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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
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Women Do Key Work in Defense Manufacturing

TRIBUTE was paid to women's vital part in munitions manufacture in 1919 by the then Assistant Secretary of War Benedict Crowell, who stated:

For the successful carrying out of our program for the production of vast quantities of explosives and propellants, as well as shell loading, the women of America must be given credit, on account of the highly important part they took in this phase of helping to win the war. Fully 50 percent of the number of employees in one explosive plant were women, who braved the dangers connected with this line of work, to which they had been, of course, entirely unaccustomed but whose perils were not unknown to them.

Today women are expected to constitute half the work force in 10 new munition plants being constructed for the Federal Government. Because of the dangerous character of this work, these plants are being built in small communities. Wherever possible the workers will be drawn from nearby cities, towns, and farms, and commuting arrangements will

be made. However, some additional housing may be necessary.

In smokeless-powder plants women may be employed in the laboratories as routine analysts working under experienced women or men chemists. They may be temperature readers in the powder-drying rooms. They work on presses and cutting machines and at inspection of powder in the finishing room. Women also perform numerous operations involved in loading shells with powders and high explosives.

Four of these plants will make powder and high explosives, two will load bags, and four will load shells. Powder plants and bag-loading plants will be in or near Charlestown, Ind., and Radford and Pulaski, Va. Shell-loading plants will be at Union Center, Ind., Wilmington, Ill., Burlington, Iowa, and Ravenna, Ohio. An additional small-arms ammunition plant is to be constructed at St. Louis, Mo.

How Can Women Best Serve Defense?

THE AGENCIES, the work, the very life itself of communities all over the country form the essential keystone in the arch of defense in a democracy. It follows that for women asking how they can best serve in the defense program, the answer is in work as citizens through local or State defense councils. If there is no such local group, representatives of existing organizations can cooperate in a request to the mayor or other local authority to create one. Until a local defense council is formed, these representatives of existing groups can cooperate as a citizens' committee, studying the needs and resources of their community and helping to coordinate the activities of agencies that seek to meet the needs.

Such is the recommendation of a group of 50 women experienced in various fields of civic activity which met late in 1940.

Among them were experts in certain Government positions and special national private agencies, and 20 executives of major national women's organizations. The conference urged also that every State and local defense council should include a woman member familiar with what women's groups can offer.

These recommendations apply to the work of women as citizens. For those seeking paid work, the answer again goes back to their own communities. They must find such chances chiefly through local employment offices or by civil service examination, notices of which are displayed in 5,000 post offices in the larger localities. Opportunities for training before taking a job also should be sought through the proper local agencies or the regular educational channels. Certain well-defined professional groups,

such as medical women, nurses, home economists, have been registering the qualifications of their own members.

In nonmilitary defense, in the building of community strength, lies the chief defense function of women, working as citizens. This work on the home front may be less spectacular than military operations, but it is every bit as vital. The endurance of our democracy can rest only on the deep conviction of its citizens that the American chances for life and liberty are worth the sacrifices of defense.

The work to be carried on in the community may include nutrition, health, housing, relief, vocational guidance and training, naturalization and Americanization, recreation, employment, education, maladjust-

ments in family life, cost of living, labor standards, knowledge of governmental functions and resources.

A practical set-up that gives place to the services women can offer is found in the New Jersey Council of Defense. Among a number of advisory committees this council has created one on consumer interests, headed by an experienced woman, and comprised of representatives of at least 18 organizations in the State that work in this field. This committee is building civilian interests into the defense program and guarding against spiraling price levels, both designed to prevent lowered standards of living. Further work also is undertaken to raise these levels, in order to build greater physical fitness in the democratic way.

Women in the Labor Market, 1940

THE FIRST of the eagerly awaited figures from the 1940 Census of Occupations have been released, in the shape of an estimated total based on a 5-percent sample. It is no surprise that the number of women workers has increased markedly since 1930. The 10¼ million women in gainful work in 1930 were considered an important number, but there are now more than 12¼ million women in the labor market, an increase in the past 10 years of about 20 percent, though the woman population of 14 years and over has increased by only 14 percent. Obviously, the new occupation figures cannot take account of the acceleration due to the defense program, which already has added more and will continue to swell the number, though at present there is no complete measure of its extent.

Women show a significant increase in the proportion they comprise of all persons in the labor market, constituting 24 percent, or practically one-fourth, of the total in 1940, as compared with 22 percent in 1930, and about 21 percent in 1910 and 1920. The figures show that 90 percent of the women as well as of the men reported in the

labor market in 1940 have jobs, about 86 percent of them in private industry.

These comparisons give a rough picture of the trend in American economic life, though the figures are preliminary and the basis in the two periods differs in two important respects: In 1940 the numbers reported are those of the total labor market, including persons unemployed but seeking jobs, both experienced and new workers. The numbers employed are broken down according to those in private employment and in public emergency work. The 1930 census reported those "gainfully occupied," instructing enumerators to include in this category those out of work if they normally were employed; at that time, too, there were no large public emergency agencies of employment such as the W. P. A., the N. Y. A., or the C. C. C.

The second difference relates to age, the 1940 figures being for persons of 14 years and over, the 1930 figures for those of 10 years and over. For totals or large areas this makes little difference, since there are relatively few children 10 to 13 years of age in employment.

Upholding Labor Standards Important to Defense

The President

There is nothing in our present emergency to justify a lowering of the standards of employment. Minimum wages should not be reduced. There is nothing to justify a retreat from any of our social objectives.—*Radio address, May 1940.*

The strength of this Nation shall not be diluted by the failure of the Government to protect the economic well-being of its citizens . . . machines are operated by the skill and the stamina of the workers . . . For the workers provide the human power that turns out the destroyers, and the planes and the tanks.—*Radio address, December 29, 1940.*

Certainly this is no time for any of us to stop thinking about the social and economic problems which are the root cause of the social revolution which is today a supreme factor in the world.—*Message to Seventy-seventh Congress, January 6, 1941.*

We know that we still have far to go; that we must more greatly build the security and the opportunity and the knowledge of every citizen, in the measure justified by the resources and the capacity of the land.—*Inaugural Address, January 20, 1941.*

National Defense Advisory Commission

All work carried on as part of the defense program should comply with Federal statutory provisions affecting labor wherever such provisions are applicable. This applies to the Walsh-Healey Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the National Labor Relations Act, and so forth. There should also be compliance with State and local statutes affecting labor relations, hours of work, wages, workmen's compensation, safety, sanitation.

Governmental Labor Officials, September 1940

(Held in New York, September 1940)

In a program of National defense it is of paramount importance to safeguard and promote the health, safety, and morale of its workers. . . .

Opposing any efforts to limit the protection of minimum-wage laws, State or Federal, by weakening amendments. . . .

Department of Labor, September 1940

National defense includes the defense of American living standards, as well as the production of machines and the training of men.

Advisory Committee on Women's Labor

(Labor Advisory Committee on Standards for the Employment of Women in the Defense Program, representing eight leading labor organizations, in cooperation with the Women's Bureau.)

Extended experience, both in commercial plants and in the World War industries in 1914-18, shows positively that the fullest productivity depends on adequate safeguards to health

The defense program, calling for speed, quality, and quantity of production, can be attained and maintained over an extended period only when working conditions leading to fatigue, discomfort, ill health, or accident are eliminated.

National Consumers' League

(New York, January 10-11, 1941)

Resolved, That the National Consumers' League will—

Continue to do all in its power to maintain and to strengthen existing labor legislation, and to arouse the community to the necessity for an informed and watchful public opinion, mobilized to this end.

The resolutions specify as essential the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Walsh-Healey Act, and the National Labor Relations Act, effective administration of State labor laws, and extension of coverage of the Social Security Act.

Conference on Labor Legislation

(Conference, called by Secretary of Labor. Representatives, appointed by Governors of States, include many State officials, such as Governors, labor commissioners, or legislators, and State Federation of Labor officials. Washington, December 9-11, 1940.)

The success of the National defense program rests upon the efficiency, health, and well-being of labor. . . .

Resolved, That the conference strongly oppose and condemn any move during this emergency to weaken or destroy labor

standards established by years of effort by State and Federal labor legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That the conference recommend positive action to extend the scope of this legislation and the programs for social security to those sections of the population which are still working and living at substandard levels, for only thus can National unity be achieved within the framework of a democratic society.

Women's Conference

(Fifty women experienced in civic activities, including 20 executives of women's national organizations and various experts in Government positions and special national private agencies, Vassar College, December 5-6, 1940.)

Findings include: In a total defense program, nonmilitary defense is as important as armed forces. . . .

It is important that labor standards be maintained.

Women in Unions

Progress in Defense Industries.

A LANDMARK in trade-union history is the recent admission of 156 Bridgeport (Conn.) women mechanics—most of them foot- and power-press experts and bench workers—to full-fledged membership in the International Association of Machinists. Leader of the group is Gertrude Sweet, employed in a plant making metal bands for wrist watches.

"Women of Steel" and the kinds of work they do are discussed by Florence M. Clowes of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, in *Life and Labor Bulletin* for December 1940. She points out that about 2,500 women—exclusive of clerical employees—are employed in steel works and rolling mills and about 4,000 in tin mills, chiefly as inspectors. A few hundred are doing actual production and maintenance work. In the fabricating end there is an increasing number of women. Even in 1929 from one-fifth to three-tenths of the workers on cutlery, certain types of hardware, tin cans, and wirework were women. Many occupations requiring manual dexterity, quick perception, and general alertness rather than sheer physical strength can be filled well by women.

In general, there are rate differentials between men and women running from 5 to 20 cents an hour, and a great influx of women may mean a lowering of wage standards. A recent union contract in a plant making kitchen utensils provides a minimum for

men of 72 cents, for women of 65 cents; an aircraft plant fixes minimums of 75 cents for men, 65 cents for women. In contrast, the agreement with a plant making bearings fixes a 90-cent minimum regardless of sex or occupation.

The steel workers' union announces nearly 700 companies with contracts now in effect. In 75 of these in New Jersey and Ohio more than 2,100 women (probably including office workers) were employed in recent years. Records showed 50 or more women in 9 of these plants, one having over 200 women, another more than 400. In 12 of the New York plants women were employed on production in 1936, though numbers employed are not available.

Work on textiles is a defense essential, and uninterrupted production is important. A contract covering 1,500 workers in a southern cotton mill forbids strikes or lock-outs. A strike against an increased workload affecting 800 workers was settled by a reduction of assignments.

In men's clothing, also a defense industry, a number of recent gains are reported. About 185 workers on uniforms secured a 15-percent wage increase and a 36-hour week. Some 100 neckwear workers whose wages had been cut in the last 11 months received a 12½-percent increase on Government work through union activity. On the next Government contract, wages are to be raised again, to bring them to the level of other local workers on similar contracts.

Women's Trade Union League Activities.

Public forums are being conducted by a number of local branches of the Women's Trade Union League, notably in St. Louis, Mo., and in Racine, Wis. These are varied in program, some giving the history of trade-unionism and showing how the league fits in with the labor movement as a whole.

The educational program of the New York branch, under the direction of Nora Piore, features a "Classroom Without Walls." This sponsors Saturday morning trips for league members to Government agencies important to labor, such as the State Labor Department, the State Labor Relations Board, the local branch of the Federal Wage and Hour Division. The Dressmakers' Union is to be host to the group for one evening, and for another the Town Hall has invited members to be present at one of its broadcasts. New classes starting in February deal with such subjects as current developments in the world crisis, trade-unionism in the United States, and the 1941 legislative sessions in Albany.

Progress in Making Dresses and Accessories.

Great interest is being taken in negotiations going on in the dress industry in New York looking toward a new contract covering 85,000 workers. The union has presented a program for greater stabilization of the industry, based on some special studies. The chief problem for the industry seems to be not one of labor costs, but of better management and planning. A detailed examination of five shops making dresses selling for about the same price showed that while variations were only 2 cents per unit in labor costs, they were 7 cents in overhead and 16 cents in profits.

Average earnings of workers in 1939 were found to be \$935 in contract shops and \$1,252 in inside shops. Spread over 52 weeks this meant an average of respectively \$18 and \$24 to meet the worker's living expenses. One source of waste is idle plant hours. A few manufacturers have overcome this by improved merchandising and provide

40 to 50 weeks of work in a year, greatly reducing overhead. The greatest need seems not a higher wage rate nor a shorter workweek but steadier employment throughout the year. In 1937 employment in regular shops in New York at its low point was less than two-thirds of the peak, with the difference even greater in contract shops.

In Baltimore some 200 cotton-dress workers negotiated a 10-percent wage increase, price committees, division of work, and a closed shop, while 100 workers in a sportswear house gained a 5-percent increase for operators and pressers and one of \$2 or \$3 a week for cutters, and a week's vacation with pay for all.

Paid vacations for out-of-town as well as New York workers have been incorporated in a new contract negotiated by a New York local. Some 6,000 to 7,000 workers are affected, and approximately 4,000 will be given vacations for the first time.

Workers on clothing accessories are included in the clothing unions. A local in New York covering certain types of buttons, plastics, and novelties reported a membership of 2,000. Recent contracts with a number of firms have brought gains to more than 1,000 workers. In several shops wage increases varying from \$2 to \$4 a week were obtained. Pay for certain holidays and for vacations also was secured. Pleaters in 13 Chicago firms employing 300 received a flat increase in a contract.

Progress for White-Collar Workers.

A contract covering about 150 employees of a chain of drug stores provides for a joint research committee representing the union and management. The committee will have the authority to raise employees' ratings with a view to promotion. A 10-percent wage increase and an additional week's vacation with pay for workers with 3 years' seniority—1 week's for at least 1 year—also were included.

A salary scale for teachers, promoted by a local union, gives raises of \$60 a year for 5 years and \$120 a year for the next 5 years up to a maximum of \$2,160.

Employees of the national office of a social agency have secured minimum-wage rates of from \$21 to \$40 a week, a 37½-hour week (35 in summer), 15½ holidays, seniority rights, and a draft clause. Negotiations are in progress with another office of the agency. In all, 300 employees will be affected.

An agreement by which over 80 percent

of the workers in the larger cities receive at least \$23 a week is in effect with a telephone company in southern California. Entrance pay is \$16, with \$1 raises after 6 months, after 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 9 years, and \$26 after 13 years. Eighty-one percent of the employees have worked 10 years or more.

Progress in Minimum Wage

Minimum-Wage Conference

ISSUANCE of State minimum-wage orders as rapidly as possible to cover workers in service industries and others that cannot be aided by the Federal Wage and Hour Act was the first recommendation of the annual conference of State minimum-wage administrators held in Washington in January. At least one State that in the past has issued a wage order covering manufacturing industries plans a revision, making a special effort to bring the provisions governing learners into conformity with Federal regulations for the same industries.

Most of the major industrial States having minimum-wage laws were represented at the conference, at which administrators exchanged experiences and considered various technical aspects of their problems. Care in drafting wage orders was stressed, and the conference considered especially helpful draft orders prepared by the Women's Bureau and designed to fit the needs of particular industries in the light of minimum-wage experience.

It was recommended that all workers in an industry, including the clerical force, be covered by the wage order for that industry. Later a special order should be issued for office workers not attached to a covered industry.

The conference considered the slender budgets available for minimum-wage progress, and recommended that economy in enforcement be secured through greater efficiency of operation, as, for example, by the training of inspectors, careful routing

for inspections, time-saving devices in inspection, cooperation with other agencies, and so forth. However, all States felt regular inspections to be of primary importance for the protection of both workers and employers.

The conference stressed the aid that can be given in securing the objectives of minimum-wage laws by public groups intelligently aware of the purpose of such legislation and of the work of the State minimum-wage division. Since the main object is to secure the payment of the legal wage to the workers, and this can be done best through employer cooperation, it was recommended that employers be given a chance to pay back wages voluntarily, providing records are not falsified, reserving final prosecution for repeating offenders.

In the States

Illinois—Beauty Culture Order Upheld.

The minimum-wage act of Illinois applies to beauty parlors, according to a recent decision by the municipal court of Chicago. A beauty-parlor employer charged with failure to comply with the law contended that her business was a profession and not under the act. The court held that whether or not the defendant's endeavor is a profession is unimportant. The term business includes a profession. The act covers all occupations not specifically excluded.

New York—Dry Cleaning Wages Still Up.

A second check-up of wages in cleaning and dyeing establishments since the New York order became effective in May 1939 showed that not only have all gains made

in the first year been maintained, but there has been some improvement. The terms of the order were responsible for most of the gains in 1940. In establishments outside the metropolitan area, in cities with a population of 10,000 and over, the minimum wage was increased from 34 to 35 cents on July 1, 1939, and to 36 cents, the level in New York City, on January 1, 1940. The proportion of women and minors earning \$15 or more a week had increased from 54 percent in 1939 to 56 percent in 1940. Median hours had not changed, but there were fewer persons working extremely long hours.

New York—Candy Order Upheld.

The New York order for the candy and confectionery industry, calling for a 35-cent hourly minimum and a 40-hour basic week, has been upheld by the State supreme court in an Erie County case. The judge ruled, however, that the part of the order calling for payment of wages to employees whether they work or not was unreasonable and invalid. He held that a guaranteed wage equal to 3 full days' pay should not be required when only part-time work is available. Under the decision, the order is referred to the State board of standards and appeals for further consideration of the part-time employment problem. It should be remembered that a guaranteed wage for the laundry industry has been upheld by the same court (see *WOMAN WORKER* for July 1940), so the question is not yet finally settled.

Ohio—Order for Beauty Parlors.

Full-time beauty operators, manicurists, or other employees, except learners or maids, are to be paid at least \$16, \$14.50, or \$13, according to size of city, by the terms of an Ohio order effective December 5, 1940. The \$16 rate is for cities of 50,000 or more, Ohio having 12 such cities. Full-time learners or beginners—workers who either have no cosmetology license or have had one for less than 6 months—are to be paid from \$14.50 to \$11.50, full-time maids from

\$14 to \$11. Full-time maids are those working from 33 to 44 hours a week; other employees are classed as full time if they work on 3 or more days, regardless of the number of hours worked in each day.

The above weekly rates of full-time employees are for work up to and including 44 hours a week. Additional hourly pay is scheduled for each type of employee, by size of city, for all work over 44 but not over 48 hours a week. After 48 hours, all employees shall be paid 75 cents an hour.

Hourly rates for part-time work range from 38 to 30 cents for maids, from 40 to 32 cents for beginners, and from 44 to 36 cents for others. Waiting time is to be paid for at not less than the regular minimum rate. Tips are not to be counted as part of the minimum wage.

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act The Act Upheld by the Supreme Court.

The Wage-Hour Law was unanimously upheld by the Supreme Court in a decision in February on two cases sent up from lower courts, involving a Georgia lumber company and a group of Southern cotton mills, both challenging the constitutionality of the minimum-wage and overtime-wage provisions of the Federal act. The Court stated that it overruled the 1918 case of *Hammer v. Dagenhart*, which was a five-to-four decision declaring that Congress could not bar from interstate commerce products made by child labor, and which, the Court stated, departed from the interpretations of the commerce clause made before and since.

Establishing Wage Rates.

A minimum-wage rate of 35 cents an hour for workers on luggage, pocketbooks, cases, and certain other small articles of leather or artificial leather went into effect under the wage-hour law January 6. It is estimated that about one-fourth of the 19,000 workers in the industry will receive wage increases. In 1929 women were from a sixth to a fifth of the employees in luggage and pocketbook factories, and well over a third of those making small miscellaneous articles.

An order directing payment of at least 37½ cents an hour to workers making embroidery, effective January 27, will raise wages for some 4,400 of the 14,250 workers, chiefly women, in addition to home workers, who also are covered.

In the carpet and rug industry, a rate of 40 cents an hour for the wool and 35 cents for the "other than wool" section of the industry has been approved by the Administrator effective March 17. It is estimated that this will raise wages for 1,100 of the industry's 31,000 workers.

Wage rates of from 33 to 36 cents, effective March 1, cover office workers, track workers, redcaps, car waiters, and certain other employees in railroad transportation. It is estimated that the wage order will bring increases of more than \$7,000,000 to some 70,000 employees.

For the jewelry industry, two rates have been recommended, 40 cents for workers on watch cases, on stones, and on more expensive jewelry; and 35 cents for all others. It is estimated that these rates will raise the wages of about 8,000 workers out of a total 35,000. In 1929 more than a fourth of the workers on jewelry and watch cases alone were women.

A committee for the enameled-utensil industry was appointed late in the fall and shortly recommended a 40-cent minimum. If accepted, wages should be raised for about one-fifth of the 6,200 workers covered. A recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows more than one-third of the employees to be women. It also shows

that about 85 percent of those earning less than 40 cents were women.

To enforce the minimum rates recently set for needlework in Puerto Rico (see *WOMAN WORKER* for January 1941), the Wage and Hour Division has set piece rates for more than 300 hand-sewing operations. "These piece rates should enable the resumption of hand needlework in Puerto Rico, among the estimated 60,000 needleworkers on the island, in compliance with the law." The regulations setting the piece rates call for the registration of all embroidery and other designs and operations with the wage and hour office in San Juan. Hourly rates of from 15 to 20 cents for work on gloves were approved, effective February 19.

New Committee.

A committee has been appointed for the drug, medicine, and toilet preparations industry. Probably about half the employees in this industry are women.

Administration.

A charge of falsification of records which concealed underpayment to a number of women was brought successfully against a southern cotton mill, and will lead to the restitution of about \$5,000 to the women. Records showed the payment to these women of the correct minimum for the correct number of hours. It was found, however, that they were forced to split this wage, as recorded, with helpers employed for them by the mill, so that they were actually being paid only 16¼ cents.

Women's Contribution to Family Support

THE USUAL place of the woman wage earner in the family economy can be more accurately determined than ever before through a series of studies of family incomes made by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Home Economics. Reports to date include 45 cities of from about 9,000 to over 3,000,000 population. These data show considerable

numbers of women as the principal earners of their families, "principal" defined as the one member bringing in the largest sum to buy the daily bread (not necessarily the customary "head" of the family). The surveys also show that many women are the sole wage earners in their families.

In each city the most usual family was one not on relief, with husband and wife

both present (the "complete family"), and both of them white and native-born. It is with these families that most of the report is concerned. Families were classified into occupational groups according to the work that furnished the greatest proportion of the family income. Usually, though not always, this corresponded to the job of the principal wage earner. A few families with no wage earners have been disregarded in the following discussion.

Incomplete Families

Little detail is given regarding the incomplete families, those lacking either the husband or the wife or both, though it is in these that a woman's contribution is often the greatest. A woman was the principal wage earner in the following proportions of the incomplete families¹ reported:

	Percent
Chicago.....	54
Pacific coast.....	33-50
East central.....	41-60
Southern—White.....	40-74
Negro.....	67-78

Of the women principal wage earners reported in Chicago, three-fourths were in incomplete families, as were 61 to 77 percent of those of such white and 81 to 86 percent of such Negro families in five southern cities.

Complete Families

Women as Principal Wage Earners.

Of all employed women reported in the 131,000 families in the sample, 21 percent (5,500) were principal earners; almost 3,300 of these chief earners were wives. Women principal earners were concentrated most largely in families in the clerical field, while men who were principal earners were more often in wage-earning families.

It is not surprising that where a woman was the principal earner the family income was lower than where a man brought in the chief pay, since women's earnings usually are considerably below men's. Almost

three-fourths of such families were living on less than \$2,000, more than a fourth of them on less than \$1,000.

Women as Sole Wage Earners.

More than three-fourths of the families had only one earner. Though in most cases this was the husband, in about 1,600 families a woman—in nearly 1,000 the wife and in over 600 some other female member—furnished the sole support. More than 90 percent of the families supported entirely by the wife were living on less than \$2,000, about 60 percent of them on less than \$1,000.

Women Supplementing the Family Income.

Others besides the chief earner contributed to the income in nearly a fourth of the families reported. These supplementary earners were found in a larger proportion of the wage earners' and clerical workers' families than of those in business and the professions. Just over half of them were women. The wife was a supplementary earner in nearly 11,500 families, more than a third of all that had additional wage earners. Over three-fifths of the families in which the wife added to the family earnings had less than \$2,000 in the year; more than one-eighth lived on less than \$1,000.

It is of interest to note the extent to which the wife was at work in relation to size of family. The studies contain data for a number of family types in 5 cities with a population of more and in 20 cities with a population of less than 20,000. Where there were one or two children and no other family member but husband and wife, only 8 percent of the wives were at work, one-fifth as principal earners. In larger families, with an older child or children or other adult member, a slightly larger proportion of the wives were in gainful work—9 percent. In the families with only man and wife, the wife was either principal or supplementary wage earner in 18 percent of the cases, and it is significant that well over a fourth of these working wives were the principal wage earners in their families.

¹ These include some one-person families.

The Negro Woman Worker.

The situation of the Negro nonrelief complete family was presented for seven southern and one midwestern city, incomes being shown for some 11,400 such families. A woman, usually the wife, was at work more frequently than was the case with similar white families. Negro women were principal earners in nearly 1,000 families, and the wife was working in nearly 5,300 families, 46 percent of the total. In at least 250 families a woman, usually the wife, was the only earner. More than half of all families had one or more supplementary earners, 74 percent of such earners being women.

Influence of Size of City.

The cities included in the survey fall into four groups according to population: 1 over

3,000,000 (Chicago), 4 between 200,000 and 350,000, 11 between 30,000 and 80,000, the remaining 29 between 9,000 and 20,000. The general level of income increased as the population increased. In Chicago about 80 percent of the families had only one earner, and this was the case with around 75 percent of the families in all the groups of smaller cities. The extent to which a woman was either the sole or the principal earner differed very little according to the size of the city. Women comprised 48 percent of all supplementary earners in Chicago and 51 to 57 percent of those in cities of other sizes. Among the women supplementary earners in Chicago the working wife appeared less frequently than in the groups of smaller cities; in Chicago about 44 percent of the women supplementary earners were wives, in the other groups of cities 57 to 62 percent.

Unemployment Compensation for Women

RECENT reports from Michigan and from Kansas cover two quite different phases of unemployment compensation. Both show that women's employment opportunities are more changing and uncertain than men's. The Michigan report deals with the adequacy of the duration of benefit payments, and shows in general a higher proportion of women than of men who had exhausted their benefit rights before being reemployed. The Kansas report showed a very high proportion of women claimants for unemployment benefits in certain industries employing large numbers of both men and women.

The Michigan study considered the experience of 55,260 workers who received their first benefit payment in July, August, or September 1938. Of these persons 15 percent were women. By June 30, 1939, all benefit rights had been used up by 62 percent of the women, though this was the case with only 43 percent of the men. This means, of course, that it took longer for women to find jobs. This greater difficulty for women was in general found in almost every industry.

Since the benefit rate is related to the worker's earnings, low-paid workers, more often women, have a low benefit rate. To add to the serious situation of these workers, those with the lowest benefit rates also were the ones who had used up most of what was due them, and this always was true even where workers had qualified for the same number of weeks of benefits. For example, of workers who had qualified for the maximum 16 weeks, three-fourths of those with weekly benefit payments of less than \$7 had exhausted their benefit rights, compared with a little more than one-fourth of those receiving the maximum of \$16.

Study of a smaller sample of 5,400 men and 1,300 women in Detroit who had used up all the benefit due them gave some indication of the time such persons continued to be unemployed in the following 9 months. Persons were considered to have been reemployed who had earned at least \$50 in one quarter in a covered occupation. Here again, women were found to be in a less favorable position, since 45 percent of them, compared with 31 percent of the men, had

not been reemployed (as defined) in the 9-month period. Only 29 percent of the women, compared with 35 percent of the men, were reemployed in the same quarter in which they had used up their benefit rights.

Because of the long intervals of unemployment when they could not get benefits, about 30 percent of all those in Detroit who did use up their benefits, and a somewhat smaller percent of those who did not, were obliged to obtain general relief or work-projects employment immediately before or during the benefit year. About 15 percent received general relief or work-projects employment after the exhaustion of benefits. Nearly two-thirds of the beneficiaries in households receiving relief were considered to be heads of the family, 4 percent of these being women. Of all beneficiaries in households receiving relief, 15 percent were women.

Among claimants reported for the last 6 months of the year, in the Kansas report,¹ 11 percent of all beneficiaries in 1939 were women. Their average weekly benefit amounted to \$6.56 for white women and \$6.33 for Negroes, while the average total

amounts received were respectively \$58.18 and \$53.92. Women comprised somewhat larger proportions of those in manufacturing and in trade, smaller proportions in service occupations, than might be expected from the extent to which, according to the 1930 census, women constituted the labor supply in such occupations, as the following shows:

	Percent of women—	
	In the industry	Claiming benefits
Manufacturing.....	8	23
Trade.....	22	23
Service.....	55	39

In a number of important industries which employ large proportions of women, more women than men claimed benefits. Women comprised 82 percent of all claimants in clothing factories, in which 91 percent of the employees were women. They were 68 percent of the claimants in general stores, 54 percent of those in apparel stores, and 67 percent of those in personal service (including laundries, cleaning and dyeing establishments, beauty parlors, and so forth). Between 40 and 50 percent of the claimants from hotels and restaurants were women.

News Notes

National Consumers' League Meets

THE National Consumers' League held its forty-first annual meeting in New York in January. The 300 members present applauded a statement by Col. Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the United States Department of Labor, that regular routine inspections of factories are being made to secure full compliance with the Federal act. He added that arguments against a 40-hour week in defense industries are made by "the very people who were opposed to the law in the first place," and that countries at war have found excessive work hours unproductive. The conference also gave approval to Dr. Harriet Elliott, who urged maintaining living standards as an important part of total defense.

¹ Data based on a 30-percent sample.

Resolutions passed included support for; Strengthening Federal and State labor laws; a national health program; increased coverage of the unemployment and old-age insurances; spread of price data to prevent speculative increase in prices of consumer goods, including rents; solution of the problems of migratory workers and their families.

Proposed Laws for Women Workers

Forty-two State legislatures have convened in regular session. The more important bills affecting women workers are as follows:

Minimum Wage.

Connecticut.—To change the law to fix a flat rate of 30 cents for all workers. (H. 521.)

Maine.—To extend coverage to all occupations. (S. 41.)

Massachusetts.—To change the law to fix a flat rate of \$14.40 for 40 hours or 35 cents hourly, less for inexperienced. (H. 1682.)

North Dakota.—To extend employee's right to recover full amount. (H. 48.)

New York.—To extend the law to domestic workers in homes. (A. 485.)

Hours of Work.

California.—To extend the 8-48 law to any establishment, industry, or office (now applies only to manufacturing, mechanical, mercantile). (A. 513.)

To provide at least 12 hours off duty after 8-hour work day. (A. 514.)

To extend the hour-law coverage to agricultural workers. (A. 10.)

Connecticut.—To extend the 8, 48, and 6-day law to all establishments (now only mercantile). (H. 179.)

New York.—To limit hours of domestic workers to 60 a week. (A. 484.)

Oklahoma.—To provide 8, 48, and 6-day law for women in intrastate industries. (H. 220.)

At least 17 States have sought to include men either under wage or hour coverage or both, either by new wage-hour act or under present law. Illinois H. 123 proposes repeal of women's law and flat minimum for all.

Women Trained for Defense Jobs

Thousands of men throughout the Nation are receiving vocational training for defense on projects operated by the Work Projects Administration in cooperation with the United States Office of Education, the National Defense Advisory Committee, and State vocational training boards. Very few women have received such aid specifically for defense work, though for 5 years the W. P. A. has trained thousands of women in work habits that fit them for defense employment.

In one such W. P. A. national defense project in Newton, Mass., all the trainees are women. Women have proved themselves more adaptable than men on the particular work, the manufacture of time-bomb mechanisms and similar precision devices. They

have demonstrated possession of hand and finger dexterity which makes for speed and accuracy in this delicate precision work.

The vocational trainees on the Newton project are taught to operate light lathes, watch lathes, bench engine lathes, kick presses, punch presses, and eyelet and riveting machines. They also receive instruction in spot welding. All the machines used are extremely light and are similar to those operated by women workers in Massachusetts watch factories, precision instrument companies, and other such establishments.

Nearby watch factories, working on defense orders for instruments such as those that the girls are learning to make, pay beginners from \$18 to \$20 a week and provide trainees with chances for private employment in the vicinity of their homes. Many Massachusetts families have been skilled watch makers for generations. The same skill and precision needed for the manufacture of fine timepieces now is required for defense purposes.

Oklahoma Trains Domestic Workers

Household employment is one of the few occupational fields in which the demand for workers exceeds the supply. The Oklahoma State Employment Service reports that in 1939 there were 16,659 girls and women placed in such work, but thousands of job openings were canceled because trained, efficient workers were not available. This led to development of several types of training projects in the State, under the Trade and Industrial Division of Vocational Education made possible by the Federal Vocational Act of 1936. For such classes organized under the act, teachers' salaries are paid with Federal money.

Under the Oklahoma plan three types of classes are carried on for both white and Negro girls, and nearly 600 young women received such training in the school year 1939-40. Day trade-school classes are provided in high schools for girls who desire to enter household employment on graduation; these were conducted in seven centers, with an enrollment of 132. Diplomas are

presented by the State Department of Trade and Industrial Education.

Basic classes for beginners who have left school gave training to 107 girls in four centers. Under this plan girls are placed in selected training homes where they earn a wage and room and board, and where employers permit them to practice the procedures and methods gained in class under actual working conditions. They are allowed to attend special classes 9 hours a week. A follow-up of basic-training graduates in one center over a period of 3 years indicates that 44 percent had doubled or more than doubled their earning power and that another 30 percent had increased it by at least one-half.

The third type of training is in evening or advanced classes, planned for experienced workers wishing to improve their knowledge and skill; also for graduates of the basic-training classes wishing to specialize. Such advanced classes were given to 345 students in 11 centers in 1939-40.

New York Office Workers' Earnings

Women in factory offices in New York in October 1940 averaged \$22.88 a week, only a little more than the amount found necessary by cost-of-living studies of the New York Department of Labor to maintain in health a woman living alone. Even if a woman lived with her family she had less than \$3 a week to spare, if she earned as much as the average.

The range in office women's average earnings was from \$20.60 in textile factories to \$24.57 in printing and paper goods. Women's average was only just over half that of men. This difference between earnings of men and women was greater for clerical workers than for those employed on production work in shops, yet even in shops women's average of \$18.17 was only 56 percent of men's.

Injuries to Massachusetts Women

Each year the Industrial Accident Board of Massachusetts makes special investigation of all serious injuries and fatalities and of all cases of occupational disease. In

1939 there were 855 accidents, 127 of them resulting in injuries to women, 4 of them fatal. Serious injury to women occurred in all but 3 of the chief industry classes, but the largest numbers were in the following: Textiles, 26 cases; shoes, 17; paper and metal, 9 each; clothing, 8; toys and novelties, and food, 6 each; rubber, 5. Of the women injured, 16 were under 18 years, 51 were under 21. Just over a fourth of all occupational-disease cases—all of them dermatitis—were to women.

Women's Employment in Alabama

A survey of 520 establishments, in 3 large cities, made by the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations showed lowest wages in small concerns with local business.

Wages as low as \$10 a week were paid to office, store, and telephone workers; as low as \$6 to laundry workers and \$5 to elevator operators. Cash wages of waitresses ranged from \$2 to \$15. Maximum hours of 60, 70, and 72 a week were reported for various white-collar workers, and of 66 for women's jobs in laundries. Waitresses sometimes worked 84 hours, as did telephone operators for taxi companies.

An Alabama College study concludes that the industrial establishments of Alabama do not at present offer much opportunity for the employment of women, either in large numbers or in varied types of work, except as operatives in manufacturing. Trained women are more generally used in stenographic and clerical work. However, there are many concerns with no women even to handle office routine, and many others with only one. Except for electric power companies, few professionally trained women are engaged. The employment of women in large numbers is concentrated in the State's two major industries—cotton-textile and garment manufacture.

New York Home-Work Action Upheld

The New York home-work order covering men was brought into question by firms who conceded the right of the legislature to regulate home work for women and minors.

Following a favorable opinion rendered by the board of standards and appeals of the New York State Department of Labor, the Supreme Court of Albany County upheld the law and the revised order. The court pointed out that the clear intent of the law was to do away with the evils of home work, and the wording of the law was such as to indicate that adult male home workers also would be included. (See earlier issues of *WOMAN WORKER*.)

Job Clinic for District Women

The Women's Occupational Council was organized in the District of Columbia to meet the needs of business and professional women over 35 who are unemployed or are seeking better jobs. One important phase of the work is the recently formed Women's Job Clinic, to be held once a week. Its purpose is to provide a place where employed and unemployed women may analyze their own vocational abilities and present their service-selling campaigns for criticism. Personnel workers, vocational counselors, and other qualified persons will act as leaders.

The first clinic meeting was attended by 22 women in search of jobs, and at a recent date 75 women were registered for work. Late in 1940 a careful canvass was made by 10 unemployed women and several independent business women. Lectures are planned on the assets of mature women and the fields of work available to them.

Home Work Banned on Public Contracts

Attention is again called to the prohibition of industrial home work under the Public Contracts Act by a recent letter from the Administrator to an employer subject to the law. The act requires every contractor furnishing supplies to the Government to be a "manufacturer" or "regular dealer." Rulings issued in 1937 define a manufacturer as "a person who owns, operates, or maintains a factory or establishment that produces on the premises the materials, supplies, articles, or equipment required under the contract." This rules out those whose low bids are made possible by the employment of home workers.

Recent Publications

Women's Bureau—Printed Bulletins¹

- STATE LABOR LAWS FOR WOMEN, December 31, 1940—SUMMARY. Bul. 156-I. 18 pp. 5 cents.
PRIMER OF PROBLEMS IN THE MILLINERY INDUSTRY. Bul. 179. 47 pp. 10 cents.
THE NONWORKING TIME OF INDUSTRIAL WOMEN WORKERS—Study by students of Hudson Shore Labor School, July 1940. Bul. 181. 10 pp. 5 cents.

Women's Bureau—Mimeographed Material¹

- THE WOMEN'S BUREAU AND ITS WORK. December 1940. 11 pp.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU IN RECENT YEARS. January 1941. 7 pp.
DIFFERENCES IN STATE AND FEDERAL WAGE STANDARDS FOR MANUFACTURING. January 1941. 8 pp.

Other Department of Labor Publications¹

- ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION, FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 1940.
WORKERS AND NATIONAL DEFENSE. Department of Labor, 1940.

¹ Bulletins may be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C. Mimeographed reports are obtainable only from the agency issuing them.

- HANDBOOK OF FEDERAL LABOR LEGISLATION. Division of Labor Standards, Bul. 39, Part I.
JUNIOR PLACEMENT. Children's Bureau, Bul. 256.
REPORT ON THE JEWELRY MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY. Wage and Hour Division.
EARNINGS AND HOURS IN THE ENAMELED UTENSIL INDUSTRY, AUGUST 1940. Bureau of Labor Statistic (mimeog.).

Publications Regarding Defense

- DEFENSE. Bulletin of the Advisory Commission to the Council of National Defense. Weekly.
DEFENSE PAPERS; DEFENSE DIGESTS; COMMUNITY COUNCILS IN ACTION. Monthly publications of American Association for Adult Education.
HOME NURSING COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. Education and National Defense Series—No. 1. Federal Security Agency, U. S. Office of Education.

Other Recent Publications

- HOW STARCHED ARE WHITE COLLARS TODAY? Leadership Division, National Board, Y. W. C. A., New York. 35 pp. (Mimeog.) Outline for study and discussion on the subject of economic security of white-collar workers.