 1940. 13 pp.
- DIGEST OF SUGGESTED STANDARDS OF PROCEDURE UNDER STATE MINIMUM-WAGE LAWS. 3 pp.
- THE WOMEN'S BUREAU LOOKS AT YOUNG WOMEN AND THEIR JOBS. Address by Mary Anderson before the Regional Conference on Girls' Projects of the National Youth Administration, Denver, Colo., November 30, 1939. 11 pp.
- DOMESTIC WORKERS AND LEGISLATION. Revised April 1940. 6 pp.
- OFFICIAL ACTION AS TO EMPLOYMENT OF MARRIED WOMEN. April 1940. 5 pp.
- GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT OF MARRIED WOMEN. April 1940. 16 pp.

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.

Other Department of Labor Bulletins¹

- STUDY OF CONSUMER PURCHASES, URBAN SERIES, 1935-36. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Vol. I, Family Income: East Central Region (9 cities), Bul. 644. New England (5 cities), Bul. 645.
- Vol. II, Family Expenditures: West Central-Rocky Mountain Region (6 urban communities), Bul. 646. Southeastern Region (3 cities), Bul. 647.
- MONEY DISBURSEMENTS OF WAGE EARNERS AND CLERICAL WORKERS, 1934-36. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Pacific Region (5 cities), Bul. 639.
- OCCUPATIONAL POISONING IN THE VISCOSE RAYON INDUSTRY. By Alice Hamilton, M. D. Bul. 34. Division of Labor Standards.
- CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY. General report adopted by the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, January 19, 1940. Children's Bureau.
- TREND OF CHILD LABOR, 1937 to 1939. Children's Bureau.
- JUNIOR PLACEMENT. A survey of junior-placement offices in public employment centers and in public-school systems of the United States. 1940. Publ. No. 256. Children's Bureau.
- CHILD-HEALTH CONFERENCES AS TRAINING CENTERS FOR MEDICAL STUDENTS. March 1940. Children's Bureau.

Other Recent Publications

- HOUSEHOLD WORKERS. By Jean Collier Brown. Occupational Monograph No. 14. Science Research Associates, Chicago. 1940. 48 pp.

There are not enough capable trained workers available for household work, and yet there are thousands of the untrained who cannot find jobs. This points the way to the need of training facilities. This type of work has not the same continuous tension as keeping up with machines in mills and factories. Yet it has disadvantages in long hours, low wages, and harsh working conditions, all of which could and should be corrected.

"The young person entering the field of household employment today—with a clear understanding of all its imperfections and disadvantages, yet seeing its future possibilities for satisfactory employment—has a great opportunity to make a significant contribution to social progress."

- SAFETY FASHIONS FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY. National Safety Council, Inc., Chicago, 1939. 24 pp.

"* * * it has become the fashion in our modern world to dress and act so that accidents cannot harm us." Among the points stressed in this attractively illustrated bulletin are the wearing of low heels and snug-fitting garments, protection of eyes and hair, learning proper methods of handling material to avoid strains and sprains.