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WOMEN'S BUREAU  
MARY ANDERSON, DIRECTOR

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# Part-Time Employment of Women in Wartime



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Part of the Employment of Women  
in War-time



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## Letter of Transmittal

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
WOMEN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, June 21, 1943.*

MADAM: I have the honor to transmit for publication a report on the subject of part-time employment of women, which brings together the material available and presents the recommendations of the Women's Bureau for this important part of the war program.

The report is the work of Alice Angus of the Division of Minimum Wage and Labor Legislation.

Respectfully submitted.

MARY ANDERSON, *Director.*

Hon. FRANCES PERKINS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*

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### *Women's Bureau Recommendations*

1. Employment of women on a part-time basis is recommended, in areas where a shortage of woman labor exists, as a means of utilizing the services of women not available for full-time jobs.
2. Part-time employment of women not available for full-time work is recommended as a means of increasing production in war plants in place of extending the hours of regular women workers beyond 8 hours a day or 48 hours a week.
3. Part-time employment of such women in service industries is recommended as a means of meeting essential civilian requirements and at the same time releasing some full-time workers for war production industries.
4. Employment of women on a part-time "relief shift" is recommended as a practical method of reducing absenteeism of full-time employees by allowing them regular time off to take care of personal and domestic needs.
5. Wage rates for part-time work should be the same as wage rates for full-time work on comparable jobs, and in no case should women's rates be less than those of men.
6. Beginning and ending hours of part-time shifts should be adjusted to meet the needs of the woman worker, special consideration being given to women with children of school age. Women with children of preschool age should not be actively recruited for either part-time or full-time work.
7. Working conditions standards for part-time workers, as for full-time workers, should include a rest period of at least 10 minutes during each 4-hour shift, not more than 5 hours without a lunch period, and 1 day's rest in 7. Women should not be employed on part-time work on the third or night shift.
8. Development of community facilities to meet the needs of employed women, including adequate provision for child care, laundering, marketing, shopping, and other household duties, is recommended as an imperative necessity in order to enable women to make their greatest contribution to the war effort.
9. Employment on a part-time basis of women who have full-time employment elsewhere is not recommended. If such employment becomes necessary in emergency situations, it should not be continued beyond the period of actual necessity. In no case should the woman worker's total employment exceed 8 hours a day, 48 hours and 6 days a week.

# Part-Time Employment of Women in Wartime

## VICTORY SHIFTS, 1943

All present signs point to a tremendous—and almost immediate—  
increase in the number of women part-time workers.

Women's employment is at an all-time high—almost 16 million  
in May 1943—an increase of nearly 3 million over May 1942 and of  
more than 5 million over December 1940. Many plants are employ-  
ing women in all types of production and the demand for women  
workers is increasing by leaps and bounds.

Large numbers of women homemakers are already working in in-  
dustry. Some who are not now employed may be available for full-  
time jobs. For many of them, however, full-time jobs will be out of  
the question; no matter how anxious they may be to take employ-  
ment, they must continue to carry the major responsibility for run-  
ning the home. The services of these women could be utilized on a  
part-time basis.

Women's Bureau field representatives found in the spring of 1943  
that employers in localities where a woman-labor shortage exists  
were already employing women on a "Victory shift," the popular  
term for part-time employment in war plants. The object of such  
employment is to utilize the services of persons not available for  
full-time work and in this way to increase production. A "Victory  
shift" worker may be defined as one who is not available for full-  
time work in a war plant but who is regularly employed less than a  
full week, on a definite shift and for a specified number of hours.

From the worker's point of view, part-time employment as it is  
now found in war plants is essentially different from part-time em-  
ployment as it customarily existed in the various service industries.  
The war-plant manufacturer employs part-time workers because he  
cannot get full-time workers. The service industries formerly em-  
ployed part-time workers because they filled a peculiar need of the  
industry, enabling the employer to furnish service at periods of peak  
public demand and to save labor cost. Women were hired for part-  
time work in the service industries without regard to their avail-  
ability for full-time work, or, more important, their economic need  
of it.

So far as the worker is concerned, the economic aspects of part-  
time employment have changed with the war. No longer is it neces-  
sary for a woman who wants full-time work to take part-time work.  
At the same time the greatly increased opportunities for employment  
enable women who are not available for full-time employment to  
make a contribution to the war effort through part-time employ-  
ment. It is for the latter group only that part-time employment is  
recommended.

## ADVANTAGES OF PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Following are some of the advantages of part-time employment for war-plant employers and women workers.

### For the Employer.

1. Part-time employment increases the total labor force and permits a more complete utilization of workers. Where full-time labor is scarce, the hiring of two part-time workers on an unskilled job may release one full-time worker for upgrading to more highly specialized work.
2. It tends to decrease plant absenteeism. It allows a woman with family responsibilities sufficient outside time to take care of family needs, whereas with a full-time job she would necessarily have to take time off at more or less frequent intervals. Employment of a part-time "relief force" is a device by which the employer can arrange to give full-time workers regular hours or days off, and thus obtain a steadier work force.
3. It permits reemployment of women with special training who left work on marriage and who would not be able or willing to return to industry on a full-time basis.
4. Experience has proved that short hours prevent fatigue and increase efficiency; hence part-time employees can be used to advantage on work which requires a high degree of concentration or is unusually tiring.

### For the Worker.

1. Part-time employment allows a woman enough time outside the job to carry on household duties and take care of family and business affairs.
2. It enables her to make a much-needed contribution to the war effort through her own labor.
3. It provides extra money to meet the increased cost of living or to buy war bonds or stamps.
4. It furnishes experience and training that may prove valuable in the future.

## PART-TIME SHIFT HOURS

Satisfactory arrangement of working hours is a major consideration in the successful employment of part-time workers. Hours of part-time shifts must be adjusted to those of full time so as to permit the most efficient use of plant space, equipment, and facilities. The part-time worker's convenience must also be taken into account and hours adjusted to fit in with her outside activities, if a steady part-time force is to be built up.

The type of work to be performed by part-time workers will largely determine the extent to which part-time hours will coincide with hours of the regular force. Adequacy of plant facilities, such as rest rooms and lunch rooms, is also an important factor to consider. If washroom and locker facilities are limited, it may be impractical to have either the beginning or ending hours of part-time shifts the same as those on full time. If lunch-room facilities are inadequate, it is undesirable to employ part-time workers longer than 5 hours a day.

Convenience of transportation service also has a bearing on hour schedules of part-time workers. Part-time workers should not be required to travel during rush hours. In plants with very inadequate transportation facilities, so that workers must depend largely on private conveyances, part-time shifts of any kind may be impracticable. Part-time shifts are of doubtful value also in plants located in isolated areas, far from the communities in which the potential workers live. A woman who is prevented by outside duties from taking a full-time job should not be expected to spend several hours a day traveling to and from a part-time job.

Arrangement of part-time shift hours should take into account the worker's outside responsibilities. As a practical matter, the employer will find that the type of part-time worker he obtains will be determined to a large extent by the hours in which the work offered is to be done. For example, late evening shifts or shifts that run through the dinner hour usually are not convenient for housewives. On the other hand, students and workers with full-time jobs elsewhere will seldom be available for part-time work at any other hours.

Part-time shifts in plants visited by Women's Bureau representatives followed three general patterns: First, short-hour, or part-day, shifts; second, shifts of approximately full daily length but covering only a half week or occurring on alternate days; third, week-end shifts. Of these, the short-hour shifts were by far the most common.

### Short-Hour Shifts.

Short-hour or part-day shifts usually were 4 hours in length and were worked on 5 or 6 days a week, making a total weekly employment of 20 or 24 hours. A few shifts were 6 hours in length. No part-time employment on 7 consecutive days was reported.

In practically all plants visited, part-time workers had been employed only a few months, and hour schedules still were on a tentative or experimental basis. Some plants had only one part-time shift schedule, so that all part-time workers were employed the same hours. Others had a variety of part-time shifts, arranged to suit the convenience of various groups of part-time workers. A few plants teamed up part-time workers in pairs, so that one worker would be employed for 4 hours or the first half of a regular 8-hour shift, and his alternate would then come in and work the second half of the shift.

When short-hour workers were employed in teams, the beginning hour of the first worker and the ending hour of the second worker coincided with the corresponding hours of the regular full-time shift. Plants had no prevailing policy concerning the relation of other short-hour schedules to full-time schedules; some short-hour schedules overlapped, and others coincided with full-time schedules. One unusual arrangement was that in which the short-hour shift was used to keep the plant in operation by filling in the 4-hour stretch between two regular 10-hour shifts.

Following are typical schedules for short-hour (or part-day) shifts:

10 a. m. to 2:30 p. m.	4 to 8 p. m. and 8 to 12 p. m.
8 to 12 a. m. and 1 to 5 p. m.	3 to 9 p. m.
8 to 7 p. m. or 4 to 8 p. m.	6 to 10 p. m. or 7 to 11 p. m.

Though these shifts have a variety of beginning and ending hours, they will be seen to fall roughly into three groups:

(a) Shifts occurring in the morning or midafternoon; (b) late-afternoon shifts; (c) evening shifts.

Information obtained from plants employing part-time workers on these various shifts indicates that the period of day or evening for which part-time work is scheduled has a very definite bearing on the type of part-time worker obtained. Indirectly, the time of day in which the shift is scheduled, as well as the length of the shift, gives rise to other related problems.

**Morning or midafternoon shifts.**—Shifts that occur during morning or midafternoon hours usually are the most convenient for women with heavy home responsibilities or children of school age. These hours enable the homemaker to prepare the morning and evening meals for her family and get the children ready for school before she leaves for work. Where their hours of employment are thus adjusted to their home duties, women homemakers constitute a large potential source of steady part-time workers.

A few firms made a definite object of attracting women homemakers by scheduling part-time shifts during midmorning and midafternoon hours. One firm was so fully convinced of the importance of convenient beginning and ending hours that it was adapting the work to "whatever hours the workers would come." This firm, employing 400 part-time workers, had adopted a wide variety of separate morning and afternoon shifts. One popular shift extended through the usual lunch hour, part-time workers being allowed the regular time off for lunch.

**Late-afternoon shifts.**—Late-afternoon shifts usually were designed to attract high-school students, many of whom were given school credit for performing part-time factory work. It is generally agreed that the part-time shift hours of such workers should be adjusted so that the total combined hours for school and work together do not exceed 8.

As late-afternoon shifts usually extend through the dinner hour, they are not convenient for the homemaker. In a plant with two late-afternoon shifts—3 to 7 and 4 to 8—high-school girls made up 75 percent of the workers on the 4 to 8 shift. The 3 to 7 shift had a large proportion of homemakers, thus showing that a difference of even 1 hour that affects domestic convenience is a matter of importance to this group.

**Evening shifts.**—Work during evening hours is a third type of short-hours shift. In some areas men with white-collar and professional jobs in daytime hours were extensively recruited for part-time evening work in war plants. Several plants had a small group of homemakers, indicating that some women may find it convenient to work in a plant when the domestic day is over and the children are in bed. Students and women with full-time jobs elsewhere also were employed. As already stated, employment of the latter group is not recommended.

None of the plants visited by the Women's Bureau employed women on the graveyard shift, though one plant was reported to be

recruiting women to split such a shift. Night work is difficult for everyone, because of the physiological adjustment involved in learning to sleep by day. Women employed on part-time work at night have an additional disadvantage in that they must perform their normal household duties in daytime hours in spite of broken rest. The Women's Bureau recommends that women should not be employed on part-time work at night.

In most plants visited by Bureau field representatives, the part-time shift worked simultaneously with the full-time shift, that is, both groups of workers were in the plant at the same time, though their beginning and ending hours often differed. In one plant, however, the part-time evening shift was used as a fill-in between the plant's two regular 10-hour shifts (these including 1 hour for lunch); the full-time day shift worked from 8 to 6, the part-time shift from 6 to 10, and the full-time night shift from 10 p. m. to 8 a. m.

Experience of this plant illustrates one disadvantage of employing regular workers on a long-hour basis and using a part-time shift as a fill-in. During the 4 evening hours, part-time workers in effect took over the operation of the plant machinery. It was not practicable, however, to have additional part-time supervision. Hence, the regular supervisors of each shift were required to work 2 additional hours, thus making a 12-hour day—from 8 to 8—for them.

In view of the incontrovertible evidence that over-long hours retard production by increasing fatigue, it would appear to be more practical for a plant to operate three 8-hour shifts with part-time workers distributed throughout the day and evening hours. This would permit reasonable working hours for all employees and eliminate the necessity of extra supervision for part-time workers.

**The double job.**—Plant practice in regard to employing on part-time work women who had full-time jobs elsewhere varied widely. One firm employing both men and women on the part-time evening shift reported that of 300 part-time workers all had full-time day jobs elsewhere except 10 housewives. Most of the women employed on a part-time basis by this firm were librarians and teachers who came in from patriotic motives. This firm also reported a high absence and turn-over rate among part-time workers. The part-time shift, averaging about 300 workers, had been established only 2 months, but already 30 had dropped out "because they couldn't stand it." Though part-time workers were employed only 5 evenings a week, there were tremendous absences some nights. The general absence rate for all workers in the plant was only 5 percent, but on the evening part-time shift it was sometimes as high as 50 percent.

Some firms stated that they did not approve of part-time workers with full-time jobs. Various reasons were given for this policy. One considered it undesirable for an employee to be so closely connected with two firms, as she might unintentionally give either firm valuable information about the other; this was especially to be feared where the job in either firm was of a clerical nature. Another reason given for not employing women on two jobs was that it might constitute a violation of the maximum-hour law.

Most employers, however, were genuinely concerned about the efficiency of a woman employed such long over-all hours. One personnel manager stated that if he employed women with full-time jobs

elsewhere he would be defeating his own purpose of speeding up production. His policy was not to keep anyone whose work in all employment totaled more than 48 hours. To carry this policy into effect, he checked from time to time to be sure that hours in the other company had not been changed.

A full-time job, especially with home responsibilities, taxes a woman's capacity to the utmost. Certainly the average woman who already has a full-time job cannot make a sufficient contribution through part-time evening work to justify the extra strain on her health and well-being. Where the part-time job involves a change in the type of work, as from clerical during the day to production at night, a woman worker may be spurred for a while by the novelty of her new work; but she is deprived of rest and recreation, and at the same time is subjected to the necessity of directing sustained effort and attention to a new task. In these circumstances fatigue is bound to accumulate and her efficiency on both jobs will eventually be reduced.

Part-time evening work added to her regular job puts an unwarranted strain on a woman even when her full-time job covers substantially less than an 8-hour day. Certain types of jobs, especially teaching and others of a professional nature, involve outside duties, so that the worker's time on the job is not accurately measured by her presence at the place of employment. Moreover, for most workers a part-time job involves extra traveling, and in many cases the time between the regular job and the part-time job is not long enough to be used efficiently but must be spent in "waiting around" for the evening shift to begin.

For these reasons, employment on a part-time basis of women with full-time jobs elsewhere is not recommended. Where it becomes necessary in emergency situations it should not be continued beyond the period of acute necessity. In no case should a woman's total employment for two or more employers exceed 8 hours a day, 48 hours and 6 days a week.

**Meal periods.**—As most short-hour shifts are only 4 hours long, the question of a meal period usually does not arise. However, some plants have longer short-hour shifts without employing workers a full 8-hour day. One plant visited by Women's Bureau representatives was found to be employing part-time workers from 3 to 9 o'clock, with only a 5-minute recess for rest. The employer stated that they were supposed to eat their meals before and after work.

A 6-hour stretch without an opportunity for rest is harmful to any worker, and with many people efficiency cannot be sustained for so long a period without food. Unbroken shifts of this length have special disadvantages for part-time workers. Often they have already done a day's work at home before beginning the part-time shift. Part-time shifts begin and end at odd hours so there is little opportunity to eat a full meal immediately before and after the shift.

The Women's Bureau recommends that women employed on part-time shifts of more than 5 hours should be allowed a regular lunch period at a convenient time during the course of the shift. The time allowed for lunch should be at least 30 minutes or longer, depending on lunch facilities in the plant. Where the part-time shift is 4 hours or longer, a rest period of at least 10 minutes midway during the

shift is advisable. Since both meal and rest periods increase the worker's efficiency and are reflected in greater output, they should be considered time worked and not deducted from the worker's pay.

### Shifts of Approximately Full Daily Length.

Part-time shifts on which the workers are employed a full day, but only part of a week, are used in some plants. One plant visited by Bureau field agents that had continuous round-the-clock operation employed part-time workers on this basis on all shifts. The shift hours were:

8 a. m. to 4:30 p. m.  
4:30 p. m. to 12:30 a. m.  
12:30 a. m. to 8 a. m.

Regular workers were employed 6 days, 48 hours a week. Part-time workers were employed either 2 or 3 consecutive days. The employer stated that these part-time workers were largely homemakers with families, and most of them older women. They were willing to work a few days a week but were not inclined to take full-time jobs.

In another plant visited, a group of women were working a reduced day. They worked daily from 9 to 4, while regular employees worked from 7:30 to 4. Shorter hours were a special concession to employees of long standing who had children and home responsibilities. By working the reduced hours the part-time workers were able to get their children off to school before coming to work. In the absence of such an arrangement, some of them could not have worked at all. As the firm was not a war plant but a clothing factory, in which certain jobs involved considerable hand work, the variation in starting hours did not upset production to any great extent, and the employer said he expected to extend the privilege to other employees if they demonstrated a need for it.

Some plants that employ women on a full-day half-week basis "team up" workers in pairs so as to insure a full-time continuous output. For example, one woman works Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and her team-mate works Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

A few plants that operate on a continuous 24-hour 7-day basis use full-day part-time workers on a relief shift to take the places of regular women workers on their days off. One firm, which gets rush calls for extra production on short notice, reported that they have considered organizing a crew of women from among residents of the community who would be "on call" for emergency periods. Actually, of course, women employed under such an arrangement would be extra rather than part-time workers, since they would not be employed regularly and on a definite shift. This spare-hand system is an old practice in the textile industry.

On the whole, part-time employment that required the worker to be on duty full days for part of a week was much less common than employment on a short-hour daily basis. The full-day shift usually is not practical for homemakers who have children of school age. Other homemakers, who can adjust their marketing and housework, may find it more convenient to work full days part of a week than short hours on every day.

### Week-End Shifts.

A few firms have organized shifts on which workers are employed either for week ends only or, in some cases, all day Sundays and two or three evenings during the week. Part-time workers are sometimes employed on week-end shifts to take the places of full-time workers on their regular days off. Part-time week-end shifts are composed mainly of white-collar workers and others with full-time jobs elsewhere who are willing to do extra work in "spare time" hours. Some homemakers also find week-end shifts convenient, as they can leave the children with their husbands on the latter's one day off.

One plant visited by Women's Bureau agents employed two groups of part-time workers on Sunday, some of whom also worked two or three evenings during the week. The schedules of these workers were as follows:

Evening hours: 5 to 11 p. m. or 7 to 11 p. m.

Sunday hours: First shift 8 a. m. to 3 p. m.; second shift 3 p. m. to 11 p. m.

In this plant the Sunday part-time shift was established expressly as a "relief shift" in order that regular workers could have Sunday off. Previous to the inauguration of this shift the plant had tried to operate 7 days but to employ regular workers only 6 days by staggering their days off. However, so many workers were absent on Sunday in addition to their scheduled day off that a Sunday shift of part-time workers was adopted to keep certain key departments in continuous 7-day operation. Ninety percent of the part-time workers thus employed were white-collar workers who had full-time jobs during the week. Most of them were new to factory work, so during the first few weeks all the supervisors from all shifts were retained on Sunday. After three or four Sundays the part-time workers were considered to be sufficiently trained so that only half the supervisory force was required; and thereafter the supervisors split the Sunday work, each group remaining on duty for half a day.

Consequently, in this plant the week-end part-time shift involved continuous 7-day employment—regular job and part-time job—for nearly all persons working on it. Some of the white-collar workers had Saturday afternoon off and the supervisors had half a day Sunday, but neither group had the full weekly day of rest now universally recognized as essential to health and efficiency.

From the standpoint of the worker's health it makes little difference that the employment on the seventh day, in the case of the part-time worker, is of a different character and for a different employer from the work regularly performed throughout the week. The detrimental effect of the 7-day week has been proved conclusively by industrial experience. The policy of "1 day's rest in 7" has always been advocated for women workers by the Women's Bureau. During the present war the weekly day of rest has been adopted as Government policy for all workers in the interest of maintaining sustained maximum production.

Employment on their weekly "day off" of women who are employed a full week elsewhere defeats the purpose of part-time shifts; it impairs the worker's efficiency so that over a period of time she will produce less on both jobs. The Women's Bureau recommends that

women should not be employed as part-time workers where such employment will necessitate their working 7 days and deprive them of their weekly day of rest.

### PART-TIME JOBS

Plants that employed women on part-time work in the spring of 1943 manufactured various products, including the following directly connected with the war effort:

Aircraft.	Radio tubes and equipment.
Gun parts, torpedo parts.	Optical supplies.
Carbine rifles.	Miscellaneous molded goods.
Time fuzes and instruments.	Slide fasteners, buckles.
Primers and flashlights.	Life-saving devices (rubber).
Electric fuzes.	Protective wear such as rain tights, jungle boots.
Condensers.	Life rafts and life boats.
Steel cores, brass primers, steel firing pins.	Textiles.
Roller and ball bearings.	

Production jobs on which women part-time workers were most frequently employed were assembly, light machine work, inspecting, packing. Women part-time workers also performed such assorted machine and hand operations as the following: Filing, drilling, burring, hand milling, spline milling machine operation, electric soldering, and grinding.<sup>1</sup>

### Independence of Work.

The consensus of employers appeared to be that on part-time jobs independence of work, though desirable, is not essential. Several employers stated, however, that part-time workers would be employed most successfully on operations that are separate and complete in themselves rather than part of a continuous process. Thus in a plant manufacturing lifeboats:

After the lifeboats are complete, both inner and outer tubes must stand an inflation test for 48 hours before they can be fastened together. This last operation is done by part-time women and is kept for the housewives because it is a single operation on which attendance does not affect other workers, as it does on a conveyor.

In another plant of the same company:

. . . There are some sewing-machine operations which are independent jobs and workers can work on them any time they wish for as long as they can.

In a plant making life-saving devices:

The jobs that part-time women do are the vest assembling and rolling the cement parts together with a small hand roller. . . . The parts of the vests are cut by other operators and are then given to the assemblers to cement together and the rollers press them out with the hand roller. . . . The work does not require any continuous operation so it can be started or stopped at any time.

Part-time workers were, nevertheless, employed on operations that were not only very complex but of a continuous nature, involving

<sup>1</sup> In Great Britain, where part-time employment of women has been used much more extensively than it was in this country in April 1943, women are reported as employed on other part-time production jobs, as follows: Riveting, welding, crane driving, internal transport, operating presses (hand and power); stamping and engraving part numbers; predrilling skins and any predrilling to jigs or templates; burring and fraying from machine and press shops; detail wiring; assisting draw-mill operators; holding up for riveters and assemblers.

great interdependence of workers. This is illustrated by the report of a firm making rain tights and gaites which employed part-time workers on the following job processes:

The material is cut as it passes on a slow-moving conveyor. Each girl has her allotted portion which she cuts with an electric knife which melts the rubber as it cuts, making a clean edge. . . . From the preparatory conveyor the material goes to the line where they are made. The end girl places the metal foot-shaped mold upside down on a jig which moves slowly down the line. Each girl adds one operation. The first puts on the upper, fastening it smoothly in place. The next puts on the sole, the next the heel, etc. One girl sees it through the press. At the end of the line the gaitee is put on a rack ready for curing. . . . This is all repetitive work. . . . The speed of the conveyor is increased with the experience of the workers.

The report of a plant making time fuzes and instruments reads:

Part-time workers were employed on fuze assembly at a conveyor. By the addition of a series of very small parts and insertion of small screws the time fuze is made ready for its time test or spinning. About 26 jobs are on the conveyor.

Employment of part-time workers on interrelated continuous operations necessarily involves certain adjustments. On such operations it is necessary to have a steady flow of materials, even speed of performance, and regularity of output. To offset short part-time hours, some employers are using part-time workers in teams, so that two such employees together put in a full day.

A device used to insure continuous production on part-time work, as on full-time work, is to train several workers on the same shift to do identical operations, so that if the work of one is interrupted a second worker can take over.

### PART-TIME WAGE RATES

The Women's Bureau recommends that part-time workers be paid the same rates as full-time workers. Employment of part-time workers on a lower wage scale not only would be detrimental to such workers but would jeopardize the security of full-time workers. Part-time workers as a class should not be discriminated against in the matter of wage rates. In no case should women's rates be less than those of men.

In the plants visited by the Women's Bureau, plant practices in connection with wage rates usually were the same for part-time workers as for full-time workers. The beginning rates were the same for both and progression to higher rates occurred at similar intervals. Job rates were the same for both groups. Where a higher rate was paid for working on a less convenient shift, such as the evening or the night shift, the differential was in effect for part-time workers as well as for full-time. It should be remembered, however, that though rates for both groups were the same throughout, part-time workers could not earn so much proportionally as full-time workers because their hours were too short to entitle them to premium pay.

For women, beginning rates ranged from approximately 45 to 60 cents an hour, average rates from 55 to 75 or 80 cents an hour.

Women who worked on the 4-hour shift 5 days a week in these plants were able to earn from \$12.20 to \$16 for the week. In a plant employing part-time workers on a 7-hour week-end shift, the average

earnings for the day were \$5.50. Thus, women able to give as much as a half-day of their time 5 days a week added an appreciable sum to the family income; women who could spare only 1 day a week had earnings which, though not great in themselves, amounted over a period of weeks to a sum that made it worth their while to do part-time work. These earnings, obtained from work that would not be available in peacetime, are of special usefulness to homemakers in the war period, to help in meeting the rising cost of living and to further the war effort through the purchase of war bonds and stamps.

Though one employer frankly admitted that discrimination against women in the matter of wage rates had no relation to the work performed (the reason being simply that men and boys are "harder to get"), most employers sought to justify a wage differential between the sexes on the grounds of difference in work. One plant, which had a differential of 10 cents in the beginning rate and 38 cents in the top rate, reported that men's jobs required more strength and were harder on the hands. Another plant, in which there was a differential of 15 cents for part-time men and women classified alike as "inspectors," reported that "men do different work; it is heavier or it requires a different skill from what women do."

The experience of a plant in which the beginning rate for women was 15 cents less than that for men, the reason given being that "women's jobs required less strength and lifting," illustrates one of the difficulties resulting from the policy of discriminating against women in the payment of wages. In this plant 225 men and 75 women were employed on a part-time basis. The company was anxious to employ more women for part-time work but had not been able to obtain them. As a result, according to the personnel manager, "There are not enough women on the part-time shift, so men operate women's machines and are paid men's pay, which costs the company money."

The Women's Bureau has always advocated that wage rates, including the entrance rate, should be the same for women as for men. All inexperienced workers who enter a plant to do the same or comparable work should be paid the same beginning rate, women as well as men, and should be given equal opportunities for training. After they are trained, they should be paid the rate for the job. If the job is a new one, a rate which adequately reflects the fair value of the services should be established. If the job is one on which men are now or were formerly employed, women should be paid the identical rate paid to men.

## **PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN OTHER THAN IN WAR PLANTS**

### **Trade and Service Industries.**

Employment of women on a part-time basis in the service industries and in trade is not a wartime development. Stores, restaurants, hotels, and to a lesser extent laundries and certain other service establishments have long been accustomed to employ women either for short daily hours or for the busiest part of the week, thus adjusting

the size of the labor force to meet anticipated daily and weekly fluctuations in public demand.

Though part-time employment in these industries is not new, the war has given it a new usefulness. The goods and services that many of these industries furnish are essential to the country's welfare, providing large numbers of the population with food and shelter, clothing and clothing upkeep. The fact that an exceptionally large number of homemakers are now employed outside their homes makes the facilities offered by the trade and service industries doubly important in wartime. Where all adult members of the family are actively engaged in the war effort, less of the usual household work can be done inside the home, and the burden on public eating places, commercial laundries, and other service establishments is necessarily increased. In some localities official recognition has been given to the essential character of certain of these industries by bringing them into the employment stabilization program, thus giving them the same status as war plants.

Much of the work in stores and the service industries is particularly suitable for part-time employment of women homemakers. Women are used to sorting, washing, and ironing clothes, serving food, trading across a counter, making change. They require little or no training for such part-time jobs; and because they are already familiar with the nature of the work they adjust readily to their new workplaces. Many jobs in trade and service industries can be carried on by part-time women workers to a very large extent, thus furnishing the public with much-needed services and releasing some women who worked regularly in these industries for full-time jobs in war plants.

At the time of the Women's Bureau survey in the spring of 1943, the need of women part-time workers was even greater in the service industries than in war plants. In most areas employers in war plants had as yet experienced little difficulty in recruiting women for full-time work, though in some localities they were faced with a shortage. Employers in the service industries were generally in a less fortunate position, especially in defense areas where they were often unable to replace women who migrated to war plants.

In many areas shortages in needed services were causing serious inconvenience. In some cities, hotels were reported to be closing their dining rooms for certain meals; restaurants needed waitresses, bus girls, kitchen workers, cooks; laundries and dry-cleaning establishments had curtailed their services, and some of them had been forced to shut down entirely; trade establishments needed salespeople, packers, cashiers, and elevator operators—to give only a partial list. The number of women available for full-time work in these occupations was rapidly decreasing. More and more women were needed for part-time work to relieve the growing labor shortage and maintain essential civilian needs.

Local United States Employment Service offices visited by Women's Bureau representatives stressed the fact that the immediate need for women to work on a part-time basis was in the service industries rather than in war plants. The report submitted in April 1943 by

the Bureau's representative in the Detroit area explains the situation existing in that important war manufacturing center at that time.

The Michigan office of the United States Employment Service advises there is no part-time employment of women in manufacturing plants—war or civilian—in this area. There is still a reservoir of women who want full-time work. There is still some in-migration. Factories here are advertising in the papers for common labor as well as for highly skilled operators. No mention is made of the need for part-time workers.

In the service industries and in trade, they advise, from 20,000 to 30,000 part-time workers could be absorbed. These industries have been losing heavily to manufacturing, during the last 3 months particularly. This is due to the marked difference in wages, and also because the prevailing factory hours are 48 as against 54 in restaurants and stores. In some firms in trade and service industries there has been considerable use of part-time women workers.

Reports received by the Women's Bureau indicate that though employers in many of these industries are anxious to obtain part-time workers, homemakers able to take part-time work prefer to work in war plants. Trade and service industries in many cities have made special appeals to homemakers to take part-time work. In addition to recruitment through public employment offices and newspaper advertising, many establishments have tried other publicity methods, such as circularizing the homes of customers, explaining the need for part-time workers and the advantages of part-time work. Among the special inducements offered are the arrangement of working hours to suit the convenience of the homemaker and the immediate placement on a regular pay basis without the delay of a training period. Nevertheless, in many areas too few homemakers have been willing to take these jobs.

Typical of this situation is the statement by the public employment office in a large eastern city in a defense area to the Women's Bureau representative in April 1943. Though the employment office in that city had a file of 600 applicants for part-time work, and though not one woman had as yet been placed in part-time work in a war plant, women were reluctant to take part-time work in service occupations. Cafeterias in war plants were willing to take all the part-time help they could get, but women were not interested in that work. Stores also were anxious to get part-time help for both sales and clerical work, and were willing to arrange the hours to suit the individual. The same situation existed in laundries and other service industries.

Homemakers able to arrange their household duties so that they can take a part-time job outside the home should realize that any needed job in an essential industry is, in reality, "war work." Civilian services must go on, and to maintain them at a wartime minimum is just as important as to work in war plants. In many cases a homemaker who has time only for part-time work can be of greater usefulness in a service industry than in a war plant; she may be able to do the work better and with less training; and by taking the service job she may release a regular worker for full-time work in a war plant.

#### **Clerical Work.**

One of the objections sometimes advanced to employing part-time workers is that it involves additional record-keeping or other clerical work. While the employment of any worker, part-time or full-time,

undoubtedly involves considerable clerical work, much of this work can be performed, in turn, by women employed on a part-time basis.

A large number of office jobs can be carried on by women with no special clerical training on a part-time basis. Such jobs include sorting mail, simple filing, checking, time recording, cashier work, sorting, and keeping certain continuous records. Other office jobs, such as bookkeeping, auditing, shorthand and typing, operation of comptometers and other office machines, require previous training and are suitable part-time jobs for women who did office work before marriage.

A number of war plants from which information on part-time employment was obtained by Women's Bureau representatives in April 1943 employed women on a part-time basis for clerical work, both in the office and as timekeepers in the plant. Usually this work was of a simple or routine nature, such as the job of mail clerk or file clerk. It was considered impracticable to employ part-time workers on elaborate office machines, as it was necessary to get maximum service from such machines by using them continuously throughout the day. One firm, which employed chiefly high-school girls on the part-time shift, reported that they could not afford to let the machines lie idle during the morning. By putting on a morning part-time shift and employing workers in "teams," one girl on the first shift and the other on the second, it would be possible to use part-time workers on such machines throughout the day.

In a survey of office employment in the summer of 1942, women were found to be employed in business offices at less than full-time work in numerous clerical occupations, such as telephone operator, biller and checker, proofreader, mail clerk, file clerk. Some of these workers, however, were employed only occasionally, as "extras," rather than on a definitely scheduled part-time shift. The growing labor shortage indicates that women who would like to do white-collar work on a regular part-time basis will find increasing opportunities to do so. Some of them will fill the places of men who go into occupations classified as essential or enter the armed forces. A large commercial bank, for example, has recently begun to employ women tellers on a part-time basis in all its branches. These women work 30 hours a week, from 10 to 3 daily, and are paid \$90 a month, the only training necessary being previous experience as a cashier in an office, theater, or restaurant.

#### **Part-Time Employment in Providing the National Food Supply.**

Women are needed for both full-time and part-time work in agriculture and the food-processing industries in order to assure an adequate supply of workers and maintain the Nation's food supply at the highest possible level.

Women without previous farm experience are showing by their performance that they can do many kinds of general farm work. On some farms women handle light machinery, run the separator and cooler, and operate the milking machines. Many of them feed and care for livestock and poultry. The various processes in the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of crops also are handled by women.

For obvious reasons, not all jobs that women can do on farms are suitable for part-time work. Those that require a general familiarity with farm conditions and customs, involving an extended period of orientation or intensive training, can best be handled by women em-

ployed on a full-time basis. On the other hand, women who can devote only part of a week or short daily hours to farm work can soon learn to do such jobs as preparing soil, planting seed, weeding, and hoeing. Their services are especially valuable also in picking fruits and vegetables, grading them, and packing them in barrels and boxes.

The extent to which women who live in towns and cities can be employed successfully for part-time work on farms depends to a great extent on the availability of transportation. In some areas community transportation can be provided for groups of part-time farm workers. Where the employment is near the city limits, as is often the case with truck farms, the city transportation system can be used. In any case, no woman who has only a few hours a day to devote to work outside her home should be required to spend most of it traveling to and from her place of employment. Except on certain types of farm work that require daily attention, it may be more practical for the worker, if there is much traveling to be done, to put in 2 full days over the week end rather than short hours on a daily basis.

In the canning and food-processing industries women have always been employed extensively, for both full-time and part-time work. In the fall harvest season of 1942 many canneries were able to add a half day to their daily operating time by employing an extra part-time shift of women who came at the plant's regular closing time in the late afternoon and worked through the evening. The services of women not available for full-time employment who can devote a few hours a day to an outside job can be utilized effectively in canning plants, thus adding to the Nation's food supply by preventing products from spoiling.

### **WOMEN WORKERS' NEED OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

Women with family responsibilities who accept employment outside the home in reality have two jobs. Most of them continue to carry the major responsibility for keeping up the home, shopping and marketing, cooking, cleaning, and caring for the children. Even if the outside job is on a part-time basis, it puts an extra burden on the homemaker and necessitates many far-reaching adjustments in her domestic and personal life.

During the war period, employers and communities are gradually becoming aware of their opportunity—and duty—to assist the employed homemaker to carry this double load. Some employers are arranging their work schedules wherever possible to meet the convenience of the woman worker, particularly where the work is performed on a part-time basis. A few plants have installed shopping facilities in the plant, and others give workers regular time off for shopping and marketing. In many localities stores have made some attempt to adjust their hours so that workers can trade in off-duty hours. Day nurseries have been set up in some communities, though often in inconvenient locations and in insufficient numbers.

Though scattered attempts have been made to develop facilities and services to assist employed women, the progress made to date in this country is only a beginning. Homemakers must have a great deal more assistance with their domestic work if they are to carry on their wartime jobs effectively and make their fullest contribution to the

war effort. This is true whether they are on part-time or full-time work, the difference being one of degree and not of kind.

In Great Britain every effort has been made to lighten the domestic responsibilities of women homemakers so that their services can be used in war work to the greatest possible extent. Until February of this year, women with heavy domestic responsibilities were not subject to the compulsory work orders, but were encouraged to take part-time jobs and give as much of their time as they could spare. Special arrangements for care of children, shopping, food, and other services are available to women who do part-time work as well as those who have full-time jobs.

A British report explains the importance of adequate community facilities to the part-time worker.<sup>2</sup> Excerpts from this report follow:

The only large reserve of womanpower still available is to be found among the women with domestic responsibilities who can only be brought into war work on a part-time basis and whose recruitment depends on the existence of suitable schemes of part-time work and adequate arrangements for transport, shopping, the care of children and the provision of meals on a communal basis. At the present stage of the mobilization of womanpower, therefore, the problem of the Ministry of Labor and National Service is to insure that the best possible use is being made of the women already in war work . . . and that women with domestic responsibilities are brought into part-time employment as rapidly as possible either on direct war work or as substitutes to release war workers.

The fuller mobilization of women with household responsibilities for part-time employment and the voluntary recruitment of women with young children . . . involves the provision of new war nurseries and improvements in the arrangements for providing meals for children of school age away from home and for the communal feeding of war workers in factory canteens and British Restaurants.

#### Care of Children.

*Wartime nurseries.*—Provided by the Maternity and Child Welfare Authorities.

*Daily Guardians.*—A scheme for Registered Daily Guardians. . . . Any woman who wishes her children under five years of age to be taken care of while she is working, may place them in the charge of a person who has been registered by the Maternity and Child Welfare Authority for this purpose. She will be free to choose the person with whom she will place her children provided the Guardian is one who has been registered. The mother makes her own arrangements as to rate of payment to the Guardian, but the Guardian is also paid a weekly sum by the State.

*Nursery Schools.*—For the case of children under five, existing nursery classes in elementary schools have been extended, and new classes are being set up. . . . The age of admission . . . has been reduced from 3 to 2 years, and the hours of opening lengthened to provide for the care of children during the whole period their mothers are at work.

*Play Centers.*—To meet the needs of older children, schools are opened at 7 or 8 in the morning and kept open until 6 or 7 in the evening . . .

#### Some Arrangements To Meet Shopping Difficulties of Women.

The shopping difficulties of war workers vary according to districts . . .

Wherever practicable the concession of time off for shopping has been found to be the most satisfactory solution. Firms make their own arrangements but it is the practice generally to allow women workers 1 half day a week or alternatively 1 or 2 hours off twice a week. Where the factory is situated near a shopping center an extended lunch hour may meet the difficulty. Local retailers cooperate when necessary by arranging to close their shops at a different hour at lunch time from that of the factory to avoid overlapping. . . . Some of the other schemes now in operation are:

<sup>2</sup> Aspects of British Woman Power Policy. Supplementary note on developments in policy between May and October, 1942. Released by British Information Services.

Priority cards issued by factories to workers for lunch hour shopping—retailers cooperate.

Workers allowed to reregister for rationed goods at shops near the factory . . .

Shops remain open late 1 night a week for workers only to shop. This has not proved a very successful scheme as women war workers with other domestic duties to perform are naturally anxious to reach home as soon as possible when they finish work.

Factories arrange shifts so that women can always shop, either morning or afternoon.

Shops keep a fair share of unrationed goods for workers.

To make possible the most effective utilization of women and permit women to make their greatest contribution to the war effort, the Women's Bureau recommends as an imperative necessity the development of community facilities to meet the needs of employed women, including adequate provision for child care, laundry, marketing, shopping, and other household duties.

