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# WOMAN WORKER

v. 22 no. 3

**MAY 1942**

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**United States Department of Labor**

**Women's Bureau**

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, SECRETARY

WOMEN'S BUREAU

MARY ANDERSON, DIRECTOR

# THE WOMAN WORKER

PUBLISHED EVERY 2 MONTHS

Vol. XXII

No. 3

May 1942



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

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

MAY 8 1942

## Women on the Battle Line in War Factories

**E**MPLOYMENT of women in war plants is increasing rapidly. However, many women are unemployed because industries are being converted to war work. Large numbers of women are seeking employment, both at employment offices and at plant gates. Hence a general registration of women is not necessary at this time. In some areas with acute labor shortages, local registration may be of advantage.

**H**ALF a million women were estimated early this year to be serving their country in war industries. The number of these increases day by day. In some 30 plants making small-arms and artillery ammunition, where 40,000 women were employed in the last quarter of 1941, over 70,000 are expected to be at work by late summer. In some of these the woman labor force will be doubled, in others trebled, and some will employ 10 times as many women as before. These are chiefly new jobs, not those vacated by men. Before 1941 almost no women were in aircraft.

### Women in Jobs Vacated by Men

Many reports from all parts of the country show that men called to war service actually have been replaced by women in types of work formerly not done, or done only very rarely, by women, though of course there is no way to discover the full number of these. They include clerks, cashiers, and pharmacists in drug stores, theater ushers, hotel elevator operators, taxi drivers, bank tellers, electricians, acetylene welders, milling-machine operators, riveters, tool-keepers, gage checkers, gear cutters, turret and engine lathe operators. Women are operating service stations. They are replacing men as finger-print classifiers. A southern city reports a woman manager of a parking lot.

One of the country's major airfields has women on maintenance work, engaging them chiefly in cleaning spark plugs and painting luminous dials. One woman hired as a secretary now directs landings and take-offs by radio. In another city a woman has entered for the first time an airfield

office as a meteorologist. Both an eastern and a southern airport have definite plans to place women in their reservations departments, and in flight watch or in the traffic operations departments, and the Civil Aeronautics Administration is considering training women as radio operators.

Women telegraph messengers now number 325 in New York City alone, and in the country as a whole 3,000 women are expected to do such work this year. In New York, they must be at least 21 years of age. Girls also are performing other messenger service, formerly done by boys, in many plants and offices. A major chemical company is now training a few women as its chemists.

### Labor Shortages Open Jobs to Women

There are many types of work long done by women but in which women now are being taken on in large numbers, because of plant expansion as well as declining supply of male labor. For example, as armature winders, inspectors, power-press and drill-press operators, assemblers. Shortages of workers are reported in many places in fields usual for women; for example, in hotel and restaurant work, as retail clerks, stenographers, and as sewing-machine operators in certain great clothing centers. Shortages of school teachers are growing, because of better-paid jobs in industry as well as the drafting of men, and the National Education Association reports that the enrollment in teachers' colleges and normal schools has declined by 11 percent. Certain of the army camps already have employed considerable numbers of women in their offices and laundries, jobs formerly done

by men but of a type frequently performed by women. A woman's job at present done by men in camps is canteen work, but serious consideration is being given to employing women in this.

### Unemployment of Women

Contrary to the movement of women into the manufacture of war products, and into jobs being vacated by men, runs that opposite line of women losing jobs due to curtailment of civilian goods and of critical materials. Such "priorities unemployment" became acute at certain points in the second half of 1941. Plants making many of the products curtailed employed large numbers of women—as on aluminum kitchenware, refrigerators, silk hosiery, washing machines, radios, typewriters, photographic supplies, metal toys, costume jewelry, slide and snap fasteners, and so forth. Others depend on equipment now curtailed, as for example the apparel industry threatened with shortages of steel needles and consequent danger of unemployment. In many cases it takes longer to place women than men in new jobs, since their industrial experience is less similar to the new types of work required. Moreover, some of these products are made in localities that offer women little chance of other plant jobs.

### Women's Pay Rates in War Plants

In aircraft assembly plants, minimum entrance rates were the same for women as for men in 15 of 17 major plants visited by Women's Bureau agents in December 1941 or January 1942. Eleven of these, employing 90 percent of the women in the 17 plants, had entrance rates of 60 cents an hour, with progression to 75 cents after 3 months'

experience. In two plants the entrance rate for women was 65 cents, in one 55 cents, in three 50 cents, and only in two of the last named was the rate higher for men (55 and 60 cents). In seven plants where women were at work on the second shift, they received from 5 to 8 cents an hour more than on the first shift.

Women's Bureau visits have ascertained the standards as to women's wages in a dozen plants making small-arms and artillery ammunition. The operations involved are chiefly such as long have employed women. Nearly all these were new plants or they were making new products and the labor force in each included many women. In two-thirds of these establishments the entrance rate for women ranged from 40 to 48 cents an hour; in the remainder it was above this, running as high as 59 cents in one new plant with a relatively small number of women. In the two old plants not making new products women had entrance rates of respectively 45 and 46 cents. Unlike the situation in aircraft, hourly entrance rates for men were the same as for women in only one plant, at least 10 cents above in the others reported. In two plants the men's entrance rates were 75 and 80 cents, respectively 20 and 22 cents above those for women.

Eleven plants reported employing women on a second shift; eight of these also had a third shift. Six of nine reporting on rate paid extra, usually 5 percent an hour more on the second shift, with an addition of up to 10 percent for the third shift. One plant paid a 10-percent differential on both second and third shifts. Three of these plants, and two that had not yet added shifts, were following the plan to alternate workers without extra pay.

## Community Facilities for Women War Workers

**F**OR WOMEN and girls in defense employment, many of whom are away from home and family for the first time, the Women's Bureau urges special efforts to provide adequate living arrangements and wholesome recreation, following surveys by

the Bureau in a number of communities. Defense areas may be large or small cities, sparsely settled areas converted within a few months to manufacturing centers, or considerably developed environs of military camps and forts.

Thousands of women are in private factories and Government arsenals, producing war materials of various kinds, many on monotonous, others on difficult, in some cases dangerous, processes. (See below for application of State labor laws to such workers.) Large numbers are employees of the United States in the Navy and War Departments and assigned to duty on military reservations, posts, or bases, or are nurses with the armed forces. Other women are employed in the congested areas as white-collar workers and in service trades, not all on so-called defense jobs but affected nonetheless by the emergency impacts. Because many such workers are in the low-income brackets, their need of low-cost housing and recreation is acute.

With such a variety of communities and of women workers calling for specific programs to be planned and shaped, no single pattern can be set for all localities. A survey should be made of the individual area, to determine what is necessary to fit the community facilities for safeguarding women's welfare. The program planned must be adapted in a practical way to community conditions and available facilities, which vary considerably with type of community. The Women's Bureau, after consulting other authorities, has formulated certain general standards and policies, certain desirable procedures, in regard to recre-

ation, housing, transportation, information on community facilities, health and medical care, and other social problems.<sup>1</sup> The following are the general standards recommended as to housing and eating facilities:

All types of housing for women war workers should conform to standards essential for safety, security, health, decency, adequacy, privacy, cleanliness, and comfort.

Living quarters should be conveniently located in regard to workplaces and recreation facilities, and be in pleasant surroundings.

The level of rent should be such as not to exceed 20 percent of the worker's income.

Safeguards should be set up in every community to control rents and to prevent other dangers from hit-or-miss room finding.

Single rooms are preferable, or double rooms with not more than two women, each with her own bed.

Rooms (whether in private homes, boarding or lodging houses, dormitories, etc.) should be adequately furnished (including a closet with lock or a locker, preferably for each occupant) and should be properly heated, ventilated, and lighted.

Bathing facilities and toilets should be modern and in good repair, arranged to give necessary privacy, conveniently located and sufficient in number (in the ratio of a modern bath, or shower, and toilet for every five to seven persons; a washbasin to every four unless there is running water in the bedroom, then one for every seven).

A place on the premises for entertaining guests outside the bedroom.

Eating facilities of proper kind, conveniently located with satisfactory inexpensive meals.

<sup>1</sup> Recreation and Housing for Women Workers. (Mimeog.) Published bulletin to follow.

## Labor Standards for Women on War Work

**F**OLLOWING the attack on Pearl Harbor December 7, many States took action to maintain in general the labor standards established for women's work, with modifications for specific needs of plants while on war work. Altogether, 24 States are meeting the need either by new or long-existing emergency provisions in basic laws or orders or by recent action of State labor authorities. Where best practice is observed, State labor authorities investigate before issuing emergency permits, in order to be sure that an actual war-production need exists. Other important safeguards taken by some States include issuance of permits (1) for

only a limited time and revocable at any time; (2) only to particular plants with contracts for war materials; (3) in some cases only for employees or departments actually at work on war materials. The summary following, made March 15, 1942, shows the situation existing; since such events move rapidly, and may occur in several States at or near the same time, there may be additional action not yet recorded here.

### Recent Emergency Action (15 States).

**California.**—Certain plants on war work have been granted permission by Commission of Industrial Relations to employ women at night.

**Connecticut.**—A law to permit Labor Commissioner to extend hours from the limit of 9-48 to 10-55 for an 8-week period, amended to permit the Governor to extend the period beyond 8 weeks. (June 24, 1941. Power to expire in 1943.)

**Illinois.**—Director of Labor has issued permits for hours over 48, and for 7-day week if necessary for war work, with time-and-a-half pay. (January 1, 1942. Permits granted 65 firms before March 1.)

**Indiana.**—Labor Commissioner relaxed enforcement of night-work prohibition, after investigating each plant (December 11, 1941).

**Kansas.**—Labor Commissioner will grant permits to defense plants, on showing need, to employ women at night (December 9, 1941).

**Maine.**—War Emergency Act gives Governor broad powers; he may "take, use, or utilize . . . all the man-power . . . for the assistance of the military and naval forces . . ." (January 21, 1942).

**Massachusetts.**—Under authority of War Emergency Act (January 31, 1942), Governor on February 18 authorized Labor Commissioner to suspend for war plants the laws limiting hours and prohibiting night work. Proof of need required and permits limited to three months.

**Minnesota.**—Hour law provides for emergency overtime, which Industrial Commission has granted in rare cases to individual plants under specified conditions.

**Nebraska.**—Amendment to night-work law allows Commissioner to grant permits to employ women at night in defense plants, after investigation (May 22, 1941).

**New Jersey.**—Amendment to night-work law allows Governor to suspend in time of war (December 12, 1941). Permit to apply to particular plant which has shown need, and for limited time.

**New York.**—War Emergency Act allows Industrial Commissioner to issue permits to individual employers waiving hour, night-work, and 1-day's-rest-in-7 laws, except for those under 18 years of age. Each case must be investigated and need shown; permits are for limited time and only for employees on war work (January 28, 1942).

**Ohio.**—Labor Commissioner issues permits to individual plants for limited time for increased work hours for war work. The employer must agree to pay time and a half or double time for all hours beyond the legal limit. (December 24, 1941. Permits granted 62 plants by January 29, 1942.)

**Pennsylvania.**—Under authority of 44-hour law, Industrial Board ruled defense employers may obtain permits to employ women over 21 on war work beyond limits of 8-44 hours, but limited to 48 hours and with time-and-a-half pay for hours over 44. Permits also may be granted for night employment (December 18, 1941).

**Virginia.**—War Emergency Act authorizes Labor Commissioner to grant individual plants temporary

permits to extend work hours for women 18 years of age and over on war work from 9-48 to 10-56, subject to conditions necessary to safeguard health (March 4, 1942).

**Wisconsin.**—Upon application Industrial Commission permits individual plants to employ women at night.

#### **Basic Laws or Orders Allow for Emergency.**

In the 17 States in the following lists, the basic labor law or order indicated permits relaxation for emergencies (of course States that issue orders regulating labor conditions may change these at any time):

##### *In Law or Order Providing Weekly Maximum of 48 Hours or Less:*

Connecticut, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, Wyoming.

##### *In Law or Order Prohibiting Night Work:*

California, Connecticut, Nebraska, New Jersey.

##### *In Law or Order Requiring 1 Day of Rest in 7:*

Arizona (if 6-hour day or less), California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina (in textile mills), Wisconsin.

#### **State Labor Laws and War Contracts.**

In general, application of State hour laws to war manufacturing differs according to the status of the plant or the contract, and may be summarized as follows:

Private firms producing Government supplies—women workers are protected by the State hour laws.

Private firms on Government construction—State laws apply to women laborers or mechanics only if so specified in the contracts; but the office workers are protected by the State hour laws.

Government-owned arsenals, munitions, or other factories—State hour laws for women apply if operated by private individuals, but do not apply if operated by the Government.

Women employees in the executive branch of the Federal Government—State hour laws do not apply.

It is still uncertain whether or not State hour laws apply to women workers for Government corporations, such as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

#### **Need for Women's Night Work Not Great.**

New York experience indicates little need for women's work at night. In the fall of 1941, only 2 percent (930) of all factories in the State had hour schedules posted allowing employment of women on the second shift;

about half of these had but one shift for men. The law allows women 21 or older to work at any time between 6 a. m. and 10 p. m., hence two 8-hour shifts are possible.

In general, few establishments in industries directly related to defense used women on more than one shift. About 15,000 women were employed in such plants, a large proportion of them in the manufacture of electrical apparatus, instrument and watch making, and fine machine manufac-

ture. The proportion of these women on the later shift was not available, but in one large electrical-apparatus factory only 6 percent were so employed. The number and proportion of plants in major industries that reported multiple shifts for women were: Food, 213 (5 percent); textiles, 167 (8 percent); paper products, 109 (12 percent); clothing and allied products, 73 (0.6 percent); printing and allied trades, 61 (1.4 percent).

## Women at Work in Latin America

LAST YEAR the Women's Bureau sent a staff member for six months to Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile to get first-hand information about economic and social conditions affecting women, conditions of work for women wage earners, and to establish contacts with public and private agencies interested in problems of women workers for a continuous exchange of publications and material on common problems. This article is based on observations and documentary material secured while in those countries.

"Rosa Gonzalez" (Rose Smith to us), typical of industrial women of Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile, has made progress in her development in the last score or so of years. Like such a large proportion of industrial women in the United States, Rosa is not yet 25 years of age. Her plant manager says that though she has the same economic background as the women employed before her, she has more years of school to her credit, more "personality"; she is a more independent person, and a better worker.

Thousands of girls and women in these three South American countries are wage earners in industry. Many young women, even from small towns and the country, who in earlier years would have sought work in domestic service, now join the "Rosas" of the factories.

The largest numbers of women in manufacturing are in textiles, with meat packing, food processing, and clothing following closely. The list of industries employing women is long. It includes glass and ceramics, metals, printing and engraving, matches, soaps and perfumes, gloves, enameled ware, rubber sports shoes, cigarettes.

In the interior "Rosa Gonzalez" besides working in factories—many of them smaller, and less likely than city plants to measure up to sanitation and health standards—is a wage earner in agricultural industries, in the sugarcane fields, the orange, grape, and other fruit and vegetable harvests, and in the preserving and drying of fruits.

Rosa and her sisters for the most part are paid at piece rates. Wages are not high, and in many plants work is not steady throughout the year. The workweek is from 40 to 48 hours. Rosa probably works from 7 to 11 in the morning, and from 1 to 5:45 in the afternoon, except Saturday. Laws require closing all business and industry by 1 o'clock Saturday. *Sabado ingles* (English Saturday) it is called. The Uruguayan law does not include industry, but it is the general custom. Night work is prohibited for women. The 2-hour lunch period gives Rosa time to go home and, if family duties are not too heavy (as they may be, especially for those who are married), to enjoy a noon-day siesta; but many plants have cafeterias or lunch rooms, where she may eat the lunch she brought and make *mate* or coffee. Evening meals are late, from 8 o'clock on, so

break in work is given at about 4, for a glass of milk, sold in the workrooms, or in some plants for tea.

The Rosas of industry work for the most part in clean, well-lighted, well-ventilated factories. Machinery is modern, there is not much speeding, and rest periods are allowed at certain times or may be taken as the work permits. In general, sanitary facilities are good; a few plants provide baths and showers. Many companies offer health facilities, physicians for examinations and prescriptions, nurses for home visits, dental and optical clinics.

An exception to this picture would be the garment industry, which employs thousands of women in small shops or homes, often a family unit, and which is the main source of industrial home work in South America. Each large department store has its own home-work employees and shops; there are no large clothing manufacturers. There has been practically no effort and very little interest directed toward eliminating home work, but there are laws to control it. Argentina revised hers last year. Enforcement is difficult, of course, even with the help of organized groups.

Rosa and her friends may belong to a labor union, or clubs organized under the guidance of the Catholic Church, or a woman's club, the Y. W. C. A., and so forth. Thousands of industrial women workers are in classes of some kind; one school visited had 650 enrolled, another 800. The numbers, their interest and enthusiasm, are thrilling to see. Classes may be at noontime or after work, giving regular school subjects, commercial work, or special instruction as in dressmaking, cooking, art. There are evening schools and vocational classes, and Saturday afternoon classes (by women's organizations).

Rosa may live in a typical small home—a one-story, flat-roof house, flush with the sidewalk but with a side or rear patio full of flowers. Or she may live in a crowded, unsanitary *coventillo* (slum dwelling), or in an apartment or small house in a cooperative, low-cost housing unit. She is part of a close family life. Economic problems are serious, housework has not been simplified, and Latin social conventions make the responsibilities of the home fall on her shoulders. Yet she is happy, well-adjusted to life as it comes to her, and may continue work after marriage.

## Women in Labor Unions

### Women's Earnings Approach Men's

**A**N agreement with a Michigan bomber plant provides that women shall receive the same rate as men on the same work. Employment of 15,000 women is anticipated. Hourly rates are from 95 cents to \$1.60. A contract covering several hundred aircraft workers in an eastern State, and expected to benefit many times that number by midsummer, sets minimum rates at 70 cents for women and 75 for men. It also provides a general 15-cents-an-hour increase, hours of 8-40 in a 5-day week, with time-and-a-half pay for work on Saturday and before or after the regular daily hours. A clause providing for the same wages for men and women is included in an agreement covering 86 employees of an Ohio dental-supply com-

pany. Wage increases for women are from 1 to 3 cents less than men's in recent contracts in the rubber tire, brass products, and container industries.

### Clothing Workers Get Paid Vacations

Vacations with pay are important features of recent clothing contracts: Corsets, 700 workers, Indiana; children's clothing, several hundred, Texas; wash dresses, 2,200, New Jersey; children's dresses 300, uniforms 50, Pennsylvania; sportswear, 2,000 to 2,500, California. Some include vacation provisions for the first time. Wage raises are provided more often than not, and in half a minimum rate of \$17 is established. Button makers in Iowa under the auspices of the men's clothing union negotiated a 10-percent

increase. Average earnings of union members are from \$16 to \$32 for a 40-hour week, compared with \$12 to \$18 a year ago.

### Cannery Workers Gain

Some 800 workers in a California fish cannery have secured a 10-cents-an-hour increase with minimum rates of 75 cents for women, 80 cents for men. Wage increases are reported for 15 other canneries on the Pacific coast. In one employing 1,300, gains of 5 to 10 cents an hour are reported; in two others employing 420, increases are 10 cents for women, 12½ cents for men. In a group of 10 California companies wage increases range from 14 to 21 percent. In October 1939, women were 60 percent of all wage earners in fish canneries, 56 percent of those in fruit and vegetable.

### Unions Help Service Workers

Service workers have special need of a union, since few benefit from the Fair Labor Standards Act. This is illustrated by wage rates recently set by arbitration for certain California hotel workers. Daily rates in women's occupations are: Telephone operators, chief \$5, other \$4.25; linen room, chief \$4.50, other \$4.25; inspectors or working housekeepers and seamstresses and menders, \$4.25; maids and bedmakers, \$4. These represent increases of from 21 to 23 percent over an award in 1938. The basic closed-shop contract was signed in June 1941, the

wage award in January 1942, with increases retroactive to August 1941. Maintenance workers in three social agencies also benefit by recent contracts. One provides a \$2 weekly increase; a week of 40 hours for women, 48 for men; time and a half for overtime; sick leave; and grievance machinery.

### Electrical Union Trains Its Women

A course for training women in union leadership has been under way among the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, since many leading union men will leave for Army duty. This followed the conference by the union in Newark, N. J., called before American entry into war, to consider defense effort and problems arising from increased entrance of women into the industry and the union. (See *WOMAN WORKER*, January 1942.) The conference, at which 27 locals and 64 shops in New York and New Jersey were represented, selected a continuing committee of 22 women from as many locals. This action is in line with a resolution adopted at the regular convention in September, calling for "extension of organizational work among women," necessary since "they are subject to extreme speed-up and \* \* \* their wages are always below those paid men." The union in New York City arranged with the Board of Education for training in defense work of at least 1,000 of its women members.

## Trends in Women's Wages and Employment<sup>1</sup>

**W**OMEN's employment increased by 14 percent, men's by 20, from March 1940 to April 1941 in a total of 24 industries. These comprise large samples from the industries that employ the greatest numbers of women in manufacturing, and include laundries and cleaning and dyeing. Much of this increase came after October 1940, as it was especially great in industries connected with defense and the defense program was expanding rapidly.

Women's average hourly earnings, as well as their employment, increased in

almost all these industries, markedly so in several of the groups formerly low-paying. Week's earnings in most cases advanced proportionately more than hourly earnings,

<sup>1</sup> Source: Pay-roll records mailed by employers to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for 1 week in the month. Reports for April 1941 included nearly 511,000 women in 22 industries representing nearly two-thirds of all women in manufacturing, and almost 35,000 women in laundries and cleaning and dyeing plants. Wage and hour figures given cover all plants reported; percent changes are computed from data for identical plants only. The 12 States included employ about three-fourths of all women in manufacturing—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania. Earlier data appeared in the *WOMAN WORKER* for March and September 1938, May and September 1939, March and September 1940, September 1941.

due to somewhat lengthened hours, though this is not true of cigar and cotton-dress plants as hours here were shortened.

Women's workweek in April 1941 averaged less than 40 hours in practically all the 22 manufacturing industries, electrical machinery and rubber boots and shoes being the only exceptions. In 13 industries women's hours averaged less than 37.

### Changes in Women's Employment.

The more notable changes from March 1940 to April 1941 in women's employment in identical plants, with those of men for comparison, were as follows:

	Employment Percent increase <sup>1</sup>	
	Women	Men
Electrical machinery and supplies.....	51	48
Woolen and worsted.....	47	33
Hardware.....	38	18
Radios and phonographs.....	31	31
Auto tires and tubes.....	31	13
Glass and pottery.....	20	14
Cotton goods.....	19	13
Boots and shoes (rubber).....	18	10
Dyeing and cleaning.....	16	16
Silk and rayon.....	14	7
Paper boxes (set-up).....	12	10
Laundries.....	12	6
Book and job printing.....	10	2
Women's undergarments.....	8	12
Hosiery.....	8	10
Men's suits, overcoats.....	5	5
Confectionery.....	3	8
Women's cotton dresses.....	2	5
	Percent decrease <sup>1</sup>	
	Women	Men
Women's coats and suits.....	23	20
Women's dresses (not cotton).....	5	2
Knit underwear.....	2	3

<sup>1</sup> Listed if change 5 percent or more for either sex.

<sup>2</sup> Increase.

### Changes in Women's Hourly Earnings.

The chief changes in average hourly earnings were as follows:

	Average hourly earnings Percent increase <sup>1</sup>	
	Women	Men
Women's cotton dresses.....	12	11
Men's cotton clothing.....	10	5
Cotton goods.....	8	9
Knit underwear.....	8	( <sup>2</sup> )
Boots and shoes (leather).....	7	7
Glass and pottery.....	7	4
Women's undergarments.....	6	8

	Average hourly earnings Percent increase <sup>1</sup>	
	Women	Men
Dyeing and cleaning.....	6	8
Woolen and worsted.....	6	4
Electrical machinery and supplies.....	5	6
Cigars.....	4	10
Boots and shoes (rubber).....	4	8
Hardware.....	2	8
Hosiery.....	2	8
Silk and rayon.....	2	8
Laundries.....	2	5
	Percent decrease <sup>1</sup>	
	Women	Men
Women's coats and suits.....	8	11

<sup>1</sup> Listed if change 5 percent or more for either sex.

<sup>2</sup> Decline, less than 0.5 percent.

### Women's Hourly and Week's Earnings.

Women's average hourly and week's earnings in April 1941 were as follows:

	Average week's earnings	Average hourly earnings (cents)
Over \$20:		
Tires and tubes.....	\$24.90	70.3
Electrical machinery and sup- plies.....	22.65	56.0
Boots and shoes (rubber).....	22.44	55.1
Women's dresses (not cotton).....	22.01	63.5
Hardware.....	20.96	53.6
Over \$15, under \$20:		
Woolen and worsted.....	19.16	50.7
Dyeing and cleaning.....	18.93	44.3
Women's coats and suits.....	18.69	74.1
Radios and phonographs.....	18.44	50.3
Book and job printing.....	18.15	49.3
Glass and pottery.....	18.02	49.8
Men's suits and overcoats.....	17.96	53.7
Women's undergarments.....	16.26	45.5
Boots and shoes (leather).....	16.06	44.5
Hosiery.....	16.03	47.3
Cotton goods.....	15.73	42.5
Women's cotton dresses.....	15.71	42.8
Laundries.....	15.66	38.5
Paper boxes (set-up).....	15.58	41.7
Knit underwear.....	15.57	42.2
Men's cotton clothing.....	15.56	42.0
Confectionery.....	15.37	43.7
Under \$15:		
Silk and rayon.....	14.39	40.5
Cigars.....	13.31	42.0

### Situation of Men and Women Compared.

Women's average hourly earnings were in every case well below those of men. In fact, in 12 of the 24 industries women's pay averaged less than the lowest figure for men, which was 47 cents in cotton mills. The

second lowest for men was 54 cents in silk and rayon mills, and women's averages were lower than this in 19 industries. Percent increases in hourly earnings from the spring of 1940 to that of 1941 were greater for men than for women in more than half the industries reported.

For the most part employment took the same direction for both sexes, usually advancing. The percent increase ordinarily was greater for women than for men, notable exceptions being hosiery, confectionery, and

women's undergarments and cotton dresses.

Men's working hours as well as women's had lengthened. Though less than 43 hours in all but 2 of the 22 manufacturing industries reported, and less than 40 hours in half of them, men's workweek was longer than women's in every case, roughly 4 to 6 hours longer in 11 industries—cigars, confectionery, electrical machinery, cotton dresses, men's cotton clothing, knit underwear, radios, hosiery, hardware, paper boxes, and silk and rayon goods.

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## Toward Minimum Fair Wages

### Fair Labor Standards Administration

**A**Doption of a 40-cent minimum recommended for several industries—noted in previous issues—is awaited as the **WOMAN WORKER** goes to press. Removal of the Wage and Hour Division from Washington delays the receipt of its latest information, and no doubt the removal materially delayed action on these industries, which are as follows:

Cigars—40 cents, except leaf handlers 35, first minimum.

Cigarettes—40 cents, first minimum.

Gloves—40 cents, replacing 35 and 32½.

Luggage, leather goods, and women's handbags—40 cents, replacing 35.

Textiles—40 cents, replacing 37½ (35 for nonwool carpets). Now adopted, effective April 20.

An order for knitted outerwear, effective April 20, fixes a 40-cent minimum, and restricts home work after November 30.

### Public Contracts Administration

Recent determinations by the Division of Public Contracts bring two more industries into agreement with the Fair Labor Standards orders. The rate for seamless hosiery was raised from 35 to 36 cents. The coverage in the case of men's underwear (knit and woven) was extended to include commercial knitting and the rate was raised to 40 cents from 35 cents in the North and 32½ cents in the South. Rates for these industries were first set in August 1937.

### Minimum Wage in the States

#### California—Hearings and Investigations.

Two public hearings were held recently by the California Industrial Welfare Commission—one in Los Angeles to consider the recommendations of the Manufacturing Wage Board, which include an \$18 minimum, and one in San Francisco, where evidence was taken on wages, hours, working conditions, and living costs of women in the canning industry, preparatory to a wage board for this industry. The Division of Industrial Welfare has opened an office in San Diego. Pay rolls are being examined looking toward appointment of a wage board for personal-service industries, covering beauty shops and certain other occupations.

#### Connecticut—Women's Earnings in Stores.

The average hourly wage of more than 8,000 women in Connecticut retail trade is 33½ cents, according to a study by the State Labor Department the findings of which have been presented to the wage board for the industry. Women members of the board are Stella Perka and Mae Alpert representing labor, and Mrs. Joseph Leopold representing the public.

Only one-fourth of the workers earned 40 cents or more; nearly one-third earned less than 30 cents. Saleswomen, the chief occupational group, averaged 31.9 cents. Average earnings ranged from 43.1 cents in automo-

tive stores (a small group) to 27 cents in limited-price and chain stores. Three in five of the women averaged less than \$16 a week in 1941, two in five even less than \$14, though a working woman living alone needs at least \$18 a week for healthful living. Minimum rates already set in other industries in the State for experienced women working 48 hours are as follows: Laundries 32½ cents and cleaning and dyeing 35 cents an hour; beauty parlors \$18 a week.

Two-thirds of the women had worked 40 hours or longer, practically 30 percent exactly 48 hours, the legal limit. More than one-fifth had worked less than 28 hours and were counted as part-time employees. Average hours were 46.4 for full-time workers.

#### Wage Collections in Three States.

In 1941 the Ohio Division of Minimum Wage collected over \$80,000 for 1,657 women and minors paid less than the required minimum. Of this, 85 percent was for workers in establishments supplying the public with food and lodging, where a striking case was that of a waitress who was awarded \$441.80; she had worked 96 hours a week for nearly a year and been paid only \$5 a week.

In the same year the Industrial Commis-

sion of Minnesota collected \$56,000 in back wages for 1,500 women and minors, chiefly in intrastate industries, including public housekeeping, offices, mercantile establishments, and small telephone exchanges not covered by the Federal Act.

Wage collections under the Industrial Welfare Commission of California were 51 percent higher in 1941 than in 1940, the total for the later year being \$291,729 as compared with \$192,599 in 1940. These figures show the necessity for minimum-wage legislation even in a time of relatively prosperous conditions. In this State, the minimum applies to most woman-employing industries.

#### Other States at Work.

A cost-of-living study is being made in Kentucky and a wage board for hotels and restaurants is to be selected soon. Louisiana has appointed a board for the laundry industry. In Rhode Island a wage board has been appointed for restaurants and hotel restaurants; public representatives include one woman (Mable E. Dickson of the State College) and employee representatives one woman (Vera Timmerman of Providence). In Massachusetts a wage board is to consider revision of the wage order for beauty-culture occupations.

## Women's Wages Rise in Large Manufacturing States

**M**INIMUM-WAGE fixing, defense-industry expansion, new demands for labor, all may have their influence in current wage rises. These have benefited both men and women, both office and factory workers, causing wages to rise much more markedly in the past year than previously.

#### New York—Factory and Office Earnings.

A special survey of men's and women's earnings in New York covered 8 industries for the 5 years 1937-41—machinery and electrical apparatus, shoes, knit goods, four clothing industries, and bakeries. For all industries combined, women's weekly earnings averaged \$19.25 in 1941, an advance of 16 percent from the low point; men's had

advanced by 20 percent. In 7 of the 8 industries women's gains exceeded men's; women's earnings increased by about one-fourth in knit goods, men's clothing, and men's furnishings. In machinery and electrical apparatus, most closely linked with defense, wages were highest, increases greatest: 48 percent for men, nearly 46 for women.

The annual October survey of office earnings in New York factories showed women's weekly average 10 percent above the level of the year before, men's 10½ percent. At the same time earnings of shop employees had risen by 14 percent for women, 16 for men. (For further details see WOMAN WORKER, March 1942.)

**Illinois—Factory and Office Earnings.**

Much the same trend in earnings of women in factories is shown by regular monthly reports from Illinois. A comparison of October earnings for the past 4 years shows women's average in all manufacturing as respectively \$16.19, \$17.27, and \$17.12 for the first 3 years, but rising to \$20.13 in 1941. (December figures show a further rise.) Such important defense industries as electrical goods, shoes, knit goods, men's clothing, and meat packing show much the same trend, with the greatest relative gain in factories making shoes and men's clothing. The lowest average (other than \$14.11 in saw and planing mills, where few women are employed) was \$15.31 in pottery and clay products, the highest \$24.37 in slaughtering and meat packing.

Women in Illinois factory offices in October 1941 averaged \$24.31 a week, not quite 60 percent of men's earnings. Technical employees doing routine work were included, but not salesmen, supervisory and managerial personnel, nor responsible technical and professional workers. The report cov-

ered about 21,000 women and 25,000 men.

**South Carolina—Textile Mill Earnings.**

In one of the major textile States, South Carolina, the Fair Labor Standards minimum of 32½ cents for this industry, the rate in effect from October 1939 to June 1941, seems to have spelled prosperity for both employers and workers. (See *WOMAN WORKER*, November 1941, for increases in 1940.) Though capital invested increased but slightly over 1940, value of annual production rose by 32 percent in 1941. Employment of men and women wage earners advanced by 9 and 12 percent, respectively, and total wages paid them by 17 and 22. Average per capita earnings were \$902 for men and \$755 for women, while in the year before the Fair Labor Standards minimum of 32½ cents became effective they were \$782 and \$625. Much of the workers' prosperity in the State depends on earnings in textile mills. Men's employment and wages were about two-thirds of the figures for all factories, women's more than 80 percent. The value of annual textile production was two-thirds that of all manufacturing in the State.

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## Women's Work in Manufacturing<sup>1</sup>

**O**F MORE than 400 industries reported in the latest Census of Manufactures, all but 9 employed women wage earners. Averages of 10,000 or more such women were reported in 44 individual industries, which together accounted for nearly two-thirds of all women wage earners in manufacturing.

The production of cotton broad woven goods averaged more women in the year than any other single industry, over 114,000 in all. The manufacture of footwear of all kinds (except rubber) engaged nearly 100,000 women. Other industries reporting at least 50,000 were: Women's and misses' dresses, 81,000; men's and boys' suits, coats, overcoats, 77,000, and shirts (except work), 62,000; woolen and worsted manufacture, 60,000; full-fashioned hosiery, 55,000; canned and dried fruits and vegetables, 55,000.

Between 20,000 and 50,000 women were in each of 4 textile, 3 apparel, and 2 food industries, and in the making of paper containers, radios and parts, cigars, and motor vehicles and parts. From 10,000 to 20,000 women were in each of 8 apparel, 4 paper and printing, 3 textile, 2 food, 2 electrical machinery, and 2 chemical industries, in cigarettes, and in miscellaneous rubber products.

**Industries Newly Reported in 1939.**

In practically every census, industries that have begun as a small part of some larger group rise to the importance of a separate class. In the decade since 1929

<sup>1</sup> The 1939 Census of Manufactures reports number of women wage earners for October. Averages for the year are not reported by sex, but average number of women was computed by applying the percent of women in October to the year's average.

three that have emerged as relatively new and that were reported separately for the first time in 1939 are quick-frozen foods, plastic materials, and miscellaneous articles made from plastics.

In 1929, fruits and vegetables were canned, preserved, or dried. Quick freezing was first reported in 1937, when it employed nearly 2,000 workers. In 1939 over 2,600 were so engaged, two-thirds of them women. At the peak of employment in June 1939, nearly 5,000 wage earners were reported.

The making of plastic materials was reported with miscellaneous chemicals in 1929. By 1939 it employed nearly 500 women, and the amount of such materials produced had increased by more than 500 percent in the decade. The making of miscellaneous articles from plastics employed 4,000 women, who constituted a fourth of the wage earners in the industry. With the substitution of plastics for other materials, the industry undoubtedly will continue to grow.

#### Women in Industries Converted for War.

In manufactures that were first to undertake defense production an average of about 275,000 women wage earners were employed in 1939, distributed in the following broad industrial groups:

Electrical machinery.....	87,000
Iron and steel and their products....	60,000
Chemicals and allied products.....	42,000
Nonferrous metals and their products..	31,000
Machinery (other than electrical)....	27,000
Automobiles and their equipment....	26,000
Other transportation equipment.....	1,570

The total number of women in these groups had declined by about 20,000 since 1929, the number of men by about 313,000. Exact comparisons usually cannot be made in specific groups because of many shifts in classification. However, in one—automobiles and their equipment—women had increased by about 4,000 while employment of men declined by about 52,500.

Most of these industries had to be converted from production for consumers to production for defense. A few already were producing war materials, and in most of these women's employment had declined,

though in aircraft making it had increased by 45 percent. Chief among those producing war materials were the following:

Industry	Women Average number	Percent of total
Aircraft and parts.....	535	1.1
Aluminum products (ingots, cast- ings, plates, sheets, etc.).....	862	5.0
Ammunition.....	1,360	31.9
Explosives.....	1,224	16.9
Firearms.....	240	4.8

The electrical-machinery group offers an important field for women's contribution to the war effort. In many of its important branches conversion may be relatively easy. In any case, the skills women have acquired here should be of the greatest use. From 1929 to 1939 the *average number* of women in the various electrical industries declined by about 6,700, but their *proportion* among all wage earners increased from 29 to 34 percent. In 1939 women averaged 87,000 in the total of this manufacturing group, but at least 11,000 more were working at peak of production. The largest numbers were found in four industries, as follows: Radios and parts, 23,500; communication equipment, 13,000; generating, distribution, and industrial apparatus, 13,000; electric lamps, 7,400. All these include products of strategic importance.

In machinery other than electrical and metal manufacturing, a brief survey indicates considerable numbers of women working on a great variety of products. The following important woman-employers may be listed, with some of their chief products, the average number of women employed, and the change in woman employment since 1929 so far as comparisons can be made. A reading of the products listed indicates that many are for the comfort, convenience, or pleasure of the average citizen, and production of many is being curtailed by the shortage of metals.

*Stamped and pressed metal products* (including vitreous enameled), 12,400, an increase of 2,500. Stamped auto parts and accessories; bottle and jar caps, galvanized iron pails, ash and garbage cans; vitreous enameled kitchen, household, and hospital utensils.

*Jewelry (including costume jewelry)*, 10,000, an increase of 2,100. Jewelry; cigarette cases and lighters; compacts, vanity cases, novelties; trophies, religious articles; chains, dress and bag ornaments.

*Tin cans and other tinware*, 9,000, a decline of 350. Packers' cans; plain and decorated cans, pails, boxes, and packages; milk and ice cream cans; household and cooking tinware.

*Office and store machinery*, 8,700, an increase of 1,000. Typewriters; mechanical devices for calculating, change making, card sorting and tabulating, check writing and canceling, addressing and mailing, duplicating and manifolding.

*Clocks, watches, and parts*, 8,500, a decline of 500. Clocks and watches; time-recording instruments and stamps; time switches and locks; clock and watch parts (except watch cases and crystals).

*Miscellaneous hardware*, 8,200, a decline of 2,600. Builders' hardware; hardware for furniture, caskets, harness, trunks and suitcases, locks and padlocks; motor-vehicle hardware (not made in plants owned by motor-vehicle makers).

*Wire work*, 6,700, an increase of 1,600. Manufacture, from purchased wire, of woven-wire fencing, screening wire cloth and netting; wire rope and cable; barbed wire, tire chains, bale wires, concrete-reinforcing wire; wire springs, trays, baskets, and kitchen goods.

*Lighting fixtures*, 5,300, an increase of 700. All types for residence and other buildings; motor-vehicle and marine lamps; searchlights, flood lights, street and highway fixtures, flashlight cases.

*Needles, pins, etc.*, 5,100, an increase of 1,900. Sewing and knitting needles, both machine and hand; pins, including hairpins; slide and snap fasteners; hooks and eyes.

## News Notes

### Oklahoma Women Aid Defense

**M**ORE than 600 women are doing clerical work in war industries or air bases in Oklahoma, according to a recent report from the Commissioner of Labor. As yet only about 100 are doing factory work, most on food or army uniforms, though 12 women operate punch presses in a bomber plant. Few directors of vocational schools are accepting women in defense courses, but a junior college was asked in February to recruit as many as possible for technical courses hitherto open only to men. Women students in two colleges are urged to take at least one of the courses in first aid, nursing, anaesthetics, dental hygiene, nursing aid, nutrition and dietetics, with a view to teaching these in their home counties. In one college a special course is being offered in institutional management—the marketing and calculating needed to operate hotels and summer camps. Four hospitals are giving training as part of a Nation-wide program to relieve a shortage of nurses and other hospital workers.

### How Women Injured, Pennsylvania

Overloading, crowding, or poor arrangement resulted in permanent injury to 21 women in Pennsylvania in 1940. Nearly 1,800 other women lost an average of 7 weeks from work for the same reasons.

Using unsafe tools or equipment or using them in an unsafe way caused an average loss of more than 4 weeks for 739 women who later recovered fully, and the death of 2 and permanent injury of 63 others. Due to gripping objects insecurely, taking wrong hold of objects, or lifting with bent back, 242 women averaged nearly 7 weeks lost, while 4 others were permanently disabled, one totally so. Other unsafe acts that led to the disability (in each case temporary) of from about 20 to 60—some women were: Operating or working at unsafe speed; working on equipment in motion; failure to wear protective clothing—gloves, goggles and the like.

Altogether 83 percent of women's injuries and 81 percent of the time lost in temporary disability cases were caused in the ways mentioned in the foregoing. This analysis points clearly to preventive measures: Careful training and supervision; better house-keeping and general management.

There were reported 3,621 injuries to women in the year, including 5 fatal cases and 6 permanent total and 107 permanent partial disabilities. Of all injuries, 38 percent occurred in manufacturing, but this was true of 61 percent of the permanent injuries (including fatal cases). The principal industries in which workers were disabled or lost time were textile and clothing

factories, stores, restaurants, private institutions, State and municipal institutions, food products manufacturing, metal products manufacturing, and hotels.

### Women on Police Forces

Women helped to enforce the laws and protect citizens in 126 of 362 cities, in all parts of the United States, surveyed in 1938 by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Cities ranged from those of 25,000 population to the largest. Including a few officers, 452 women, aside from matrons, clerical workers, and so on, were engaged in law enforcement. While in most cities only one police-woman was reported, in New York City there were 127, in Chicago 61, in Detroit 55, in Los Angeles 36, in Washington 22.

In 61 cities the salary of at least one of the women was the same as the first-grade patrolmen's; in 4 cities it was higher than men's rate. In 41 cities women were paid less than any patrolman of any grade; in 11 cities as much as \$500 to \$900 below first-grade patrolmen's salaries.

### Women Serve in Baltimore Offices

Women white-collar workers were replacing men selected for the Army in four of eight large Baltimore offices reporting in a

Y. W. C. A. survey recently made available for late 1940 and the first half of 1941. Five of the firms paid women the same as men for the same work.

There were indications that the better prepared workers were likely to fare best. Of the high-school graduates less than three-tenths received as much as \$26 a week and 8 percent were paid \$15 or less. Of the college graduates half were paid \$26 or more, and none received less than \$15. A fifth of the women had been at work 10 years or longer. Of the entire group of 215 women reported, about 8 percent were paid well below the W. P. A. estimated requirement for subsistence level. Over 60 percent of the total lived at home.

Jobs that employers found most difficult to fill were those requiring somewhat more training or experience than others—operators of calculating and bookkeeping machines, experienced salespersons, secretaries, and PBX operators. Overcrowded were the jobs of typist, clerk, receptionist, salesclerk, and store wrapper. Six firms gave regular in-service training. All firms had some overtime, four worked overtime a great deal. For such work, most firms gave extra pay at the rate of time and one-half or time and one-third; a few substituted time off.

## Recent Publications

### Women's Bureau—Mimeographed Material

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU ADVISORY COMMITTEES, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., January 21-22, 1942. 25 pp.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN CANADIAN GUN AND RIFLE FACTORIES, January 1942. 13 pp.

SUPPLEMENT TO WOMEN IN WAR INDUSTRIES IN GREAT BRITAIN. March 1942. 16 pp.

TYPICAL OPERATIONS ON WHICH WOMEN CAN BE EMPLOYED MORE EXTENSIVELY IN WAR PRODUCTION. 2 pp.

### Other Department of Labor Publications

CHANGES IN COST OF LIVING IN LARGE CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1913-41. Bul. 699. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

MONEY DISBURSEMENTS OF WAGE EARNERS AND CLERICAL WORKERS, 1934-36. Summary Volume. Bul. 638. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EIGHTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LABOR LEGISLATION. Bul. 52-A. Division of Labor Standards.

HANDBOOK OF FEDERAL LABOR LEGISLATION: LABOR LAWS OF GENERAL APPLICATION. Bul. 39, Part II. Division of Labor Standards.

### Other Publications

VOCATIONS FOR WOMEN. Reprints of a series of articles appearing in *The Independent Woman*. Price 15 cents, 10 for \$1.25. Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., New York City. Among the 24 subjects so far covered are: War work; personnel, social, statistical work; aviation, nursing, office management, occupational therapy.