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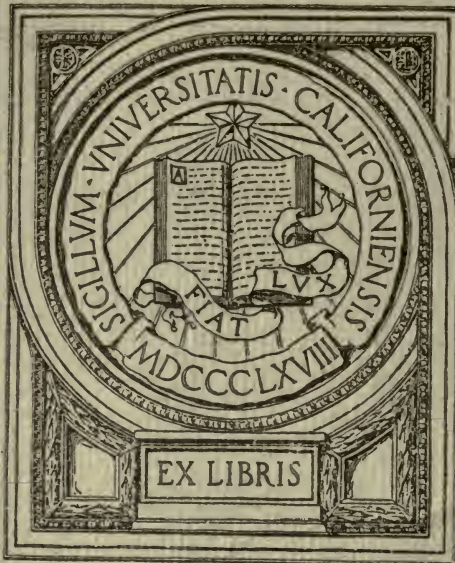
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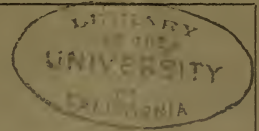
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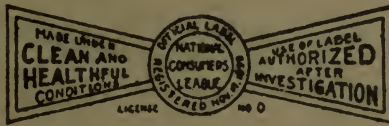
# Social Survey Committee

OF THE

## Consumers' League of Oregon

ON THE

### Wages, Hours and Conditions of Work and Cost and Standard of Living of Women Wage Earners in Oregon with Special Reference to Portland



PORTLAND, OREGON

January, 1913



REPORT OF THE

# Social Survey Committee

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THE  
OFFICE OF  
THE  
COMMISSIONER OF  
LABOR

PORTLAND, OREGON  
January, 1913

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
Social Survey Committee . . . . .	2
Officers of the Consumers' League . . . . .	2
Table of Contents . . . . .	3
Statistical Tables . . . . .	4
Report of Survey Committee . . . . .	5
Opinion of the Attorney-General . . . . .	7
Minimum Wage Legislation Elsewhere . . . . .	10
Draft of the Proposed Bill . . . . .	13
Report of the Director of the Survey . . . . .	18-72
Introduction . . . . .	18
Wages, Hours and Unemployment . . . . .	25-45
Retail Stores . . . . .	25
Five and Ten Cent Stores . . . . .	29
Factories . . . . .	31
Laundries . . . . .	35
Office Help . . . . .	36
Moving Picture Show Cashiers . . . . .	39
Printing Trades . . . . .	39
Telephone Operators . . . . .	41
Hotels and Restaurants . . . . .	42
Hairdressers, Dressmakers . . . . .	44
Milliners; Cleaning and Dyeing . . . . .	45
Conditions of Labor . . . . .	46-57
Light and Ventilation . . . . .	46
Too Great Heat in Laundries . . . . .	47
Nauseating and Other Odors . . . . .	48
Poor Arrangement in Work Rooms . . . . .	50
Lack of Sanitary Plumbing . . . . .	52
Noise from Machinery . . . . .	53
Nervous Strain in Telephone System . . . . .	55
Conclusion . . . . .	56
Cost of Living . . . . .	57-67
Room-rent . . . . .	57
Rooms and Board . . . . .	60
Carfare . . . . .	61
Clothing . . . . .	62
Laundry . . . . .	64
Doctor and Dentist Bills . . . . .	65
Lodge and Church Dues . . . . .	66
Recreation and Vacation . . . . .	66
Education and Reading . . . . .	67
Summary . . . . .	67
Personal Stories . . . . .	68
Appendix—Welfare Legislation. . . . .	73

## LIST OF TABLES

---

- 1—Occupational Distribution of Workers in Portland.
- 2—Summary of Cost of Living in Portland.
- 3—Summary of Cost of Living Outside of Portland.
- 4—Summary of Wages in Portland.
- 5—Wage Information Outside of Portland.
- 6—Department Stores; Number and Percent, Wage Schedules.
- 7—Department Stores; Cumulative Number and Percent.
- 8—5c, 10c & 15c Stores; Wages.
- 9—Factory; Number and Percent Wage Schedules.
- 10—Factory; Cumulative Number and Percent.
- 11—Factories in Portland Reporting Wage Schedules.
- 12—Laundry; Markers, Starch Room, etc.
- 13—Laundry; Number, Percent, Wage.
- 14—Laundry; Cumulative Number, Percent.
- 15—Office Help; Number, Percent, Wage.
- 16—Office Help; Cumulative Number.
- 17—Stenographer; Number, Percent, Wage.
- 18—Stenographer; Cumulative Number, Percent.
- 19—Printing Trades; Number, Percent, Wage.
- 20—Printing Trades; Cumulative Number and Percent.
- 21—Telephone Operators; Number, Percent.
- 22—Telephone Operators; Cumulative Number, Percent.
- 23—Hotels and Restaurants; Number, Percent, Wage.
- 24—Hotels, Restaurants; Cumulative Number.
- 25—Miscellaneous; Wage Schedules.
- 26—List of 105 Rooms for Rent in Portland. A, B, and C.
- 27—Classified Cost of Living; Average Spent on Room and Board.
- 28—Average Annual Sum Spent on Clothing.
- 29—Estimated Cost of Clothing at Low Market Prices.
- 30—Estimated Cost of Clothing, Serviceable.
- 31—Average Annual Sum Spent on Laundry.
- 32—Average Annual Sum Spent on Doctors' and Dentists' Bills.
- 33—Average Annual Sum Spent on Carfare.
- 34—Average Annual Sum Spent on Church and Lodge Dues.
- 35—Average Annual Sum Spent on Education and Reading.
- 36—Average Annual Sum Spent on Recreation and Vacation.
- 37—Summary of Cost of Decent Living for One Year.



## REPORT OF SURVEY COMMITTEE

To the Officers and Directors of the Consumers' League of Oregon:

The Social Survey Committee of the Consumers' League herewith respectfully submits its report on Welfare Legislation for Women and Minors in Oregon. Your Committee began its investigation for this Report early in August 1912. The generosity of a number of public-spirited citizens made it possible to engage a trained investigator to take charge of the inquiry into the wages, hours, conditions of labor and standards of living of women wage-earners in various industries of the State with special reference to Portland. Miss Caroline J. Gleason of Minneapolis, Minn., was made Director of the Survey and it is due to her special knowledge of the conditions of women wage-earners as well as to her tireless energy that the Committee is able to present a statistical report on so large a percentage of the women workers in various industries with only five months for the task of organizing, investigating, collating, tabulating and publishing.

In Portland, the investigators have gathered information affecting the wages, hours or conditions of labor of 7,603 women wage-earners. Wage statistics are tabulated for 4,523 of this number. In the case of the Department Stores the pay-rolls were placed at our disposal, and hence the wage statistics are exhaustive; but in other cases where the wage-schedules had to be obtained from individual employes, it was felt that the wage conditions in an establishment could be sufficiently gauged from the reports of a reasonably large percentage of the employes without seeking to get the schedule of every employe.

Outside of Portland wage statistics were gathered for 1,133 women wage-earners. The Director of the Survey visited most of the larger centers throughout the State and enlisted the generous co-operation of committees in twenty-five counties of the State. All over the State there was manifested the keenest interest in the work of the Consumers' League for this measure for the welfare of women workers.

In drafting the Bill for an Industrial Welfare Commission, your Committee has had the advantage of the experience of the Commission on Minimum Wage Boards of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and of the legal advice of ex-Senator John M. Gearin and Mr. D. Solis Cohen, who have given unsparingly of their time. The constitutionality of the measure has been carefully examined by the Attorney-General of Oregon, whose opinion is given herewith.

Social workers from Washington and California have investigated the Bill and have arranged to have it introduced at the coming session of the Legislatures of those States. The passage of the same measure by the three coast states would be a very progressive step in social welfare legislation. The argument for Welfare Legislation for Women and Minors is presented in the address of the Chairman of this Committee at the annual meeting of the Consumers' League and published as an appendix of this report (also printed separately).

### Principles and Facts.

The outstanding principles and facts which form the basis of the demand for the proposed legislation are the following:

(1) Each industry should provide for the livelihood of the workers employed in it. An industry which does not do so is parasitic. The well-being of society demands that wage-earning women shall not be required to subsidize from their earnings the industry in which they are employed.

(2) Owing to the lack of organization among women workers and the secrecy with which their wage schedules are guarded, there are absolutely no standards of wages among them. Their wages are determined for the most part by the will of the employer without reference to efficiency or length of service on the part of the worker. This condition is radically unjust.

(3) The wages paid to women workers in most occupations are miserably inadequate to meet the cost of living at the lowest standards consistent with the maintenance of the health and morals of the workers. Nearly three-fifths of the women employed in industries in Portland receive less than \$10 a week, which is the minimum weekly wage that ought to be offered to any self-supporting woman wage-earner in this city.

(4) The present conditions of labor for women in many industries are shown by this report to be gravely detrimental to their health; and since most women wage-earners are potential mothers, the future health of the race is menaced by these unsanitary conditions.

For these reasons your Committee believes that the passage of the proposed Bill for an Act creating an Industrial Welfare Commission is most important and we strongly recommend that the Consumers' League urgently petition the Legislature for its enactment.

Respectfully submitted,

SOCIAL SURVEY COMMITTEE.

Mrs. Millie R. Trumbull,  
Secretary.

Edwin V. O'Hara,  
Chairman

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**OPINION OF ATTORNEY-GENERAL.**

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SALEM, Ore., December 23rd, 1912.

Chairman Social Survey Committee, Consumers' League of Oregon:

DEAR SIR:—

I have your favor of the 19th instant, and under separate cover, draft of a proposed Industrial Welfare Commission bill, and complying with your request, I beg to say that I have examined the proposed bill with reference to ascertaining so far as I can, whether, if said bill were enacted, it would be subject to the objection that it is unconstitutional in any respect, and after such examination, together with the authorities which I have been able to find bearing upon the subject, am of opinion that it is entirely within the authority of the legislative department of the State of Oregon to enact. There are only two points which occur to me which might be raised in objection to the validity of the bill on constitutional grounds, and they are, first: As to whether it comes within the police power of the State, and second: Whether it is a delegation of legislative authority.

A question very similar to this arose upon the passage of the law limiting the hours of women workers to ten hours per day, and sixty hours per week, and in the case of State against Muller, 48 Ore. 252, the Supreme Court of Oregon sustained that statute as a valid exercise of the police power and as not unduly interfering with the right of women sui juris, to contract, which decision was sustained by the United States Supreme Court where the case was taken on writ of error, which decision is found in 208 U. S., 419.

In the case of Mutual Loan Company against Martell, 32 U. S. Supreme Court Reporter, 74, involving the validity of a statute of Massachusetts which makes invalid against the employer, assignments of, or orders for wages to be earned in the future, unless recorded, accepted in writing by the employer and accompanied by the written consent of the wife of the employee, the Court sustained said statute as a valid exercise of police power, and on page 75 discusses the question of what the police power of the State is, and the extent of its authority, at considerable length, and closes this branch of the case in the following language:

“There must, indeed, be a certain freedom of contract, and, as there cannot be a precise, verbal expression of the limitations of it, arguments against any particular limitation may have plausible strength, and yet many legal restrictions have been and must be put upon such freedom in adapting human laws to

human conduct and necessities. A too precise reasoning should not be exercised, and before this court may interfere there must be a clear case of abuse of power. See *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. McGuire*, 219 U. S. 549, 55 L. ed. 328, 31 Sup. Ct. Rep. 259, where the right of contract and its limitation by the legislature are fully discussed."

In the case of *Noble State Bank against Haskell and others*, 219 U. S. 104, 31 Supreme Court Reporter, 186, the Court discussing what is a State's police power, uses this language:

"At least, if we have a case within the reasonable exercise of the police power as above explained, no more need be said.

It may be said in a general way that the police power extends to all the great public needs. *Camfield v. United States*, 167 U. S. 518, 42 L. ed. 260, 17 Sup. Ct. Rep. 864. It may be put forth in aid of what is sanctioned by usage, or held by the prevailing morality or strong and preponderant opinion to be greatly and immediately necessary to the public welfare."

To the same effect are the decisions of the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Laurelhill Cemetery against San Francisco*, 216 U. S. 358, *Welch against Swasey*, 214 U. S. 91, *Jacobson against Massachusetts*, 197 U. S. 11, and the dissenting opinion in *Lochner against New York*, 198 U. S. 45, as well as the principles laid down in the controlling opinion in that case, although the decision was that the principles did not apply to the conditions then at issue.

If the police power extends to all the great public needs, as held by the United States Supreme Court in the cases above cited, and it must be conceded that sufficient earnings to procure a reasonable and comfortable existence, together with some opportunity for rest and recreation, and sanitary, healthful and moral conditions under which to labor, on behalf of women and minors, are some of the prime and greatest needs of the public, then this proposed bill is certainly well within the police power of the State, and as said in *Bank against Haskell*, *Supra.*, if we have a case within the reasonable exercise of the police power, as above explained, no more need be said.

Upon the other point, as to whether the appointment of a commission, and through it of wage boards, or conferences, for the purpose of ascertaining and fixing what are reasonable and necessary minimum wages, maximum hours of labor, and standard conditions for and under which women and children may be allowed to work, I find it established by a multitude of authorities, that while a legislature cannot delegate its authority to make laws, to any other body or authority, but having enacted the law, may delegate to another body or

authority, power to determine facts upon which such law shall operate.

State against Thompson, 160 Missouri, 333, sustaining an act authorizing the State Auditor to exercise his judgment as to the good repute of an applicant for a license for book making on horse races; Lothrop against Stedman, 42 Connecticut, 583, sustaining an act providing for the repeal of a charter of an insurance company if a certain event did not occur, and appointing a commissioner to determine whether it occurred.

In re Locke's Appeal, 72 Pennsylvania State, 498, the Court says:

"What is more than common to appoint commissioners under a law to determine things, upon the decision of which the act is to operate in some way or another."

and lays down the rule that while the legislature cannot delegate its power to make a law, it can make a law delegating its power to determine some fact or state of things, upon which the law makes, or intends to make its own action depend.

It is now well settled, that while the establishing of railroad rates is a legislative function, the determination as to what are reasonable rates and fixing the same, may be delegated to Railroad Commissions and other bodies authorized to determine facts.

Railroad Commission against Yazoo & Mississippi Valley R. R. Co., 62 Miss. 607;

Stone against Farmers' Loan & Trust Co., 116 U. S. 307;

Regan against Farmers' Loan & Trust Co., 154 U. S. 362;

C. B. & O. R. R. Co., against Jones, 149 Ill., 378;

Beale & Wyman R. R. rate regulation, section 1309; 8 Cyc., 834;

Without citing as many more authorities to the same effect which I have consulted on this subject.

Therefore in my opinion the act proposed is valid so far as a conflict with the constitution, State or National, is concerned, and I am further impressed with the great merit of the object sought to be obtained by this proposed law. If our free institutions are to be maintained, it is of vital importance to protect our citizens, especially those in greatest need of such protection, by furnishing adequate means of livelihood, as well as safe and sanitary conditions under which employment may be pursued.

Very respectfully yours,

A. M. CRAWFORD,

Attorney General.

## MINIMUM WAGE LEGISLATION ELSEWHERE.

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As to the operation elsewhere of Minimum Wage legislation, we quote here from the report of the Commission on Minimum Wage Boards of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1912):

"Such a system of (Minimum Wage) legislation has been in operation in the State of Victoria, Australia, since 1896, and in Great Britain since January, 1910. Some form of fixing legal minimum wages is also in operation in the other Australian states and New Zealand. In Victoria and England the minimum wages are determined by wage boards created for considering the special requirements of the respective industries or trades.

### The Victorian System.

"In Victoria, at the instance of either employers or employees, or of the minister of labor, the legislature may authorize the creation of a special board, which is empowered to fix a minimum wage for a given trade. Employers and employees are equally represented upon such a board, and a non-partisan chairman is selected by the two parties at interest, or, if they fail to agree, is then appointed by the minister of labor. The chairman has a casting vote. **Determinations**, as the decisions of the special boards are called, if accepted by the minister of labor, are published in the Government Gazette and become law for that trade; but if the minister of labor considers that a determination may cause injury to the trade, he may suspend it for a period of six months, and then send it back to the board for reconsideration. There is also the court of industrial appeals, to which determinations may be referred, and this court has the power to amend or annul a determination. The decision of the court is final, but it may review its own decisions. Moreover, the court of appeals is specifically instructed to consider whether a determination has been or may be injurious to a trade, or may limit employment, 'and if of opinion that it has had or may have such effect, the court shall make such alterations as in its opinion may be necessary to remove or prevent such effect, and at the same time to secure a living wage to employees.' (Factory and Shops Acts, 1905, No. 1975). The law ignores the possibility of cases in which the maintenance of the trade and payment of a living wage to the employees may be incompatible. These special boards, although authorized to secure a 'living wage' in practice have served rather to formulate common rules for a trade, to bring employees and employers into co-operative relations and to

provide suitable machinery for the readjustment of wages and other matters to changing economic conditions. Their flexibility in dealing with complex situations is obvious. Few appeals have been taken from their decisions to the court of industrial appeals. The claim that the system is not considered antagonistic by propertied interests is borne out by a great weight of testimony. On this point Victor Clark, who visited Victoria in 1903 and 1904 as a representative of the United States Department of Labor, states, 'Propertied interests were not opposed to a statutory minimum wage... The better employers rather courted some provision that freed them from the competition of the less scrupulous men of their own class.' (Labor in Australia, pp. 141, 147.) He states further that 11 of the 38 special boards then in operation were established upon application of employers.

"In 1910, 20 new boards were instituted, and at the end of that year 91 industries were under the operation of the act, affecting 5,362 factories, in which 83,053 workers were employed.

### The English System.

"In England, the industries in which the system may be applied are named by Parliament, but the Board of Trade may provisionally extend the application of the act to other industries, subject to subsequent continuation by Parliament. The wage boards, known as trade boards, are composed of representatives of employers and of workers in equal numbers, elected by the respective organizations, and of other members, including the chairman, appointed by the Board of Trade. The determinations of these trade boards are made obligatory by an order of the Board of Trade, but the Board of Trade may suspend the operation of the order. If the order is suspended the trade may after six months again renew its recommendation, and the Board of Trade may then issue an obligatory order or further suspend it. Minimum wage orders determined in this manner apply to both men and women, and they may apply universally to the trades or apply to any special process in the work of the trade, or to any special class of workers in the trade, or to any special area. The act (9, Edward VII, chap. 22), went into effect Jan. 1, 1910, and applied immediately to the trades of wholesale tailoring, box-making, lace-making and chain-making. The act has not been in operation long enough to judge of its ultimate success, but it was adopted after mature consideration by a select committee, whose laborious investigations included a field study by Ernest Aves, commissioner of the home office, into the workings of minimum wage regulations, both in Australia and in New Zealand. In the passage of the bill through Parliament it was not made a party or a class measure, and it does not seem to have met

with any particular opposition from any quarter. In one industry, at least, it has been gladly accepted by employers, who even contributed money to enable their employees to organize for the purpose of taking advantage of the act."

After a thorough investigation of the needs of the women and minor workers in the Commonwealth, Massachusetts has enacted a law creating a Minimum Wage Commission for the determination of minimum wages of women and minors. The Commission is to undertake its duties July 1 of the current year.



## A BILL

For an Act to protect the lives, health and morals of women and minor workers, establishing an Industrial Welfare Commission for women and minors, prescribing its powers and duties, and providing for the fixing of minimum wages and maximum hours and standard conditions of labor for such workers, and providing penalties for violations of the Act.

WHEREAS, The welfare of the State of Oregon demands that women and minors be protected from conditions of labor which have a pernicious effect on their health and morals; and

WHEREAS, Inadequate wages, unduly long hours and unsanitary conditions of labor exert such pernicious effect,

THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED By the People of the State of Oregon, and Be It Enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

Section 1. It shall be unlawful to employ women or minors in any industry or occupation within the State of Oregon for unreasonably long daily hours, or under conditions of labor detrimental to their health or morals; and it shall be unlawful to employ women in any industry within the State of Oregon for wages which are not adequate for their decent maintenance.

Section 2. There is hereby created a Commission to be known as the "Industrial Welfare Commission for the State of Oregon," to establish such standards of hours of employment and conditions of labor for women and minors employed within the State of Oregon as shall be held hereunder reasonable and not detrimental to their health or morals, and such standards of wages as shall be adequate for the decent maintenance of women.

Section 3. Said Commission shall be composed of five persons, three of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, as follows: The first appointment shall be made within thirty days after this Act takes effect; one for the term ending January 1, 1914; one for the term ending January 1, 1915, and one for the term ending January 1, 1916; provided, however, that at the expiration of their respective terms, their successors shall be appointed by the Governor to serve a full term of three years. Any vacancies shall be filled by the Governor for the unexpired portion of the term in which the vacancy shall occur. The Commissioner of Labor Statistics and Inspector of Factories and Workshops shall be ex-officio a member of the Commission. The Secretary of the Child Labor

Commission of Oregon shall be ex-officio a member of said Commission. Three members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum at all regular meetings and public hearings.

Section 4. The members of said Commission shall draw no salaries. The Commission may employ a Secretary whose salary shall be paid out of the monies hereinafter appropriated. All claims for expenses incurred by the Commission shall, after approval by the Commission, be passed to the Secretary of State for audit and payment.

Section 5. It shall be the duty of the Commission to ascertain the wages and hours of labor and conditions of labor of women and minors in the various occupations, trades and industries in which said women and minors are employed in the State of Oregon. To this end, said Commission shall have full power and authority to call for statements and examine, either through its members or other authorized representatives, all books, payrolls or other records of all persons, firms and corporations employing females or minors as to any matters that would have a bearing upon the questions of wages or hours of labor or conditions of labor of said employes.

Section 6. Every employer of women and minors shall keep a register of the names of all women and minors employed by him, and shall on request permit the Commission or any of its members or authorized representatives to inspect such register. For the purposes of this Act, a minor is defined to be a person of either sex under the age of eighteen (18) years.

Section 7. The Commission may specify times to hold public hearings, at which times employers, employes or other interested persons may appear and give testimony as to the matter under consideration. The Commission shall have power to subpoena witnesses, and to administer oaths. All witnesses subpoenaed by the Commission shall be paid the same mileage and per diem allowed by law for witnesses before the Circuit Court in civil cases.

Section 8. If, after investigation, the Commission is of opinion that in any occupation, trade or industry, the wages paid to female employes are inadequate to supply the necessary cost of living and to maintain the workers in health, or that the hours or conditions of labor are prejudicial to the health or morals of the workers, the Commission is empowered to call a Conference composed of an equal number of representatives of employers and employes in the occupation, trade or industry in question, together with one or more disinterested persons representing the public, but the representatives of the public shall not exceed the number of representatives of either of the other parties; and a member of

the Commission shall be a member of such conference and Chairman thereof. The Commission shall make rules and regulations governing the selection of representatives and the mode of procedure of said conference, and shall exercise exclusive jurisdiction over all questions arising as to the validity of the procedure and of the recommendations of said conference. On request of the Commission, it shall be the duty of the Conference to recommend to the Commission an estimate of the minimum wage adequate in the occupation or industry in question to supply the necessary cost of living, and to maintain the workers in health; to report on the number of hours of work per day consistent with the health of the workers, and to recommend standards of conditions of labor demanded by the health and morals of the employes. In determining questions arising in different localities throughout the state the Conferences may consider the different conditions as factors in reaching conclusions, and the Commission may in its judgment formulate different rules in different localities based upon said consideration. The findings and recommendations of the Conference shall be made a matter of record for the use of the Commission.

Section 9. Upon the receipt of such recommendations from a Conference, the Commission shall review the same and may approve any or all of such recommendations, or it may disapprove any or all of them and recommit the subject or the recommendations disapproved of, to the same or a new Conference. After such approval of the recommendation of a Conference, the Commission shall issue an obligatory order to be effective in sixty days from the date of said order, specifying the minimum wage for women in the occupation, trade or industry affected, the maximum hours, provided that the hours specified shall not be more than the legal maximum for women in Oregon, and the standard conditions of labor for said women; and after such order is effective, it shall be unlawful for any employer in said occupation, trade or industry to employ women over eighteen (18) years of age for less than the rate of wages or more than the maximum hours specified, or under conditions of labor prohibited for women so employed. The Commission shall send by mail so far as practicable to each employer in the occupation in question a copy of the order, and each such employer shall be required to post a copy of said order in each building in which women affected by the order are employed.

Section 10. For any occupation, trade or industry, in which a minimum time rate only has been established, the Commission, through its Secretary, may issue to a woman physically defective or crippled by age or otherwise, a special license authorizing the employment of such license for a wage

less than the legal minimum wage; and the Commission shall fix the minimum wage for said woman.

Section 11. The Commission may at any time inquire into wages, hours and conditions of labor of minors, employed in any occupation in the state, and may determine wages, hours and conditions of labor suitable in the case of minors. When the Commission has made such determination in the case of minors, it may proceed to issue an obligatory order in the manner provided for in Section 9 of this Act, and after such order is effective, it shall be unlawful for any employer in said occupation to employ a minor for less wages or more hours than is specified for minors in said occupation or under conditions of labor prohibited by the Commission for said minors in its order.

Section 12. Upon the request of the Commission the Commissioner of Labor Statistics shall furnish to the Commission such statistics as the Commission may require.

Section 13. Any employer who discharges, or in any other manner discriminates against any employe because such employe has testified or is about to testify, or because such employer believes that said employe may testify in any investigation or proceedings relative to the enforcement of this Act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of from Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00) to One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) for each such misdemeanor.

Section 14. Any person employing a woman or minor for whom a minimum wage or maximum hours or standard condition of labor have been specified, at less than said minimum wage, or for more than the specified maximum hours, or under conditions of labor prohibited by the order of the Commission; or violating any other of the provisions of this Act, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall, upon conviction thereof, be punished by a fine of not less than Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00) or more than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) or by imprisonment in the County Jail for not less than ten (10) days, nor more than three (3) months. Justice courts shall have jurisdiction of all violations of this Act.

Section 15. If any female employe shall receive less than the legal minimum wage in any occupation for which a minimum wage has been determined by the Commission, she shall be entitled to recover in a civil action the full amount of her minimum wage as herein provided for, together with costs and attorney's fees to be fixed by the court, notwithstanding any agreement to work for such lesser wage. In such action, however, the employer shall be credited with any wages which

have been paid upon account, whether in cash or otherwise.

Section 16. All questions of fact arising under this Act shall be determined by the Commission, and there shall be no appeal from its decision, but there shall be a right of appeal to the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon on questions of law.

Section 17. The Commission shall bi-ennially make a report to the Governor and State Legislature of its investigations and proceedings.

Section 18. There is hereby appropriated annually out of any monies of the State Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of Three Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$3,500.00), or as much thereof as may be necessary to meet the expenses of the Commission.

# REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE SURVEY

## To the Social Survey Committee:

I herewith submit the report of the investigation into the wages, hours, conditions of labor and cost and standards of living of women workers in Oregon. Acknowledgment is due to the Chairman of the Survey Committee, Rev. E. V. O'Hara, for his constant advice and aid in carrying out the work; to Mr. O. P. Hoff, State Labor Commissioner, and to Mrs. Millie R. Trumbull, Secretary Child Labor Commission, for many valuable suggestions, to the manufacturers and merchants who have opened their shops and payrolls to us for inspection. The director was assisted in the field work by Daisy M. Eager, Mrs. Wm. P. Gannett and Grace G. Collins.

Respectfully yours,

CAROLINE J. GLEASON,  
Director of Survey.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### Purpose of Investigation.

The purpose of the investigation was to secure accurate data (1) as to the wages paid in all lines of work to self-supporting women in this State, (2) as to the cost of living in Portland and the smaller towns of the state, with a view to determining whether wage-earning women are receiving a wage that permits them to live so as to preserve their health and their morals, and to save against future needs; (3) as to conditions which would affect the health or morals of the workers.

A hostile attitude has never been assumed by the investigators towards the management of any establishments. They report details of conditions that are not good, or which are remarkably bad. Where conditions have been found remarkably good, mention has gladly been made of them. Yet a state of affairs should rightly not exist in which an employer who paid his employes a living wage, who kept his shop in a clean, healthful condition, should feel that he was acting in an exceptionally commendable way. A sanitary shop and a living wage ought to be not the exception but the rule—a standard, the opposite of which would call for general disapproval.

### Procedure of Investigation.

No attempt was made to canvas every female worker in the various industries for cost of living schedules, nor to gather complete wage schedules from all industries in the state. A number that would accurately represent the wage and cost of living situations was all that was deemed necessary.

Four lines were followed in gathering information:

1. Cards, one of which is reproduced below, were distributed among women workers, and when filled were collected by investigators. To reach workers, no distinction was made in establishments. A list of different industries employing women was drawn up and every house on the list visited. Over 2,000 cards were distributed; 509 were collected in Portland. Workers were approached at lunch and closing hour and in their homes. The director has no hesitancy in presenting information gathered from cards as accurate.

#### MINIMUM WAGE INVESTIGATION

1. WHAT kind of ESTABLISHMENT are you working in? .....
2. WHAT is your work.....
3. WAGES—Week..... or Month.....
4. HOURS employed—Day..... or Week.....
5. LIVING at Home? (Yes or No).....
6. VACATION with pay?.....
7. HOW long with firm?.....
8. FIRST wage here?.....

#### COST OF LIVING

1. HOUSE or Room rent, per year.....
2. FOOD, per year.....
3. CLOTHING, per year.....
4. CARFARE, per year.....
5. LAUNDRY, per year.....
6. DOCTOR Bills, per year.....
7. CHURCH Dues, per year.....
8. LODGE Dues, per year.....
9. EDUCATION, per year (books, newspapers, etc).....
10. RECREATION, including vacation, per year.....

NOTE.—On reverse side of card, give all other items of expense that you deem proper, or information concerning working conditions.

2. A second method was to solicit wage schedules from employers and to ask their views on the labor conditions of

female employes and their opinion as to the feasibility of the proposed bill.

3. A third line pursued was that of engaging to work in different establishments, in order to obtain first-hand information as to conditions and to corroborate both employers' and employes' reports. The investigators worked as employes in 12 factories.

4. A fourth line pursued was that of visiting boarding and rooming-houses and private families who advertised room and board, in all sections of the city, to discover the actual cost of food and lodging; (b) of visiting department stores for the lowest and average prices on articles of wear; (c) The director of the investigation went to southern, western and eastern sections of the state, visiting in all 14 towns, organizing sub-committees to gather wage statistics and collecting information herself on wages, conditions of labor and cost of living. The result is that information has been gained about 39 occupations employing women, and 8,736 women workers, 7,603 of these being in Portland, 1,133 outside.

Below in Table 1 is given a list of the industries investigated in Portland and the number of workers employed in each.

TABLE 1.

Occupational Distribution of 7603 Women Workers in Portland employed in 39 occupations investigated in regard to wages, hours, conditions of work and cost and standards of living.

Bag Factories.....	137	Cleaning and Dyeing.....	57
Broom and Basket .....	43	Department Stores .....	2281
Can Factories.....	65	Druggists (wholesale).....	102
Canning Factories.....	100	Dry Goods (wholesale) .....	125
Chewing Gum Factories.....	80	Electric Co. ....	314
Cigar Box Factories.....	3	Five and Ten Cent Stores .....	120
Clothing Factories.....	218	Grocers (wholesale) .....	73
Candy Factories.....	212	Hairdressing .....	15
Cordage Factories.....	16	Laundries .....	259
Creameries .....	17	Offices (general) .....	800
Curled Hair Factories.....	2	Printing and Stationery .....	213
Flour Mills .....	8	Stenographers .....	985
Furriers .....	9	Publishing .....	20
Mattress Factories.....	12	Restaurants and Hotels .....	363
Meat Packers .....	12	Telephone .....	570
Paper Box Factories.....	63		
Packing .....	106	Total .....	6297
Prune Canneries.....	35	Factories .....	1306
Pickle Factories.....	16		
Shoe Factories.....	2	Total .....	7603
Soap Factories.....	2		
Tobacco Factories.....	10		
Tent and Awning Factories.....	39		
Mohair and Woolen Mills .....	99		
Factory Total .....	1306		

### COST OF LIVING.

The investigators have come to the conclusion that in Portland \$10 a week is the least on which the average girl can support herself decently. Facts which led to this conclusion were drawn from the testimony of the girls through the 509 schedules detailing their living expenses. Certain in-



dustries demand higher standards of living than others; also a young woman's condition as to whether she is living at home or is a girl "adrift" influences her cost of living.

The term "adrift," used in connection with the woman not living at home, may need some explanation. The application of the word is that given by the Federal Investigators in their Report on Women and Child Wage Earners in the U. S., Vol. V, "Women in Stores and Factories." It is meant to cover all cases of the girl "practically without a home." Those who are living in rooming and boarding-houses and entirely dependent on their own earnings, are undoubtedly "adrift." The question arises over those who, though living with a parent or other near relatives, are depended upon for care and support. An example quoted by the Federal report is that of a girl supporting an invalid father by her income and caring also for the house: "Not absolutely but practically without a home, as her father is neither physically nor mentally able to sustain her in time of need or restrain her in time of temptation." The widow or deserted woman with dependent children is another example of a woman "adrift." This investigation came across women difficult to classify, and for purposes of simplicity adopted this description.

Table 2 below gives the average annual wage and expense of the 509 women interviewed in Portland, classified according to industry and whether they were living at home or adrift. The saving or deficit is also indicated, showing the amount of outside help required for the girl's support.

It will be observed that the average girl in every occupation, except office work, receives wages which are inadequate for her support, and consequently would face the end of the year in debt if she does not receive assistance from her family or some outside source. This shows the extent to which industries employing women are parasitic in character.

TABLE 2.

Average Annual Wage and Expense of 509 Women Wage Earners in Portland, classified by occupation and as to living at Home or Adrift:

## LAUNDRY.

No.	Average Annual Wage.	Expense.	Deficit.	Saving.
9 At Home .....	\$423.00	\$474.45	\$ 51.45	
27 Adrift .....	464.00	475.05	11.05	

## FACTORY.

82 At Home .....	416.92	426.98	10.06	
18 Adrift .....	395.00	438.83	43.83	

## OFFICE.

57 At Home .....	542.14	599.50	57.36	
31 Adrift .....	692.90	617.07		\$ 75.83

## DEPARTMENT STORES.

81 At Home .....	459.50	605.36	145.86	
35 Adrift .....	480.57	572.42	91.85	

## MISCELLANEOUS.

99 At Home .....	440.24	539.29	99.05	
70 Adrift .....	458.71	526.68	67.97	

Out of 127 persons who offered information, other than the schedules called for, 70 stated that they could not live on their salaries if they did not receive outside help; 22 had to help support families that ranged from 4 to 9 persons; 15 others said they had children to support; 62 claimed to receive assistance from home. The wage ranged from \$2.50 to \$12 per week.

Table 3 shows what is the average cost of living for 101 young women in the state at large. The evidence is practically the same as that from Portland. Outside it amounts to \$9.82 a week, or \$42.55 a month. In some towns the actual cost of living would be slightly lower on account of lack of car service.

TABLE 3.

Average amount spent annually by 101 women wage earners in miscellaneous occupations in Oregon (outside Portland). Information obtained from Ashland, Baker, Eugene, Forest Grove, LaGrande, Medford, Oregon City, Pendleton, Salem and Vale:

Room and Board.....	\$278.62
Clothing .....	137.50
Laundry .....	16.00
Carfare .....	21.00
Doctor and Dentist.....	18.00
Church and Lodge.....	12.52
Reading .....	6.54
Recreation .....	20.50
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$510.68</b>
\$9.82 a week; \$42.55 a month.	

### WAGES.

Table 4 below shows that out of 3,217 wage schedules, 1920 were under \$10 a week. A median average was struck for 1,306 additional workers in 53 factories. The median wage here was \$8.20 a week, which means that 50 per cent were receiving less than \$8.20 a week, 50 per cent more. To the 1920 receiving less than \$10 a week, we can add 50 per cent of 1,306, or 653, making a total of 2,573 out of 4,523, or over one-half, receiving less than \$10 a week. The lowest wage reported was that of a millinery apprentice earning \$1.50 a week; the highest, that of a stenographer earning \$35 a week.

TABLE 4.

Summary of Weekly Wages of Women Employes in Portland:

OCCUPATION	Number under \$10	Number over \$10	Total	Per Cent under \$10	Per Cent over \$10
Department Stores.....	1211	867	2078	58.2	41.7
Factories .....	319	108	427	74.7	25.3
Hotels and Restaurants.....	105	108	213	49.2	50.8
Laundries .....	130	10	140	92.6	7.4
Office Help (not including stenographers).....	59	67	126	46.4	53.6
Stenographers .....	19	66	85	22.4	77.5
Printing Trades.....	32	25	57	56.1	43.8
Telephone Operators.....	26	26	52	50.	50.
Miscellaneous .....	19	20	39	48.7	51.3

Total .....

Additional report of 53 factories representing 21 industries; 1306 women employed; lowest wage reported, \$3 a week; median wage, \$8.20 a week.

Total number of wage schedules of women employes in Portland received and classified: 4,523.

Table 5 shows the average wage paid in different lines of work outside of Portland. 26 towns, with 1,133 women wage-earners, are represented. The lowest wage is that offered in hotels and restaurants, where 18 women earned on an average of \$31.65 a month. Next are 22 telephone operators earning an average of \$33.07 a month. Individual schedules reported an operator's wage in several of the towns as \$20 a month. Stenographers earn the largest sums; next to them, with a difference of \$11 a month, are retail stores and laundries.

TABLE 5.

Wage Information for 1133 Women Wage Earners in Oregon (Outside of Portland).

(Wage information was received from the following towns and cities: Albany, Ashland, Astoria, Baker, Cottage Grove, Dallas, Enterprise, Eugene, Forest Grove, Hood River, Grants Pass, LaGrande, McMinnville, Medford, Oregon City, Pendleton, Roseburg, Salem, Springfield, Stockton, The Dalles, Union and Vale.)

No. of Employees.	Industry,	Average Monthly Wage.
88.....	Canneries .....	\$35.00
6.....	Condensed Milk.....	38.00
280.....	Woolen Mills.....	37.50
18.....	Hotels and Restaurants.....	31.65
518.....	Laundries .....	39.50
45.....	Office Help.....	35.50
140.....	Retail Stores.....	39.21
16.....	Stenographers .....	50.00
22.....	Telephone Operators.....	33.07

## CONDITIONS OF LABOR.

In smaller towns, one frequently finds an attitude of fraternalism between employer and employe which makes for consideration on both sides. Some lines of work, such as retail stores, though they may demand much at one time of day, have decidedly lessened strain at others. Because of a smaller number of workers to an establishment, ventilation and light are often good. In Portland, working conditions cannot be described as a whole as very good, fair or poor. Some establishments were found which could be placed on a "white list." Other are unspeakably bad. The chapter which describes these in detail shows, as does the chapter on wages, the need of legislation to preserve the health and morals of the workers.

During the investigation, several phases of the female labor problem have been brought out constantly. One of these is in regard to the efficiency of the workers. One fact that was clearly demonstrated is that efficiency is certainly not the standard according to which the majority of workers are paid. This was evidenced (1) by the dismissal of highly paid, experienced employes and the employment of young, inexperienced substitutes; (2) by the reduction of rates on piece-work when employes had reached a certain earning capacity; (3) by the fact brought out again and again, that though employes were retained for years of service, though their efficiency increased with time, they found it an impossibility to

keep their position and bring their wages above a certain low figure.

Other facts that seemed to account for inefficiency lay in the unpleasant and sometimes degrading and difficult surroundings in which the work had to be done.

Lack of training undoubtedly has much to do with inefficiency. This is a burden which must be assumed by society at large and disposed of by some kind of industrial training for girls as well as for boys. Until education of this sort is compulsory, some of the evils of low efficiency will remain.

Another cause of inefficiency, however, must be attributed to the careless standards of employers. If cheap help is employed, cheap work must be expected. Inexperienced workers see loose methods of work permitted and are content to go on in the way they have begun. A concrete example of this is in the office work. Girls of 16, 17 and 18 years spend six weeks or two months in a short course in a business college. At the end of that time, they are ready for work. As might be expected, they are slow, uneven writers; they hire out to a firm where many technical terms entirely unknown to them are used. If their spelling is even good to begin with, it stands a test here to which it has not been subjected, and fails. Even though an attempt is made by the stenographers to "make good" in this work, progress is retarded by the lack of preparation. Girls state that large firms employing a number of office employes permit shoddy work to go through, and practically spoil a young stenographer for future high grade work. If employers insisted that their office help had a minimum amount of elementary schooling and an approved business training, then started them at \$40 a month, instead of \$20 and \$25, the girl and the firm would profit in the end.

### CONCLUSION.

The investigation has proved beyond a doubt that a large majority of self-supporting women in the state are earning less than it costs them to live decently; that many are receiving subsidiary help from their homes, which thus contribute to the profits of their employers; that those who do not receive assistance from relatives are breaking down in health from lack of proper nourishing food and comfortable lodging quarters, or are supplementing their wages by money received from immoral living. That even in places where living wages are paid, workshops are in such unsanitary condition that immediate changes are necessary; that in certain industries hours of labor are prejudicial to the health of the workers. For the remedying of these evils, proper legislation seems to be the only means.

# WAGES, HOURS, UNEMPLOYMENT

## RETAIL STORES.

### Beginning Wages in Department Stores.

Table 6 shows that the beginning weekly wage in Department Stores in Portland is \$3.00. Only two girls are registered at this sum, but the number receiving \$4 calls for more attention. Fifty young women, or 2.4 per cent. are earning a sum that would pay only for a decent room and carfare. Nearly ten times that number, or 489 (Table 7), are working for less than \$1 for each day of the week.

TABLE 6.

Number and Per Cent. of 2078 Women Workers in Portland Department Stores classified by weekly earnings.

	\$3 but under \$4	\$4 but under \$5	\$5 but under \$6	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	Over \$15	Total
Number . . . . .	2	50	138	313	145	331	232	505	326	36	2078
Per Cent . . . . .	.09	2.40	6.63	15.05	6.97	15.92	11.15	25.25	15.68	1.73	100

TABLE 7.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of 2078 Women Workers in Portland Department Stores, Classified by Earnings.

	Under \$4	Under \$5	Under \$6	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Total
Number . . . . .	2	38	176	489	634	965	1211	867	2078
Per Cent. . . . .	.09	2.49	9.12	24.17	31.14	47.06	58.21	41.79	100

Girls earning \$3 and \$4 a week are given that sum because they are "young." We expect to find them running errands and acting as cash girls. We discover them in steady positions as clerks and in the office. Six dollars a week is the wage most frequently offered an applicant for a clerk's position. Wrappers receive between \$25 and \$30 a month. The position carries a certain amount of responsibility, as the wrappers must measure every yard of goods passing through their hands, or in the case of single articles, compare the price tag and the clerk's slip to see that the sums are correct. Such positions offer very little hope of advancement. Ten dollars is the maximum wage that the majority of clerks can hope to attain to. That this is a hope for the majority and a realization for a minority, is shown in Table 7, which indicates that 1,211 women wage earners in department stores are earning under \$10. The 867 who are earning \$10 and over are made up of a few clerks, the highest paid office help and heads of departments.

### Complaint Against Their Wage System.

One of the greatest complaints to be found with the large department store management is that as far as anyone can find out, they have no system of advancement of employes. Amount of sales, increase or decrease, is watched, to be sure, but apparently only to dismiss the employe if he or she does not come up to a certain standard. When the regulation of wages is left to the head of each department, the demand that the returns from the department be kept at a certain figure is likely to result (for men and women alike) in the dismissal of competent, high-paid clerks, or reduction of their wages. The basis of advance seems to be personal aggressiveness, and this is testified to over and over again by the girls.

### Secrecy of Wage Rates.

A rule existing, written or unwritten, in all the larger stores, is that the girls must not tell others what wage they are getting. Divulging this information has resulted in instant dismissal. One firm goes so far as to require a signed promise from the girl that she will not tell any other employe her wage. The following is quoted from the firm's application blank:

"(Unless you can answer 'yes' to these questions, do not place your application with us):

"1. I will consider it my duty to report in writing or otherwise to the Superintendent any act or conduct of my fellow employes that I believe to be against the interest of the business.

"2. My engagement can be terminated any hour or day at the option of....., I being at liberty to do likewise.

"3. I agree to keep my salary confidential.

"I have answered the above questions in the affirmative (yes) without reservation, and agree, if engaged, to conform to the rules of the house."

Another existing rule that works hardships on employes is that goods under-charged, mis-measured, wrongly addressed and lost, must be paid for. One is ready to acknowledge that with a large number of employes, some system must be adopted whereby the more irresponsible ones will feel the necessity of being careful. But with responsible work should go a corresponding wage which would enable a worker to pay for a possibly accidental mistake, without having to incur a debt for it.

An observer is inclined to think that the secrecy of wage scales is due to inability to explain individual large sales with low wage, or long service with persisting low wage; or knowl-

edge of the cost of living and a lower-than-cost-of-living wage. Even one who has experienced incompetent service in retail stores is loath to admit that out of 2,000 young women, over half of them are so inefficient that they do not deserve to receive what it reasonably costs them to live. Instances are at hand of girls who have been started at \$17 per month at work that required intelligence and application, and at the end of two years were receiving only \$20; of girls who started at \$7 per week and at the end of 9 years were receiving \$13. Department stores are known to have a waiting list. Female help is not so scarce that a girl who cannot make herself worth more than \$5.00 per week after two years' experience, is worth bothering with on the payroll. The same can be said of a clerk who with nine years' experience behind her is worth only \$2.08 per day.

A fallacy maintained by the managers and used as an excuse for their low wage scales is that girls who live at home do not need as much money as girls who are boarding. Many go so far as to require that a girl be living at home before they will employ her. The argument against this is that the girl at home surely eats three meals a day, as the girl adrift is supposed to do, and food for the former costs as much as for the latter. If she is receiving only enough to pay for her clothing, who pays for her food and laundry? If her parents or her guardians do, are they not contributing just that much toward the revenues of the store? and if she is a "charity girl," who pays for her lunches with the loss of her virtue, can she not hold the department store more heavily her debtor than do the parents of the virtuous girl? Table 2 on page — shows that the average wage of the girl adrift is \$21 a year more than the average wage of the girl living at home, but the same table also shows that the girl adrift has an annual deficit of \$91.85 and no home to rely upon for payment of it. \$145.86 is the annual deficit the department store girl at home would have to face, did she pay room and board fees, as does the girl adrift.

### Wages in the State at Large.

Wages in retail stores outside of Portland average higher for the large majority, but do not reach the maximum paid here. Out of 14 towns reporting on this industry, only one has a wage of \$6, or less, a week. The highest paid is \$50. The average paid in the other twelve towns is \$39.20. Table 5, page — shows the average wage paid in the different industries in all towns outside of Portland.

### Hours.

It is a pleasure to record that since this investigation began, one of the large department stores of Portland has announced an eight-hour day for its employes.

In all but one of the department stores in Portland the girls "ring in" at eight o'clock. In No. 1, an 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ -hour day was given as a Christmas present to the employes. Here a 45-minute lunch hour is allowed, and in return for the sacrificed 15 minutes, the employes of one year or more are given a week's vacation with pay. The firm can, even with this arrangement, save more than they pay out in vacation money. Besides this, many girls work less than a year, and though they give up the fifteen minutes of lunch hour for nine months, get nothing for it. However, this firm's example of 8 hours is much to be commended, since some of its competitors are still open 10 hours. Firm No. 2 not long ago began closing at 5:45 p. m., but at the same time took 15 minutes from the lunch hour. This firm does not open the store to the customers at present till 8:30 a. m., though the girls are required to be on duty at 8. To the clerks, this is very little relief as the trade the first hour after opening is so light that there is small difficulty in arranging stock. The third large firm has always opposed any policy that seemed to aim at real improvement in the condition of its employes. It still maintains a full 10-hour day with an hour for lunch. On Saturdays, the employes work in broken shifts, an arrangement that betides ill for the girl living too far from home to return there between shifts. It has persisted in Saturday afternoon and evening work during the summer when its competitors announced that they were willing to close if No. 3 would. Firm No. 1 stayed closed Saturday evenings for a year longer than 2 and 3 did when the experiment was tried several years ago, and eventually given up. A fourth store during the past summer closed on Thursday afternoon each week.

#### Saturday Evening Closing.

Saturday evening closing has been introduced to such an extent in eastern cities without harm to the owners' profits that it has been agitated here. Though the girls do not work more than ten hours on Saturday, the time off during the day means very little in the way of rest or accomplishment, while the added expense of the Saturday night meal and during Christmas week of the six extra suppers downtown is complained of loudly. No instances have been reported of "lunch money" being given to girls when kept downtown for night work, or of \$1 or \$1.25 being added to the Christmas week's wage. The evils of night work appeared particularly grave during the holiday season just closed, when some of the girls thought it necessary to take opiates to maintain their strength for their work.

#### Overtime.

"Broken shifts" mentioned earlier is the arrangement substituted for overtime. Yet overtime still exists in department



stores to a certain extent. Previous to Christmas, when the season for decorating was at hand, girls were asked whether they would "like" to come back on Sunday and work. Knowing what refusal meant, they dared not "dislike" it. In some cases, when brought back on a Sunday, the doors were locked, and they were thus prevented from going home when they wished. During Christmas week girls in mail order and other departments worked as much as an hour overtime. Such a thing as overtime pay in these cases is unknown.

### Unemployment.

Periodic rush seasons come in the Christmas holidays and in the before-Easter and spring season. After Christmas a large percentage of the force in the large stores is laid off. As a general rule, the clerks expect dismissal to be on the basis of length of service, but they claim that they can never be certain of their positions even though employed for two years. One concrete instance was that of a girl in service for a year. A friend of the head of a department was put on for the Christmas rush; at the end of the holidays the new girl was given a permanent position, the old one laid off, the reason assigned being that she would not be needed in the dull season. Her mother was ill and dependent on her, and the girl was in hard straits for work. A friend, hearing of this, interceded and after a month's unemployment, she was taken back. She did not blame the managers for this, saying that they knew nothing of it, but held the head of the department responsible.

### Hours Outside of Portland.

Outside of Portland, the standard of hours is a more lenient one. Some firms do not maintain the full ten hours, but even where they do, the work is usually much lighter. Fewer customers, more opportunity to rest, less open surveillance and a feeling of friendliness between employer and employe make the limit of the law less a burden.

### Five, Ten and Fifteen Cent Stores.

Though many of the statements made about wages, hours, conditions of employment in department stores apply to the 5c, 10c and 15c stores as well, their wages here as a whole are so miserable, their attempt to trade on the "youth and consequent cheapness" (see note at bottom of page) of the girls so open, that their system needs a special word.

Below in Table 8 is given specific data concerning wage and length of time with firm of 13 girls in the 5c, 10c and 15c stores in Portland. This indicates that \$4 a week is a begin-

\* "An ugly item in recent finance is the circular by the Woolworth Company (United 5c and 10c Stores), notifying subscribers that the investment would be profitable because of the small wages paid to clerks by reason of their youth and consequent cheapness."—Mrs. Florence Kelley.

ning and long continued wage, \$6 being about the happiest maximum that an applicant can expect. Local superintendents are controlled entirely by the eastern board of directors, but even the former realize the shamefulness of the policy of the latter. A superintendent of one of the large 5c and 10c stores in the state made a statement which he said could be used for publication. He was not able to give the wage schedule without the consent of the owners; for this, eastern headquarters would have to be communicated with. He himself is in sympathy with Wage Legislation and declares that the syndicate which he represents will never raise the scale unless compelled to by law. At the annual convention at San Francisco he took the floor and made a plea for an increase in wages for women, which was endorsed by all the other managers. The board of directors simply laughed them down. He says that he employs only girls who live at home, because he knows the wages paid are not sufficient to support them otherwise. Investigation, however, showed some of the employes living "adrift." Their wages are regulated by a certain percentage of the sales set aside for the purpose. The board of directors does not care whether the superintendent spends that amount for 50 or 150 girls, but he must take care of the public and get results.

TABLE 8.

Wage Information Given by 13 Girls Working in Five and Ten Cent Stores.

Number receiving \$4.00 a week	4
Number receiving 4.50 a week	7
Number receiving 5.00 a week	1
Number receiving 6.00 a week	1
Total	13

No.	First Wage.	Time with Firm	Present Wage
1	\$4.00	1 month	\$4.00
2	4.00	1 month	4.00
3	4.00	2 months	4.00
4	4.00	6 months	4.00
5	4.00	3 months	4.50
6	4.00	6 months	4.50
7	4.00	2 months	5.00
8	4.50	2 months	4.50
9	4.50	4 months	4.50
10	4.50	2 months	4.50
11	4.50	1 week	4.50
12	4.50	2 months	4.50
13	6.00	2 months	6.00

Comments.—"I have only money enough, after paying carfare, to pay for my clothing." "Mother helps me." "My salary is so small that I have to work for my room and board after working ten hours in the store. Sunday I wash and iron for the people I live with. My folks cannot help me." "Two children to support."

## FACTORIES.

### Beginning Wages.

From \$3.00 to \$6.00 per week is offered beginners in factories. Bag factories offer \$4.00, candy factories \$5.00, woolen mills \$6.00. Girls starting at \$4.00 per week are kept on this rate for ten days or two weeks, when they are put on piece work. Clothing and shoe factories offer \$1.00 per day each. Bookbinderies, which are unionized, pay \$6.00 per week to beginners; tent and awning factories \$1.25 per day. Canneries start workers in immediately on piece work, which in the busy season for 12 or 16 hours daily work nets a woman from \$3 to \$5 per week. At the opening of the season, when fruit is not abundant, stemming strawberries is paid for at the rate of 18 cents a crate of 24 boxes; stemming cherries at 14 cents per bushel. When fruit piled in and workers were in demand, 24 cents a crate of 24 boxes and 22 cents a bushel for cherries were offered. Tobacco factories also pay beginners by piece rate system. Stripping tobacco at 5 cents a pound nets a beginner here from 20 cents to 45 cents per day. Tobacco is so very light in weight that it takes many leaves to make a pound.

### Wages in Factories.

TABLE 9.

Weekly Wage Schedule of 427 Women Factory Workers in Portland.

	\$3 but under \$4	\$4 but under \$5	\$5 but under \$6	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Totals
Number .....	6	25	58	56	61	51	62	58	42	8	427
Per Cent. ....	1.4	5.8	13.5	13.1	14.2	11.9	14.5	13.5	9.8	1.8	100

Table 9, above, shows in detail the weekly wage of 427 factory girls in Portland. We find here that women are working for \$3.00 per week. From Table 10, showing the cumulative number and per cent of workers with their respective wage, we learn that 145 women, or one-third of the entire number investigated are earning under \$7.00, while nearly one-half get less than \$8.00 per week.

TABLE 10.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of 427 Women Factory Employes in Portland  
classified by weekly earnings.

	Under \$4	Under \$5	Under \$6	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Totals
Number .....	6	31	89	145	206	257	319	108	427
Per Cent. ....	1.4	7.2	20.8	33.9	48.1	60.1	74.7	25.3	100

### Maximum Wage.

Forty-five cents a day is an impossible wage. Six dollars or \$7.50 per week may be unquestioned where it is maintained merely as apprentice's wages and dispensed with when the girl has learned to work, but apparently several years of service count for no more than an apprentice's hours. In Table 10 above we find that out of 427 factory women in Portland, 74.7 per cent, or three-fourths, are earning less than \$10.00 a week; 13.5 per cent are earning \$10, while 11.6 per cent are earning over \$12, but less than \$20 a week. 50 women out of 427 are represented by 11.6 per cent. The wages of \$12, but less than \$20, represent in some cases the result of 18 years work at an industry. They are the maximum that these women may expect to earn. One fact that is responsible for this stationary maximum wage is that when a piece worker begins to accumulate speed, the prices of work are cut, and she finds herself set back a year as far as her earning power is concerned.

The director of the investigation and one of her investigators, in order to learn the truth as to wages, conditions of labor, efficiency of workers, and causes of inefficiency, have during the investigation worked in ten different factories. In one of the paper box factories where she applied, an investigator started at \$4 per week. She stayed three days only, but during that time, kept account of what her earnings would have been had she been working on piece rates. In order to be fair to the factory management, she worked her very hardest and wasted no time. She discovered that the first day she would have earned 78 cents, second day 68 cents and the third day 58 cents. She felt that though new to the work, she should have been able to earn a good wage, as she brought a higher degree of training and adaptability than did some of the unschooled workers. One reason for her decrease in wage was that the first day's work would have been paid at the rate of 10 cents per 100 pieces and required three handlings. It was unskilled, but needed a little care. The second day's work required the same number of handlings, was paid at the same rate, but required twice the time to bring the supplies and dispose of them, and much dexterity in handling materials. The third day's work required nine handlings, and was paid for at the rate of 15 cents per 100,—three times as much work, with only 50 per cent more compensation. To one of the girls who had worked there a year, the remark was made that it would take a long time to earn 15 cents at the third class of work, and she answered, "Oh, you can make absolutely nothing on that." One young woman, who had spent four years in this trade, who had a mother and younger sisters dependent upon her, and

was an earnest, quiet worker, was able to make between \$9 and \$10 only, even in the busy season. This, she maintained, was because such inefficient help was employed in the preparing room that rough, uneven work was done, and prevented the skilled help from working as swiftly as they could if careful work were put into the foundation of the boxes. To the investigator, it seemed that so unpromising was the wage, so wearisome and exhausting the work and the effort to make a few cents, that one need not be surprised if the girls take no pride in what they accomplish, are careless and indifferent as to the work they do, so long as it can pass the foreman. Poor conditions of workrooms are also responsible for shiftlessness, but this will be shown later.

TABLE 11.

Factories in Portland Reporting Wage Schedules of Women Workers.

	Establishments	Industries	Women Employed	Lowest Weekly Wage	Median Weekly Wage
Number .....	53	21	1306	\$3.00	\$8.20

### Hours.

Strict enforcement of the 10-hour day, 60-hour week female labor law has done away with much of the overtime work that previously existed. The problem is solved in some places now by working a night shift in the Christmas and spring rush seasons. Some managers still prefer to run the risk of being caught at permitting or forcing overtime work and being made to pay the penalty.

Some of the factories blow the work whistle at 7:00 o'clock a. m., but the majority employing women do not start before 7:30. An hour for lunch is granted. Factories starting at 7:30 close at 5:30. Fifteen minutes for cleaning workrooms is often given just before closing time, but in those establishments where less than a 60-hour per week schedule is maintained, employes use part of Saturday afternoon for sweeping floors and scrubbing work tables.

Fruit and vegetable canneries are probably the most flagrant violators of the labor law, both as to length of hours of women's work and age of children permitted to work. The child labor law forbids employment of children under 16, even during the vacation months without a permit, and under no circumstances is a permit given to a child under 12 years of age. Yet investigators working in the canneries in the summer of 1912 saw children under 11 years of age with their parents,

and sometimes unaccompanied, work more than the ten hours a day allowed an adult. Canneries are open at 6 o'clock a. m. They close at 10:30 p. m. One-half hour is permitted at noon for lunch. Employes are threatened with loss of work if they stop for an evening lunch, and because this threat does not always keep them in, the entrance doors are sometimes locked at 6 o'clock. Children of 12 and 13 employed in the factories have been seen crying in the evening because they were too tired to work, yet could not get home on account of locked doors. Overtime is paid in the cannery at the regular piece rates. At the close of the season, old men and women who could not work elsewhere were kept on peeling apples for 2 cents a pan, and this in an unheated, fog-laden, damp cement-floored workroom. Earlier in the season the rate had been 3 cents a pan!

### Unemployment.

The rush season for bag and paper box, candy and fur factories comes just before Christmas. Paper box and candy establishments are busy again from February to Easter, when the clothing season begins to "swing in full." Canneries maintain only a six months' season—from June until December.

The problem of unemployment which is suggested by the mention of "rush" and "dull" seasons is a serious one to the workers. Practically three-fourths of the wage-earning women of the state have to reckon on a period of unemployment which must be prepared for "somehow or other." Industries such as the canneries are known to be open for only a few months. They employ in part a class of women, often mothers of households, who do not work away from home the other six months of the year, or if they do, engage for "day work," but to them the money that they can earn during these summer months means much toward the winter fuel and winter clothes of children. They employ, too, girls who may have been dismissed from a trade starting on its quiet season. Sometimes they have been out of work for one or two months, trying to get work somewhere else, but dependent on this when June comes.

In such trades as the clothing, shoe, candy and can making industries, which run all year, the applicant is always hoping for an opportunity to "make good" to the extent that she will be kept on when the dull season arrives. To her unemployment means a serious evil. Her wages during employment do not keep her well housed and clothed. How can she save for the day when she will be out of work? Figures of the number employed in the two seasons in a few of the trades show the extent of the problem. Clothing factories hiring 300 and 150 dismiss 200 and 100 respectively in the dull

season. Three other factories of different work employing 150, 80 and 20 respectively in the busy season dismiss 115, 60 and 15 in the dull season. Unemployment in other trades will be noted when they are described.

## LAUNDRIES.

### Wages.

Laundry work has the name of being one of the best paid lines requiring chiefly hand work. In reality, it is one of the poorest. The minimum wage is \$1.25 a day, but the maximum is \$2.00, above which even the most skilled seldom go. Below is a typical wage schedule:

TABLE 12.

Markers .....	\$1.50 per day.
Starch Room.....	15c and 17½c to 20c per hour.
Manglers .....	\$1.35 to \$1.50 per day.
Folders .....	\$1.25 to \$1.35 per day.
Stackers .....	\$1.25 to \$1.35 per day.
Body Manglers.....	\$1.75 to \$2.00 per day.
Ironers .....	\$1.50 to \$2.00 per day.

TABLE 13.

Weekly Wage Schedules of Women Workers in Portland.  
Laundries. 140 Women Employes.

	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	Totals
Number .....	29	38	41	22	6	4	140
Per Cent. ....	20.6	27.1	29.2	15.7	4.3	2.8	100

TABLE 14.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of 140 Women Employed in Portland Laundries,  
classified by weekly earnings.

	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Totals
Number .....	29	67	108	130	10	140
Per Cent. ....	20.6	47.7	76.9	92.6	7.4	100

Table 13 shows the weekly wage schedule of 140 women workers in Portland. From this it appears that though managers announce their minimum as that given above, \$1.25 per day, there are 29 laundry workers in Portland who are earning only \$1 a day. None reported earning \$15 a week. Those earning \$12 per week are 1-35th of the whole number; those earning \$10 are 1-23rd of the 140. Table 14 shows the cumulative number earning under \$10. 130 out of the 140 women interviewed, are earning less than it costs them to live. (See Cost of Living Tables).

### Hours.

Out of 19 laundries investigated in Portland, but two reported a day less than 9 hours; the remainder vary between that and 10 hours.

### Overtime.

Overtime is paid for at the rate of from 10 cents to 12½ cents an hour. Beginning in May and continuing through the summer, laundries work to almost their full capacity. In the warmest months, overtime from one-half to three hours a day is exacted. As one woman remarked, "The exhaustion of overtime is not worth the 10 to 20 cents—mere carfare—that we earn." Like the factories and department stores, the laundries lay off a large percentage of their help during the dull season. The experienced ironers may find it possible to do family washing by the day, but for the more unskilled workers the problem of being out of work in the winter time is a serious one.

### Wages Outside of Portland.

Wages in laundries throughout the state so very nearly approach the wage in Portland that scarcely any comment is needed. Table 5 shows that the average wage per month of 518 women working in laundries outside of Portland is \$39.50. The hardships of the work diminish slightly with the volume of it.

### Hours Outside of Portland.

Of 32 laundries outside of Portland investigated as to hours of work, 2 reported an 8-hour day; 12 a 9-hour day, and 15 a full 10-hour day. Some of those who maintain a 9-hour schedule are competing with others who maintain a 9½-hour day.

## OFFICE HELP.

### Wages.

Beginners' Wages.—For an occupation that calls for a more mature worker than some of the confessedly low-paid industries, and for one that demands brain rather than brawn, office work offers astonishingly small wages. In this investigation, those who did stenographic and bookkeeping work were not separated from those who did stenographic work only, for the reason that where a stenographer has books to keep they are usually simple and easy. Those classed as

TABLE 15.  
Weekly Wage Schedules of Women Workers in Portland.  
Office Help (not including Stenographers) 126 employees.

	\$5 but under \$6	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Over \$20	Totals
Number .....	3	13	7	25	11	20	24	18	5	126
Per Cent. ....	2.3	10.2	5.5	19.7	8.7	15.8	18.3	14.2	3.9	100



general office help included filers, billers, stock girls, desk clerks and cashiers. The lowest wage indicated in Table 15 is \$5 per week. Record on hand tells of a girl who started for \$17 per month, and at the end of two years had been advanced to \$20 per month. Twenty-five dollars per month is a frequent offer to coptometer, billing and filing clerks, but \$30 and \$35 are also met with.

TABLE 16.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of Women Employes in offices (not including Stenographers in Portland, classified by weekly earnings.

	Under \$6	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Totals
Number .....	3	16	23	48	59	67	126
Per Cent. ....	2.3	12.5	18.0	37.7	46.4	53.6	100

Stenographers, it may be noted, Table 17, start out at as low a figure as do the billers, filers and cashiers, who may obtain a position without a business course training, but stenographers advance more quickly and at a higher rate of pay. Cumulative Table 16 shows that out of 126 general office employes 59, or nearly one-half, are earning under \$10; 67 slightly more than one-half, are earning over \$10. Table 18 shows that out of 85 stenographers, 19, or less than one-fourth, are earning under \$10; 66, or nearly three-fourths, are earning over \$10 per week. Below \$10 per week and above \$10 per week is made the point of comparison in this line of work, as in all others, but on account of the higher standard of living which an office employe must maintain to hold her position, it is a question as to whether the living wage for those in this line of work should not be more than \$10 per week.

TABLE 17.

Weekly Wage Schedules of Women Workers in Portland. Stenographers. 85 Women Employes.

	\$5 but under \$6	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Over \$20	Totals
Number .....	1	2	5	4	7	4	17	39	6	85
Per Cent. ....	1.1	2.3	5.8	4.6	8.1	4.6	19.8	45.6	7.0	100

TABLE 18.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of 85 Women Stenographers in Portland classified by weekly earnings.

	Under \$6	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Totals
Number .....	1	3	8	12	19	66	85
Per Cent. ....	1.1	3.5	9.3	14.0	22.4	72.5	100

Firms which offer a low beginning wage are the smaller law and real estate offices, some physicians, specialized retail stores and large corporations which, though they pay maximum wages, also offer the very minimum, and wholesale houses, not manufacturers. Classification of business houses according to the line of work, for salaries paid office help, is difficult, because the wage frequently depends on the character of the head of the firm, and not on the nature of the work. Among the small law and real estate firms, where \$30 and \$35 a month is a common beginning wage, employers say that the work is so light that the girl does not earn more. Because of the low wage they offer, they are willing to take students fresh from business colleges, and give them more time and patience than they would if the applicant were experienced. Frequently she is given permission to take in outside work. An income so earned is uncertain and variable.

### Maximum Wages.

Some firms adopt a maximum wage and refuse to go higher, regardless of the ability of the applicant. "Start at \$40, raise to \$45, the most we will pay. If you want to earn more, don't come here," was the statement of the manager of a retail firm carrying a special line of goods, recognized as the best of its class in the city. Others adopt a bullying attitude, which is very effective, especially in the case of a timid girl away from home. One ambitious girl, who is able to hold a good position, and will not be content with less than she can earn, was heard to say, "So-and-so has worked for that firm (wholesale hardware) for three years, and she is getting only \$50. She is a hard worker, too, but she is scared to death of that man, scared to ask for a raise, and scared to leave. They treat the girls too mean for anything."

Other employers declare that efficient help is scarce; that they would gladly advance a young woman to a good position and good wages if they could get one who would take an interest in the business. This is very often true, but it is also true that employers themselves are partially responsible for the inefficients filling their stenographic positions today.

An average maximum for general office work is \$50 a month. Five out of 126 young women in Portland, or 1-25th, are receiving over \$20 a week. The average maximum for stenographers and bookkeepers is \$65 or \$70 a month. Those who receive more than \$20 a week are out of the ordinary in their line of work, or combine with it private, secretarial or confidential clerk's ability.

### Hours.

Eighty-eight persons from the total 211 office workers reported on hours of work. Sixteen, or not quite one-fifth, work

less than eight per day. Twenty-eight, or nearly one-third, work between eight and nine hours; thirty-nine, or nearly one-half, between nine and ten hours. Five girls record working overtime. Single firms are usually considerate about overtime pay, at least in the form of lunch money.

### Unemployment.

In offices, work has none of the irregularity of mercantile and manufacturing establishments. The summer vacation and post-holiday seasons are recognized as the time when changes are likely to be made. In the coast cities, however, first-class stenographers from the East find it difficult to get work, and the supply is usually greater than the demand.

### Outside of Portland.—Wages.

Forty-five women doing general office work throughout the state averaged \$35.50 a month. Sixteen stenographers average \$50 a month, which indicates that the wage schedule is practically the same as Portland's. The situation is a little better in those sections of the state where the cost of living is lower than it is in Portland.

### Moving Picture Show Cashiers.

The cashiers of the moving picture shows, who have been classified with office help, call for special mention on account of their hours of work. This industry escapes the restrictions of the Female Labor Law, because it cannot be classed as a "manufacturing, mechanical or mercantile industry." Hence cashiers often work over ten hours a day for seven days a week. Hours of work range from 11 A. M. till 11 P. M. One girl stated that this was an advantage for her, because she could not afford three meals a day and by staying in bed in the morning she was not likely to miss her breakfast. The wage offers little compensation. The lowest wage reported was \$6 a week. The highest was \$12. Of 14 women interviewed, 13 were receiving under \$10 a week.

## PRINTING TRADES.

### Wages.

Portland has 42 printing shops, all of which recognize the union. Sixty-five women earn their living in these shops, binding pamphlets and books. When the union was established, a minimum wage of \$6 a week was asked for each apprentice. The rules existing now are that she may be kept at this wage for six months, when, if proficient, she is to be advanced to \$6.50 per week. At the end of the year she will receive a further advance of 50c per week. If she is a slow girl, the employer may keep her at \$6 per week for a year, when he is required to pay her \$7, if he expects to retain

her. At the end of two years she is earning \$8, and at the end of three years must be paid \$9 a week. This is as far as the union demands go in regard to wages. While an apprentice, a worker is employed chiefly at pamphlet binding. Blankbook work—considered skilled—is the aim of all girls.

### Maximum Wages.

After several more years of service, a woman may reach the sum of \$10 per week, but this is the maximum for a great majority. Length of service, which should count for something, helps not at all in increasing wages,—so say the workers. Bookbinding is one of the trades at which women work for many years, many leaving it only to get married. Frequently they return to it later in life. In the printing trade in Portland, embracing typists, copy-readers and bookbinders, Table 20 shows that of 57 investigated, 32 are earning under \$10, nine are earning over \$12. The remaining 16 are earning between \$10 and \$12. Of these 16 two women are earning \$11 per week, who have been at the trade for 11 years. Of the nine earning between \$12 and \$20, six are typists, three are foreladies earning \$12, \$13 and \$15 a week. No bookbinder, though she stayed at the trade 18 years, was ever known to earn over \$15 per week.

TABLE 19.  
Weekly Wage Schedules of Women Workers in Portland.  
Printing Trades. 57 Women Employes.

	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Totals
Number .....	11	4	14	3	16	5	4	57
Per Cent. ....	19.2	7.0	24.5	5.2	28.0	8.7	7.0	100

### Hours—Overtime.

Besides a minimum apprentice wage, another advantage that the union has secured is the 8-hour day. The busy season begins in August and, reaches its height before the Christmas holidays. There is very little overtime, but this is paid for by time-and-a-half rates. No vacation with pay is ever given. If an employe cares to take a vacation during the quiet season, she is permitted to do so.

TABLE 20.  
Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of 57 Women Employes in the Printing Trades  
in Portland, classified according to weekly earnings.

	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Totals
Number .....	11	15	29	32	25	57
Per Cent. ....	19.2	26.3	50.8	56.1	43.8	100

## TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

## Wages.

Telephone operating, like bookbinding, has a decided apprenticeship. "\$1 a day paid while learning" is the advertisement of the company. Beginners are instructed from charts, typewritten instructions, and by means of dummy switchboards for four weeks before they are started to work at a

TABLE 21.

Weekly Wage Schedule of Women Workers in Portland.  
Telephone Operators. 52 Women Employees.

	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	10 under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Totals
Number .....	9	5	7	5	11	10	5	52
Per Cent. ....	17.2	9.6	13.4	9.6	21.1	19.2	9.6	100

"live" board. For six weeks they are considered useless, and only after four months are they able to handle the board without criticism. After four months the beginner's wage is increased 10c per day; if she wishes, she may work ten hours, and earn more that way. Table 21 shows in detail the weekly wage of 52 of the operators. Table 22 shows that of these 52, just one-half are earning under \$10 per week, and one-half \$10 or over.

TABLE 22.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of 52 Women Telephone Operators in Portland  
classified by weekly earnings.

	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10	Totals
Number .....	9	14	21	26	26	52
Per Cent. ....	17.2	26.8	40.3	50.	50.	100

At the end of the year, the maximum wage for operators varies between \$1.80 and \$2.00 a day. Beginners are usually given the "broken shifts," but in order to induce older employees to take these unpopular shifts, 15c to 30c per day additional was offered to them for doing it. Operators seldom rise above \$2.00 a day on regular pay. Supervisors are paid \$2.25 to \$2.50 per day. Clerical employes are paid \$50 to \$55 per month. If supervisors lose a day, they are docked; clerical help is not. Salaries of single positions, such as toll operators, school principal and other better paid workers, were not obtained.

## Hours.

The Bell Telephone Company has inaugurated an eight-hour day, broken at intervals of two hours by 15-minute rest

periods. In another part of this report (Conditions of Labor), is given a physician's opinion as to limit of hours for telephone work.

Operators work in three shifts; one comes on at 4 P. M. and works till 10 P. M. Second shift comes at 10 P. M., works till 6 A. M. The third shift, which comes on at this last hour, begins the "broken shift", which means that the operators are on duty for a few hours, when they are laid off till late afternoon or early evening work. The understanding exists to the effects that "old" girls shall have the privilege of "straight time." Mention was made above of the increased wage as an inducement to more experienced girls to take "broken shift" work. In small offices, the girls have a six-day relief, but in those carrying many subscribers, a 15-day relief.

### **Unemployment.**

One arrangement the Portland branch has made which is to be highly commended is that of paying an employe who has been with the Company for a certain length of time wages for three months, if she should be ill that long. On the other hand, the girl who may miss work for a day or two through illness is permitted to work 10 hours a day until she has made up lost time; thus she avoids being "docked." Vacations are taken without pay.

### **Welfare Work.**

The Company has provided an excellent lunch-room, with matron in charge, where a substantial warm lunch is served at cost to the employes. Rest rooms are provided where operators may lie down or read during the rest period or when off duty.

### **Outside of Portland.—Wages.**

Beginning wages outside of Portland are lower than in this city. Returns from 33 girls in five different towns show the minimum wage to be \$20 a month, the maximum \$43.65, the average \$33.07.

## **HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS.**

### **Chambermaids and Waitresses.**

#### **Wages.**

Hotels and Restaurants stand third highest on the list of industries for paying a large percentage of employes a living wage. This is because chambermaids frequently are given a room where they work, and waitresses board free of charge. The lowest wage reported for a chambermaid is \$6 a week. For \$25 a month, not including her room, a chambermaid is required to do 30 rooms and the halls. Amount of work for wage varies here, as in all trades, depending upon the nature

of the employer. Some men consider 25 rooms and halls a good day's work; others pay less and insist on 35 rooms.

TABLE 23.

Hotels and Restaurants. 213 Women Employees.

	\$5 but under \$6	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Totals
Number .....	1	8	3	19	74	100	7	1	213
Per Cent. ....	.46	3.7	1.4	8.9	34.7	46.9	3.2	.46	100

**Maximum wages** for chambermaids amount to \$12 per week. When this wage is paid, the woman receiving it is in charge of the linen closet or may exercise some of the duties of a housekeeper. \$10 a week is a more frequent "high" wage. To earn this, a woman must be very quick, very clean, and of long experience. Chambermaids make a small amount from tips, but not nearly as much as waitresses. Waitresses do not work for less than \$6 a week as a beginning wage. \$8 with board is an average wage; \$12 and \$15 a week is met with, but again it is in the case of a woman who is head waitress. Tips vary in amount with the personality of the girl. No place was found in Portland where they are forbidden. One firm combining restaurant service and the selling of creamery products pays all its waitresses at least \$9 a week and gives them their meals. Exceptions to this are a couple of girls who work short hours at their own request.

### Hours.

Chambermaids in many cases have an 8-hour day. Work starts at 7 or 7:30 a. m., and is usually finished by 3 p. m. As restaurants are open till midnight, two shifts of workers are needed. Hours range from 6 a. m. to 4 p. m., and from 4 p. m. to midnight. Both lines of work are popular with women; hotel work because the work is through in the middle of the afternoon; restaurant work because women are continually meeting new people. Both lines of work are hard, the latter sometimes injuriously so on account of carrying the heavy trays.

TABLE 24.

Cumulative Number and Per Cent. of Women Workers in Hotels and Restaurants classified by weekly earnings.

	Under \$6	Under \$7	Under \$8	Under \$9	Under \$10	Over \$10
Number .....	1	9	12	31	105	108
Per Cent. ....	.46	4.2	5.6	14.5	49.2	50.8

Table 24 shows that of 213 girls interviewed, 105 are receiving under \$10; 108 are receiving \$10 or over.

## MISCELLANEOUS TRADES.

### Wages. Hours.

#### Hairdressers.

Girls desiring to learn this trade have two opportunities open to them. They may work for four months without pay, as apprentices, or they may pay \$25 to learn the trade, spending six weeks at it, and have the promise of a position at \$7 per week at the end of that time. Girls serving without pay are kept at cleaning and preparing combings for switches the larger part of the time. The hair is in all stages of mussiness, and handling it is very disagreeable work. Apprentices are paid \$6 per week. Gradually they learn to give shampoos, manicures and to dress hair. Girls who have worked at this trade say there is no reason at all for being kept three or four months on combings for switches, as the work is absolutely unskilled and one knows how to do it after a few days. The most experienced girls earn \$15 per week. Many who are proficient cannot get more than \$10. Department stores insist on experience and start girls at \$6 per week unless they are able to handle hairdressing as well as manicuring. Girls who work up a trade independently make good money. The hours for those employed in the shops vary between nine and ten per day.

#### Janitress Work.

This is a line of work that is laborious from its very nature. It is exhausting also because of the night hours and the broken days. The wages range from \$7 to \$10 per week. The hours are difficult to state. Some women come at 6 o'clock in the evening and work until 9 or 10 o'clock, or until midnight. Those working only three or four hours in the evening must come back early in the morning.

#### Dressmaking.

The investigation did not concern itself with women who sew by the day in families. A woman who is a plain sewer only, can earn \$2 a day with at least two meals. Reports were sought from fitters and sewers in department stores and private shops. \$7 and \$8 per week are the regular wages for beginners who know how to sew; \$10 per week is the wage received by the majority, but first-class fitters and fancy waist-makers receive \$12 and \$15 per week. In shops where only tailoring is done, the tailor-owner does the fitting himself. Hours vary between 9 and 10 per day. Most dressmaking shops that make fancy gowns for women close for one month, in some cases two months each year.



**Millinery.**

The lowest wage recorded during the investigation is that of a millinery apprentice receiving \$1.50 per week, and her schedule had the note, "In slack time I am laid off." Prospects in the wholesale houses are not very bright; \$4 per week is a stock girl's wage; \$6 per week is a frequent wage for makers. Trimmers reach \$10. A peculiarity in the wholesale millinery work is that every fall, milliners flock from small towns to the larger cities and work for a week or two in the wholesale houses to learn the styles. Calls come in from shops all over the state for new workers. This affords the girl out of work, or the one who may want to change her position, a chance to hear of an opening. This renders conditions very difficult for the girl who works in a wholesale house the year through, as an abundance of help in the rush season keeps her wage continually low. Smaller shops pay trimmers and makers from \$10 to \$15 per week. Unemployment in this trade for a large share of the workers amounts to at least two months a year.

**Cleaning and Dyeing.**

This line of work might be classed by some with regular laundry work, but it is given separate notice here because the conditions under which the work is done are better, and the wage is frequently higher. Pressers receive from \$9 per week to \$16 per week; \$12 is a more frequent wage. There is some danger to the health of the workers in the room where the cleaning processes are carried on. Hours vary between 8 and 9 a day.

Table 25 shows that of 39 girls interviewed, 19 are receiving less than \$10 per week; 20 are receiving over \$10.

TABLE 25.

**MISCELLANEOUS TRADES.**

Weekly Wage Schedules of Women Workers in Portland.

OCCUPATION.—Demonstrators, Hair Dressers, Cleaning and Dyeing, Millinery and Dressmaking, Janitress.

	\$3 but under \$4	\$4 but under \$5	\$5 but under \$6	\$6 but under \$7	\$7 but under \$8	\$8 but under \$9	\$9 but under \$10	\$10 but under \$12	\$12 but under \$15	\$15 but under \$20	Totals
Number .....	1	1		2	3	5	7	9	9	2	39

## CONDITIONS OF LABOR

### Factories.—Light and Air.

Fault can not be found with many of the larger plants on the score of lack of window space. Smaller establishments, such as tailoring shops, furriers, and millinery stores, are often located on one or two floors in downtown shops, which have a front facing of not more than twenty feet in width; in the rear the windows open onto a court, or there may be no windows at all. The front half of the shop is used for show and salesrooms, the rear half curtained or partitioned off for a workroom. The latter is usually so dark that artificial light is needed all the time. Very little fresh air can come in from the rear, and practically none from the front room, which is aired by the coming and going of the customers. Frequently the toilet is placed in the workroom without even a curtain protecting it. In such cases it invariably ventilates into the workroom. In one instance, in a high-priced millinery shop, the girls complained a great deal. The health officer had been there, but nothing was done to remedy the condition until one of the girls came down with scarlet fever. Then the toilet was enclosed, and other precautions were taken. In another rear workroom one of the employes had to sit with her back against a "shoe box" toilet door. This girl frequently had "fainting fits." In this same place, a cracked sink, which the owner had attempted to patch up with plaster of paris, allowed the water to drip on the floor. For many months one of the workers, on account of the location of her work table, had to stand on this wet spot, where the water drained. Eventually, she had to give up her work on account of ill health and went to the country to recover. In the same place, until this spring, the employes drank from a galvanized pail with a wooden cover.

Other firms of this class, such as tailors and milliners, sometimes have the entire floor for show and fitting rooms, and use a balcony for a workroom. As this is usually built in at the front of the store, the light is very good and the air also when the transoms are built to be opened; but they are very congested as workrooms, and crowd the workers up against one another. Sometimes the ceilings are so low that a girl can scarcely stand up straight in the workroom.

### Lack of Heat.

A question which is most important during the winter months is that of heat. In some factories no heat at all is provided, or tiny wood stoves supply inadequate heat. What the effect of sitting in a cold workroom for ten hours a day, perhaps after she has walked from home in the rain for lack

of carfare, — what effect this has immediately on a young woman's work and on her health for the long future is too evident to need further words.

### Conditions Affecting the Efficiency of the Worker.

Along with the question of sufficient space in which to work, good light and fresh air to keep her alert, and a reasonably warm workroom, comes the question concerning the nature of the work itself and its effect on the efficiency of the worker. Several conditions may affect the thoroughness and rapidity of a worker. First, she may work where the heat from stoves or machines is far beyond what the human frame is designed to meet. Second, she may have to handle materials that give off nauseating, acid, or other overpowering odors, or much dust and dirt. Third, the arrangement of the workroom may be such that she has to spend valuable time collecting materials for work, when a little forethought on the part of the manager would make her earning ability a few cents greater.

### Laundries.—Too Great Heat.

Laundries probably demand the most from the workers on this score. It does not matter whether an employe is engaged in the handling of hot clothes, or managing the mangle or body ironer; she works in an overheated and frequently steam-laden atmosphere. The washing machines on the first floor, and all the rooms above suffer in consequence. Sometimes the boards of the floor are too hot for comfortable standing. Besides the discomfort of the heat, the work is very laborious, and 9½ hours at it demand more energy than can be regained in the same length of time of rest. In summer-time, conditions are particularly terrific. In one laundry, where the temperature sometimes reached 135 degrees, six girls fainted at work within three weeks. One was in bed several days as a result. The usual custom is to take the girls out of doors, leave them there until they revive, when they come back to work. Some laundries have fans which help to keep the air in circulation, and some have awnings, but one or two have neither, and the managers refuse to add them. Even those which have the fans have not, in many cases, a sufficient number. Most of the work has to be done standing. The women complain that its hardships would not be as great if a large enough force of workers was maintained; that lack of a larger force is due to deliberate refusal on the part of managers to hire sufficient help. As a general rule, laundrymen are unable to hire the number of workers they need, but men who refuse awnings or fans when the temperature of the workroom is 135 degrees are capable of keeping too few workers and of driving the ones on hand to the utmost.

That laundry workers, as a class, are known by their haggard faces and dragging bodies is not to be wondered at.

Among the 30 power laundries in Portland mention is gladly made of 3 that can be put on a "white list" in recognition of the managers' efforts to have clean up-to-date arrangements and to make conditions as tolerable as possible for employees. Such men deplore the hardships of the work and state that they will gladly co-operate with any movement that aims to better conditions.

### Candy and Biscuit Factories.

Candy and biscuit factories have the same problem of work associated with constant heat, but to not nearly so disastrous a degree as the laundries. Here, again, the ovens and candy pots are sometimes on the lower floors, and send their volumes of heat through all the other workrooms. Sometimes the vats are on an upper or top floor, and then the general body of workers do not suffer as much. French cream dippers work over a kettle which sets in a steam table, in which the water is always kept hot. Chocolate dippers heat their chocolate slabs on a hot marble plate. Air in these rooms is frequently foul. Sometimes a foreman claims that the workers may have all the fresh air they wish but keep the windows closed of their own accord. The workers say that fresh air, as they get it, means cold air, which means the ruin of their work. What is needed is a proper ventilating device.

### Nauseating and Other Odors.

Match Factories.—The use of white phosphorus in match-making has recently been forbidden by law, but there are still unpleasant phases in the industry. In one factory visited, two women in a basement workroom were tipping matches in a sulphur-laden atmosphere. A Chinaman was tending a pot of sulphur on a stove nearby. The investigator could scarcely endure the fumes, and asked the foreman why the windows were all closed. He said that the women were responsible, since they wished it so. The women were asked the same question, and answered that they could not have the windows open, as the sulphur would be cooled and they could not tip the matches. Yet for want of a simple ventilating device, they are permitted to work until their health prematurely fails, and they are cast on society to be cared for.

Can Factories.—In can factories a room known as the japan room is another disease breeder. In one factory, of two girls who formerly worked in this room, one died of tuberculosis, the other gave up her position recently because she has it. The testimony of the girls that the fumes in the japan room affect their health is borne out by testimony of the Federal Re-

port, Vol. V. (Report on Condition of Woman and Child Wage Earners in the United States.—Women in Department Stores and Factories, etc.): Fresh air, when it means unwarmed air, cannot be admitted for the reason given in two previous cases.

**Paper Box Factories.**—In paper box factories, certain kinds of hand-pasting require the workers to have a fresh supply of warmed, thin glue on hand. The long work tables have three iron pots, each divided into two even sections, and set into the table; one in the middle, and one at each end. A gas flame is kept burning under them all the time they are in use. In one half of the pot are the glue flakes with a little water. This melts into the thick, liquid glue, which is used to replenish the other section of thinner glue, kept by the girl at the right consistency for her work. From the pot is rising constantly a nauseating, warm, fish-glue odor. "How do you stand it?" was asked an older worker by an apprentice. Shrugging her shoulders, the other answered, "Oh, you get used to it; it made me sick at first." They get used to it, as the bent twig does by growing into a crooked tree. They get used to it, as did one worker of four years' experience, who had to stop eventually for six months on account of stomach trouble. She is the daughter of a widowed mother, and is assisting in the support of two young sisters. She could scarcely afford to be ill.

**Meat Packing.**—Meat packers, as is well known, make many by-products out of what would be waste material. One of these is glue. In the room where the glue vats are and women work, the stench is unbearable, yet they eat their lunches there. Similar conditions exist in the sausage room, where women work also. Even a foreman, who is an employe of several years' standing, said casually that the glue room was one to which he had never been able to get accustomed.

**Laundries.**—Markers of soiled clothes in laundries complain of two hardships in their work. First they are compelled to stand all day, bending their bodies as they pick the clothes from the piles at their feet and ink the laundry mark on them. "Broken" backs and swollen feet for the first three months are the result. The second hardship is the nausea caused by the odors coming from clothes in every degree and kind of dirt. One girl, a stenographer, recently from the East, but greatly in need of work, applied at the laundry, and because of her training, was put at marking. "I stood it for two hours," she said; "how they stand it all the time, I don't know. The girl next to me said that she suffered much on account of her back and feet at first, but now she is used to it, — and those dirty clothes! — the smell is awful!"

Following are further notes taken from the reports of investigators:

Factory 1.—The room where the girls worked was heated with one tiny stove. The window could not be opened because the room would be too cold. They have to inhale the odor of strong tobacco, which is very nauseating. While I worked there, several girls came to apply for work, but left when they saw the condition of the workroom, which was very dirty, and had no place in it for the girls to sit down while working. The girls are paid 5 cents per pound for stripping the stem out of the tobacco leaf; as tobacco is very light, it takes a great quantity to make a pound, and by working just as hard as they possibly can, they cannot expect to strip more than 4 pounds in a day—a wage of 20 cents to 25 cents per day. Some beginners manage to make 45 cents a day, but working up to a better wage is very slow work.

Factory 2.—Material used here very oily. Smell of leather noticeable but not nauseating. No windows open. General effect of place was rough. No place for a girl; too dirty.

Factory 3.—Only one sink here and that not clean. Much bespattered with glue. At closing time, girls required to clean their machines, but first heated the water in pails on a wood-stove in an adjoining room. Small dressing room, where girls change from street garb to working clothes. This filthy and ill-smelling, partially due to untidiness of girls themselves. Toilet here very dirty and apparently never clean. Unlike others, however, it did not open into the workroom. Workroom on second floor, reached by dark, screened stairways.

Factory 4.—Owner a poor manager; doesn't keep up material to work with, so workmen have to be on duty from 19 to 24 hours without sleep, then are laid off for a couple of days for want of material. There has been no toilet for women, but superintendent is putting one in now.

As I walked up two flights of stairs, I noticed the thick dust in the air from feathers and found it very smothering. Men's section so full of dust, I could not see across the room. Women's section not so bad, but still far from good. Room where men worked heated by a stove; did not see any in women's workroom.

#### **Poor Arrangements Diminish Earning Capacity.**

Besides the foregoing physical hindrances to the development of continued efficient workers, there are obstacles of arrangement which waste time for them and count up seriously when employes are working on piece rates. In one paper box factory the women and girls bring their own ma-

terials from the stock and remove the finished product. This means that though paid 10 cents per 100 for making boxes, pasting labels, "lacing" boxes, covering them, etc., they put in time as messenger or supply boy, for which they receive nothing. This would not call for complaint if it meant a very little loss of time, but it does not. In one case, one kind of material was kept in a corner of the room obstructed by a belt on a staying machine. To get to the stock, the worker had to pass under this moving belt, dangerously low. Time was lost in avoiding it. For the same kind of work other materials were in another room. Disposition of these boxes was simple, as they were thrown into a barrel. Labelled boxes, ready for lidding, had to be piled tier upon tier on the work table and carried away. The more tiers a worker could carry, the more time she saved, but because the boxes were very light, there was danger, with a big pile of tiers, of having the whole pile come tumbling down. Then they must all be picked up and repiled. Even experienced workers, who were supposed to have acquired the knack of piling securely and carrying away safely, lost time when through some slight jerking of the body, the whole load tumbled down. In much of the simple pasting, hot water is needed all the time to keep brushes, glue boards and tables clean, label cloths damp, etc. In one factory, the sinks are equipped only with cold water faucets. The method of obtaining the necessary warm water is this: a three-gallon pail is half filled with cold water drawn from the faucet over one sink in a dark corner of the room; this is carried into the adjoining box-cutting room, between machines and over a floor littered with pasteboard and papers. Progress is necessarily a little slow. Attached to one wall of the room is one of the filthiest sinks imaginable. It is matched only by the sink from which the water was drawn. Coming up from behind this second sink in the cutting room is a steam pipe about four feet high, which turns down into a horseshoe shape. A steam jet is on top of the bend. To get "warmed" water, the girls must hang their pails on this steam jet, which is hotter than the hands can bear, turn on the steam and let it roar into the cold water until it is sufficiently hot. Meanwhile the girl, especially if she is a small one, meets with several difficulties. She must lift the pail and hang it on the steam wheel, but she must avoid hitting the turned down portion of the pipe; she might spill some water, and as the sink below is already filled to the brimming point and covered with a thick scum of glue, additional water would mean a disastrous overflow. Yet the steam-pipe is too hot to touch and she likes to be careful not to burn her hands. When the steam is turned on, it rushes into the water with such an ominous boiling sound that a new girl fears for the outcome. With the condensed steam,

the pail is heavier to lift over the steam wheel and down than it was to lift up, but after at least five minutes wasted in this fashion, she can go back to her work with the necessary hot water. This process may have to be gone through three or four times a day in certain kinds of work. The sinks on the other floors were not as dirty as on this one, but nowhere in sight was there a hot water faucet, and how to draw steam from some of the other pipes seemed to be even a deeper problem.

### Decreased Earnings in the Canneries on Account of Materials.

In the canneries, women and older girls complained that children under twelve and thirteen, employed here in open violation of the law, were shown the preference in the giving out of the fruit. The children were given the most perfect fruit, which meant less handling in sorting and picking, and therefore, quicker money, though the older women needed their wages badly.

### Sanitary Plumbing in Factories.

Office buildings, department stores and telephone companies are the best equipped, as regards washrooms and toilets. These are given space apart from the main workroom. In factories and laundries, however, in the majority of cases, the women's toilet is built in the workroom proper and stands projected like a long shoe box six feet high on end, and uncovered. It ventilates, therefore, right into the workroom. In some instances, the interiors were clean, in others filthy. The crudest arrangement found for women was in a factory on the river front, where the river washes up under the floors of the building. Here the toilet is nothing more than a seat built over the river, which does the scavenging. If it sweeps up and out, well and good; if it is quiet, the unpleasant odor hovering around that part of the building is only a little more noticeable. Sinks in some places are also disreputable. In one factory it is nothing more than a wooden trough. Here lately the girls have been given individual hand-basins. In another place, that where the steam-pipe heats the cold water, one sink with the cold water faucet hung in a corner between the toilet and the wall. This corner, about 6 by 6 feet, uncurtained, served as a dressing room for the girls, who changed their dresses morning and evening. It was too dark to distinguish objects without the aid of a small electric bulb, which was nearly always turned off. When the investigator started to work one morning, the sink, undrained, was half full of water. At five-thirty that evening it was running over, and the girls who kept their hats and clothes in the corner were paddling around in the water, trying to be ready to leave when the last whistle would blow. A dirty roller bath towel



hung next to the sink, but no soap was provided. Girls who have not brought cups from home, put their mouths to the faucet for a drink. The sink overflowed because the girls washed glue, as best they could, from their hands with cold water, and emptied their pails of steam-warmed water, which carried a quantity of glue, after brushes, boards and tables had been washed. The result was inevitable. Sinks into which a quantity of glue is poured each day can not easily be kept drained, but such drainage is possible and necessary. A janitor's service might be called for as well as better plumbing. Here, as in other factories, the girls are required, and rightly so, to keep their work tables clean, but in the fifteen minutes given at the end of the day for glue-scraping, etc., they are required to sweep the workroom floors. There seems to be no system about this. An "old" girl may call to a younger girl to do it, and in some haphazard fashion, the younger girl gets it done. Not all girls in dirty work places would keep them clean if they were given them clean. There are women workers who are naturally shiftless and untidy, but it is nevertheless an employer's duty to do his share to maintain a higher standard of neatness, and not assist in further demoralization of his employes. Filthy, untidy workshops breed contempt for the management and the work.

#### Fire Escapes.

The Oregon law calls for adequate fire escapes on buildings used for industrial purposes. It has not prevented dark stairways in buildings from being completely enclosed. One such is a staircase that forms an "L" at the bottom. On a bright, sunshiny morning and at noon, the staircase was so dark that going up or coming down, one had to feel her way. At noontime, the small electric bulb hanging part way down could not be turned on, and a crowd of girls stumbled their way out.

A needless exposure to danger is in the heaps of paper cuttings which cover the floors in some of the workrooms in certain lines of work. Lack of janitor service is probably the reason why floors are completely littered and unswept for three days at a time. To drop a lighted match in one of these places would mean instant conflagration.

Here it is proper to draw an observation concerning the effect of power machine work on the general health of women workers. "The noise is terrific," "the noise from the machines was so loud that we could not attempt to make ourselves heard," are remarks appearing again and again in the investigators' reports. Clothing factories and woolen mills take the lead here, but there are few factories which do not carry machinery of one kind or another. When investigators exclaimed to a foreman as to the evil effects of the noise of the

machines, the latter said that at lunch time, when the machinery is shut down, the girls miss its whirr and are anxious to have it start up again. He, too, did not feel natural when it was not going. Apropos of this subject, Josephine Goldmark, in her late work on \* "Fatigue and Efficiency," says: "In both the needle and textile trades, which we have taken as types of work involving speed and complexity, fatigue is the more quickly induced by other attendant influences which are common to most machine work. One of these fatiguing influences is the noise of machinery. The fatiguing effect of the roar of shock is chiefly due to its influence upon the faculty of attention. Mental fatigue is characterized pre-eminently by a weakening of the powers of attention. . . . There is in attention a sensation of effort, and fatigue of attention is in direct proportion to the continuance of the efforts and the difficulty of sustaining them. Now under the influence of loud noise, attention is distracted, and the difficulty of sustaining it is increased. Thus it (noise) necessitates a greater exertion of intensity or conscious application, thereby hastening the onset of fatigue of the attention. A quite uncounted strain upon this easily fatigued faculty results among industrial workers such as girl machine operators, when the deafening, intermittent roar of highly speeded machinery adds its quota to the tax of a long day's work. The roar is not even continuous enough to sink into monotony. With each stoppage and starting of the machine, it blurts out regularly.

"The subject of noise in industrial establishments is usually dismissed with the remark that the workers 'get used to it,' and doubtless in many occupations, the workers themselves are scarcely or not at all conscious of any increased application on their part due to noise. But in the main, the process of getting used to it involves precisely that increased intensity of nervous effort. . . . which, as we have seen, is most favorable for the approach of exhaustion. . . . Another subtly fatiguing element in machine work is due to its rhythm. It is apparent that the rhythm of any power-driven machinery is fixed and mechanical, depending upon its construction and its rate of speed. Now, it is true also that human beings tend to work rhythmically, and when the individual's natural swing or rhythmic tendency must be wholly subordinated to the machine's more rapid mechanical rhythm, fatigue is likely to ensue. . . . The machine sets the tempo, the worker must keep to it.

Not only is the beat of the machine much more rapid and regular than the more elastic human rhythms; it is often wholly lost in the chaos of different rhythms of the various machines, belts and pulleys in one workroom. The roar and

\* Fatigue and Efficiency, Chap. III, p. 68. The New Strain in Industry.

vibration of machinery tends further to distract any sense of rhythm on the part of the workers."

### TELEPHONE OPERATORS.

Another industry employing a large number of girls noted for the nervous strain it causes is the telephone system. To the credit of the Telephone Company it can be said that in Portland the operating rooms are well lighted and well ventilated. A rest and reading room is provided for the use of the girls while off duty, and a hot, well-cooked lunch is offered at cost price. In smaller towns, arrangements are not always adequate.

The disadvantages of the work are its constant demand for the keen use of eye, ear and arms, and particularly the long hours.

The nature of the work is the same the world over. On entering the exchange room, the first arrangement noticed is something that looks like a blackboard screening three sides of a long room, marked with alternate rows of small white glass lamp plates and black holes, the latter of which are all numbered.

The operator is aware of a call by the flash of the signal lamp and the click of the lifted receiver in her ear. She "connects up" by inserting one of a pair of brass plugs into the hole beneath the lamp, releases her "listening" key, a lever on the shelf in front of her, and at the same time speaks "Operator" or "Number, please," into her transmitter. While she is receiving the call, she has reached for a plug attached to a cord, corresponding in color to the one in use, and as soon as the number is plain to her, she inserts this plug into the hole the number of which corresponds to that called for, and establishes the connection between the subscribers. Immediately the second subscriber's lamp flashes and continues to glow as first caller's is doing, until the conversation is ended, when both go out. The operator, watching for this, pulls down the cords, which fall back into their respective holes.

But while one conversation is in progress, she may have answered a dozen similar calls, and the switchboard is a tangle of green and red cords, bewildering to the uninitiated. The hardship of the work lies in the constant attention that must be kept for incoming calls and for deadened lamps. An incoming call means concentration of energy to satisfy the patron in the shortest possible time, and making a connection does not mean simply the watching, listening and reaching of arms to insert plugs.

Added to the nervous strain, the operator to reach holes on either side of her frequently has to rise to her feet, balancing herself on a round of her chair and stretch over her companion operator to reach the necessary subscriber. This looks like a difficult, straining task.

The physical effects of the work were brought out strongly in Toronto, when a dispute arose between the Bell Telephone Company of that city and the operators, concerning the hours of employment. The testimony of physicians called by the Royal Commission to settle the difficulty declare that four or five hours work broken by a rest period of one and a half hours should be the maximum.

The following is quoted from Elizabeth Beardsley Butler's "Women and the Trades," Chap. 19, p. 289, in which she quotes from the findings of the Royal Commission in Toronto:

"Dr. Robert Dwyer's testimony in part was as follows:

"I find the service intense all the time. The telephone company nor the doctors who see the operators do not see the final result; after these girls have gone on for four or five years and served the company and they get married or for other purposes leave, then they turn out badly in their domestic relations. They break down nervously and have nervous children, and it is a loss to the community.'"

In order to work the operators up to the highest degree of speed, a record is kept at the different offices, of the average length of time it takes the operators in the exchanges of the cities of Oregon and Washington to make a connection. This record is posted and the attention of the girls called to it. While increase in efficiency is a commendable thing, this system probably works toward increasing the intensity of the nervous strain upon the operator, who constantly feels that she must further exert herself to come up to a standard.

### Conclusion.

The conclusion we wish to draw from this description of the conditions of labor in Portland is that not wages alone, which are insufficient to give the worker a full nourishing meal three times a day, and call for close, unhealthful sleeping quarters; not hours alone which strain her to a point of exhaustion to finish the day's demands; but these two, combined with unsanitary, dirty and distasteful conditions under which girls work, are responsible for much of the inefficiency, sickness and degeneracy that is found among women wage-earners.

## COST OF LIVING

### Room and Board.

#### Investigators' Testimony.

In gathering facts as to the cost of living in this state, the director prepared schedules calling for yearly estimates as to the cost of house or room-rent; food, clothing, carfare, laundry bills, doctor bills (including dentistry), church dues, lodge dues, education and recreation including vacation. Two other questions asked in connection with wages, but which threw light on the Cost of Living results, were whether the worker was living at home and whether she received a vacation with pay. From 509 schedules received from Portland, the investigator has become convinced that \$10 per week is the minimum on which a self-supporting young woman can maintain herself decently and in health in this city.

#### Cost of Room-rent.

The estimates of the girls and women were not taken as final; over 100 rooming houses, housekeeping rooms and private families offering room and board were investigated. The investigators found that while in exceptional instances rooms can be secured for \$8 a month, it happens to be with a woman who wants someone for companionship or to assist her with a couple of children in the evening. In the latter case, the cost of the room should be estimated at more than \$8 a month. Rooms within walking distance renting for \$10 per month are usually attic rooms, low ceilinged, poorly papered, or not papered at all, or with walls covered with faded burlap. A stove heats the room and often the girl has to furnish her own wood. It is hard to make a landlady see that this adds to the cost of the room. In one case of a \$10 room, where the necessity of furnishing one's wood was protested against, the housekeeper explained: "But look what you are getting the room for!" This house was within walking distance; the room was on the second floor, but could be reached only by a narrow staircase from the side of the house. The room door was narrow and low; the bath and toilet were located off the back porch. To reach them, one had to go down stairs, out of doors and around to the rear. A bath in the winter must be a chilly undertaking in this house. This room had two cots, and the lady furnished a gas plate where the girls could make coffee. It was on the housekeeping order, but could not be put in that class, as the tenant had to furnish dishes, hardware, silver and linen. Rooms at \$12 begin to verge on the comfortable state, but one must pay \$14 or \$15 a month to get accommodations that can be called cosy or

pleasant, and by these the writer does not mean running hot and cold water in the room. Many girls take a roommate and thus reduce their cost of living at the same time that they reduce their opportunity of recuperation. Sometimes they room three together, the better to economize. An example of this is that of three girls living with a woman in a small, crowded flat. The three girls room together in an inside court room and each pays \$30 per month for the room, breakfast and dinner. The house is about twenty minutes walking distance from town, and one must walk uphill to reach it.

Below in Table 26 is given a description of other rooms investigated, with the prices asked. The addresses were taken from the daily papers. Certain localities in the city known to be boarding house sections, others known as private residence sections, where roomers were occasionally taken in, and still others known to offer more homelike accommodations were canvassed. Rooms outside of walking distance are expected to be cheaper, though they are not always found so, because of the additional cost of carfare.

TABLE 26.  
A—ROOMS ONLY.

- 1—1 large room, good ventilation, \$12 per month.
- 2—1 small room, no heat, no carpet, no running water, \$8 per month; for two girls, \$10 per month.
- 3—1 small room, 1 small window, single bed, no carpet, \$6 per month; no heat, no telephone.
- 4—1 back room, heated by small stove, \$8 per month.
- 5—1 large room, heated by stove, no running water, \$16 per month.
- 6—1 large room, 2 windows, heated, \$14 per month.
- 7—1 large room, modern conveniences, \$16 per month.
- 8—1 small room, modern conveniences, \$12.50 per month.
- 9—1 large room, no closets, \$16 per month.
- 10—1 small room, 1 window, \$12.50 per month.
- 11—1 large room, modern conveniences, single bed, \$7.50 per month.
- 12—1 small room, single bed, 1 small window, no heat, \$7.50 per month.
- 13—1 room, second floor, very pleasant, well furnished, outlook on beautiful yard, \$15 per month; same house, 1 room in attic, 3 windows so high that one had to stand on chair to look into yard, bathroom on lower floor, \$10 per month.
- 14—1 room on first floor, nicely furnished, but had to go through kitchen to reach bathroom off back porch; gaslight.
- 15—Another room, same place, upstairs, entrance from side of house, high narrow stairs, small narrow door, gable room, brick chimney passing through center of floor, cheap wallpaper, double cot, stove heat, furnish own wood, could have gas-plate for coffee, to reach bathroom on back porch one has to go downstairs and out of doors; \$10 per month.
- 16—1 room upstairs, dark, good closet space, with gas-plate for coffee, \$3.50 per week; without, \$3; old house, narrow porch.
- 17—1 small single room, crowded with bed, chiffoniere, trunk; \$10 per month.
- 18—1 single room, side of house, not bright, good closet; \$3.50 per week. House attractive exteriorly.
- 19—1 large front room with alcove, \$20 per month for two persons; stove heat.
- 20—3 rooms, \$8 per month.
- 21—2 double rooms, \$10 each person.
- 22—Rooms with hot and cold water, \$3.25 to \$5 per week.
- 23—1 room, \$14 per month.
- 24—5 rooms, \$5 per week.
- 25—1 room, \$14 per month.
- 26—5 rooms, \$5 per week.
- 27—1 room, no phone, \$8.
- 28—1 room, heated by oil stove; bath and electric lights; \$8 per month for one; \$10 per month for two.
- 29—1 room, modern conveniences, \$10 per month.
- 30—1 room, \$14 per month.
- 31—1 room, rather cozy, \$12 per month.
- 32—1 room, divided from hall by partition three-fourths way up, hot water heat, gaslight; \$10 per month.

- 33—Rooms \$1 to \$3 per week, not cozy and not clean.  
 34—1 large room, \$10 per month.  
 35—1 room, \$3.75 per week.

## B—HOUSEKEEPING ROOMS.

- 1—2-room apartment, \$15.  
 2—1 room with gas-plate, \$10.  
 3—2 housekeeping suites, attic rooms, walls covered with burlap, electric light, stove heat, \$12; smaller suite, \$10.  
 4—2 housekeeping rooms, 1 downstairs, \$20; room upstairs, \$21; neither of them worth the price.  
 5—Front room, curtains brown with dust, unattractive, gas-plate in alcove, \$18; not worth it.  
 6—2 rooms with public bath, \$25; electric light extra charge.  
 7—Outside apartments, 2 rooms, \$30; inside apartment facing untidy house, unpleasant outlook, \$25.  
 8—Bedroom and kitchen, \$20; gas stove for heating, pay for own heat; this upstairs. Single room downstairs, furnace heat, \$10 for one; \$12 for two.  
 9—Small room, no conveniences, \$7 per month for one girl; \$10 for two.  
 10—Small room, rear, 1 window, \$7.  
 11—Front room, \$10 per month.  
 12—Rear room, no conveniences, \$9 per month.  
 13—Room, modern conveniences, \$4.50 per week.  
 14—Large room, modern conveniences, \$4 per week.  
 15—Attic room, very small, 1 small window, \$2 per week.  
 16—1 small room, \$9 per month.  
 17—1 room downstairs, modern conveniences, \$12 per month.  
 18—1 room with bed, large, modern conveniences, \$30 per month.  
 19—1 large room, modern conveniences, \$16 per month.  
 20—1 small room, without heat, \$2.50 per week; with heat, \$3.  
 21—Housekeeping room in basement, large, with kitchenette curtained off, have to pay for own heat and electric light; \$20 per month.  
 22—1 small room with single bed, no bath, have to heat water on stove; \$6.  
 23—1 large room, 1 window, \$12 per month.  
 24—3 rooms, \$14 per month.  
 25—1 room with kitchenette, \$15 per month.  
 26—2 rooms, modern conveniences; \$12 per month.  
 27—1 front room, modern conveniences, \$12 per month for one; \$14 for two.  
 28—Housekeeping room, kitchenette, single bed, room heated by stove, \$20.  
 29—1 small room, modern conveniences, kitchenette, heated, \$20.  
 30—1 large room, kitchenette, 1 large closet, 20 per month.

## C—BOARD AND ROOM—WEST SIDE.

- 1—Attic room, 1 small window, heated evenings, \$28 per month.  
 2—1 small room, second floor, \$30 per month.  
 3—Regular boarding house, cheapest room is \$35; rates up to \$45 per month.  
 4—Nice room, modern conveniences, \$37.50 per month.  
 5—Large rooms, modern conveniences, cheapest \$50 per month.  
 6—Small room, not heated, small windows, \$24 per month.  
 7—Large room, heated, \$25 to \$30 per month.  
 8—Large room, modern conveniences, \$27.50 per month.  
 9—Large room, modern conveniences, \$27 per month.  
 10—Modern conveniences, \$40 to \$50 per month.  
 11—Rooms and board, \$28 to \$35 per month.  
 12—\$40 to \$50 per month.  
 13—\$8.50 per week.  
 14—Modern conveniences, \$9 per week.  
 15—Small, dark room, \$7.50 per week.  
 16—Modern conveniences, \$25 per month.  
 17—Large sunny room, modern conveniences, \$30 per month.  
 18—Large room, 3 windows, modern conveniences, \$30 per month.  
 19—Modern conveniences, \$29 per month.  
 20—1 large room, suitable for two, \$35 per month.  
 21—1 large room, modern conveniences, \$30; with two meals, \$35.  
 22—Two meals, \$25.  
 23—Two Meals, \$25.  
 24—\$5 per week.  
 25—\$18; second month, \$16 (someone for company).  
 26—\$25, two meals.  
 27—\$25, two meals.  
 28—\$30 per month.  
 29—\$30 per month; two meals.  
 30—\$35 per month.  
 31—\$25 per month.  
 32—\$25 per month.  
 33—\$26 per month; three meals.  
 34—1 upstairs court room, three meals, \$30; 1 room downstairs parlor room for two, \$60 per month.

## SOUTH PORTLAND.

- 35—1 small dark room, heated, \$7 per week.  
 36—Small dark, dirty room, \$7 per week for one; \$25 per month for two people.  
 37—\$4.50, but room so dirty, poorly ventilated (1 small window), that it was simply impossible to live in it.  
 38—1 small room, no conveniences, \$5 per week.  
 39—1 small room, \$5 per week.  
 40—Small rooms, \$20 per month.

## Rooms and Board.

Exceptional families offer room and board for \$20 per month. The average cost for three meals per day at a low estimate is \$25 per month, but because of the large number who demand \$30, one is much inclined to say that that is nearer the average. Two cheap, charitable boarding houses offer room and board at \$4, and from \$3.75 to \$5 per week respectively. Together they can accommodate about eighty girls, an insignificant percentage of those covered by the investigation in Portland.

## Housekeeping Rooms.

A frequent plan of living is that of a housekeeping system, where the rooms are made to differ from ordinary sleeping rooms by the addition of an oilcloth-covered table, a few cheap cups, saucers and plates, linen, hardware, a gas plate, and once in a while some silver. Sometimes the renter is required to furnish both her silver and hardware. The opportunity to cook her own meals and wash her own dishes may help to keep the domestic feeling alive in the struggling worker, but it does not help her to keep alive the physical strength and moral courage needed for persistency in this same struggle. The addition of the hardware poorly concealed and the gas plate only make the room more hideous. Rooms were visited by the investigators renting at \$16 and \$20 per month that cast a gloom over them when these rooms were considered as a constant habitation, a place to be called home. And in visiting rooms, the investigators, while looking for what an ordinarily well brought up girl would require in neatness and pleasantness, kept constantly in mind the fact that most girls do not demand velvet rugs and mahogany furniture as a standard of comfort, so in no case was a room condemned for plain furniture. Rooms may reasonably be objected to, however, on the score of ragged carpets, dirty or torn curtains, lack of sufficient daylight, closet space, for sagging cots or uncomfortable-looking beds, and for scratched, marred dressers that tilted and wavered for lack of a castor. It was considered a point against them when the householders, though a private family, kept men as well as women roomers, and offered a room with a bath and toilet on the floor above or below.

## Expenditures for Room and Board.

Facts have been quoted to show that the least sum for which most wage-earning women can obtain decent rooms in



Portland is \$10 a month. The lowest for which room and board can be obtained is \$25 a month. Table 27 shows the average expenditures, of the girls adrift, for room and board.

TABLE 27.

Average Amount Spent on Room and Board Annually by 181 Wage Earning Women in Portland living Adrift, classified by occupations.

No.	Occupation.	Annual Room Rent.	Cost of Board.	Total.
27	Laundry .....	\$ 62.15	\$168.00	\$230.15
18	Factory .....	73.77	131.73	205.50
35	Department Stores.....	118.00	196.25	314.25
31	Office .....	128.89	179.51	308.40
70	Miscellaneous Group.....	121.04	152.34	273.38

### Laundry Workers.

Twenty-seven laundry workers average (Table 27) \$62.15 per year for room rent, or slightly more than \$5 per month. Board costs them \$14 per month, or less than 50 cents per day. It is impossible to harmonize this with the idea of comfortable room and sufficient food. If any explanation can be made for the sum, it is that many laundry women adrift live near the laundries, which often are in very undesirable districts.

### Department Store Employes.

Department store girls adrift rise nearer to a decent standard when they spend \$118 per year, or nearly \$10 per month for room rent. Board for them amounts on the average to \$196.26, or \$16.35 per month, which is 54 cents per day. This is divided between toast and coffee for breakfast, 10c; for lunch, meat, bread and tea, 15c; or salad, desert and tea, 15c; and for dinner whatever they can manage to order for 25 cents. Picture these menus as a source of energy for ten hours' work in a factory or store, and two or three more hours' work "at home" in the evening. The average spent for one month on both room and board is \$26.18, a sum which, it has been shown, will cover the cost of room and board when bargained for at one time. But as accommodations at this price are usually beyond walking distances, many girls prefer to live nearer in and save carfare. That they do so is indicated by Table 33, which shows that the girl at home spends \$31.20 per month, or 10 cents per day for working days and nothing for extra rides on Sundays or holidays, while the girl adrift spends \$23.42, or less than 10 cents per day. As this sum is an average, it means that some girls walk every day to and from work, spending nothing at all, while others ride one or both ways.

TABLE 33.

Average Sum Spent Annually for Carfare by 509 Women Wage Earners, classified by occupations and on basis of "at home" or "adrift."

Occupation.	Average Annual Carfare—At Home.	Adrift.
Laundry .....	\$ 27.50	\$ 20.80
Factory .....	28.96	28.50
Department Stores.....	31.20	23.42
Office .....	31.22	25.28
Miscellaneous .....	33.36	24.13

### Office Employes.

Girls in offices spend more for room rent than girls in department stores, but less for board. Rooms cost them \$10.75 per month; board costs nearly \$15. Young women in these two classes of work have been mentioned before as having practically the same standards of living and the same requirements for an attractive appearance. Observations on one apply to the other. Carfare amounts to almost the same. Office girls living at home spend \$31.22 a year, just 18 cents less than department store girls living at home. Office girls adrift spend \$25.28, or \$1.74 per month more than department store girls adrift, but \$6 per month less than office girls at home.

### Miscellaneous Trades.

As those under this heading are divided between the more poorly and the well-paid trades, the average spent for room and board indicates a good standard, \$121.04 per year for room, and \$152.34 for board; or, \$10 per month for room and \$15 for board. Carfare for those living at home is the highest of any group, \$33.36 per year. For those adrift, it ranks next to the office employes, or \$24.13 per year or \$2 per month, which, however, does not permit a ride to and from work for the average girl.

### Board Without Room.

Meal tickets in private families range from \$5.25 per week to \$5.95. This is at the rate of 25 cents for each meal, or 25 cents for breakfast and lunch, and 35 cents for dinner. Many girls who are rooming, however, confine their breakfast to toast and coffee, 10c; lunch, 15c; and dinner, 15c; but sometimes to 25 or 35 cents. This information, apart from the evidence of the schedules, was obtained by frequenting restaurants that wage-earning women patronize, and watching their menus and checks. These small sums would not be possible as limits if it were not for charitable organizations and cafeterias.

### Cost of Clothing.

Cost of clothing for the average woman working outside of her home would amount to \$125 or \$150 a year. This is an item which varies noticeably with the occupation. Girls in offices, telephone exchanges and department stores must dress better than those in laundries and factories. The former wear the same dresses at their work through the day, while the laundry and factory employes can come to work in a good suit and change it, on arriving, for a rough working dress. This is one phase of the problem that argues strongly for a commission which can regulate the minimum wage according to

the demands of the occupation. Table 28 below offers opportunity for some interesting comments on the variation of cost of clothing with occupation. In three out of five classifications, including laundries, factories, department stores, offices, and miscellaneous trades, the girl living at home spends more for her clothes than the girl adrift. This is due to the fact that the girl at home, because her parents furnish her room and board, can afford to spend more.

TABLE 28.

Average Amount Spent annually on Clothing by 509 Women Wage Earners in Portland, classified by occupation and as to living "at home" or "adrift."

No.	Occupation.	Average Annual Expenxe—At Home.	Adrift.
36	Laundry .....	\$158.00	\$157.00
100	Factory .....	126.46	140.33
116	Department Stores.....	161.36	139.63
88	Office .....	183.20	182.66
169	Miscellaneous Group.....	138.10	143.52

In no case is the amount stated an extravagant one; \$183 a year is the highest sum mentioned, and this is spent by **office employes**, who are expected to dress not only neatly, but in good style. The office girl adrift spends \$1 a year less, showing that however she may economize in other ways, she must appear well dressed. **Laundry girls** at home and adrift spend practically the same—those at home \$158; those adrift \$157. That their cost of clothing is higher than the factory workers, whose average expenditure by the girl at home is \$126.46, and for the girl adrift, \$140.33, though the two classes of work are ranked the same, may be accounted for by the fact that laundry work means much greater wear and tear on clothing than factory work, which while often very dirty, does not require as much moving around and straining of garments. Next to the office girl, for expenditure for wearing apparel, ranks the **department store employe**. Those living at home spend on an average of \$161.36 a year; those adrift, \$139.63, or \$21.73 less. This means that the girl living at home may not have to burden herself after working hours by making her own clothes. Even if she does, and spends the entire \$161.36 in a larger amount of apparel, still she cannot be called an extravagant dresser. In the case of the **factory girls**, those adrift spend \$140.33, or \$13.87 a year more than the girl at home. The records are of 18 girls adrift and 82 at home, and would tend to show that those at home are relied upon for so much support that what they are able to spend on themselves is below the minimum required. Living at home they are able to save on dressmaking. The group called "miscellaneous" is made up of waitresses, chambermaids, milliners and dress-makers, janitresses, demonstrators and canvassers, cleaners and dyers, hairdressers, photographers, bookbinders, etc. Miscellaneous schedules number 169; 70 of these are from girls adrift, 99 from girls living at home. Cost of clothing for the former amounts to \$143.52; for those at home, \$138.10. The

reason for the difference here is the same as that given for the factory girls. When a certain standard of good appearance is not demanded, the girls at home tend to economize below the minimum on wearing apparel.

The minimum average spent by any class for clothes in Table 28 is \$126.46. Some schedules reported an expenditure of \$50 a year, and one or two went as high as \$300 a year. In order to ascertain what is the least sum that a self-supporting woman can clothe herself for, the following tables have been made out. Table 29 quotes the lowest prices at which any article can be bought. Table 30 shows the least for which an article that has good wearing qualities, and looks well, can be bought, and states what it should cost a young woman to dress decently and attractively. Table 29 is discarded because articles bought at these prices often look shoddy in the beginning and wear out twice as fast as a more expensive article.

TABLE 29.

1 winter coat.....	\$15.00
1 suit .....	18.00
1 extra skirt.....	5.00
2 dark waists.....	4.00
4 white waists.....	4.00
2 dark underskirts.....	2.00
4 suits summer underwear.....	2.00
3 suits winter underwear.....	3.00
1 dozen pair stockings.....	3.00
2 pair corsets.....	3.00
4 corset covers.....	2.00
1½ dozen cotton handkerchiefs...	.90
4 pair gloves.....	4.00
4 pair shoes.....	10.00
1 pair rubbers.....	.50
1 Umbrella .....	1.00
3 hats .....	6.00
1 party dress.....	10.00
3 white underskirts.....	4.50
2 summer dresses.....	10.00
	<hr/>
	\$107.90

TABLE 30.

1 winter coat.....	\$20.00
1 work suit.....	20.00
1 extra skirt.....	7.50
1 "best suit.....	25.00
2 dark work waists.....	6.00
2 dark underskirts.....	3.00
4 white waists.....	10.00
4 suits summer underwear.....	4.00
3 suits winter underwear.....	6.00
1 dozen pair stockings.....	6.00
2 pair corsets.....	5.00
4 corset covers.....	2.00
1½ doz. handkerchiefs.....	1.80
4 pair gloves.....	6.00
4 pair shoes.....	16.00
1 pair rubbers.....	.75
1 umbrella .....	1.00
1 party dress.....	15.00
3 white underskirts.....	6.00
2 summer dresses.....	10.00
4 hats .....	16.00
	<hr/>
	\$187.05

### Laundry.

Table 31, which gives expenditures for laundry, offers further opportunity for interesting comparisons. The largest amount spent by any class is \$24.28, the average cost a year, or \$2.02 a month, the average cost of the department store employe. The smallest amount paid out is the average of the laundry girl adrift: \$7.85 a year, or 65 cents a month. Laundries charge from 25 cents to 35 cents for a shirtwaist, and for other pieces accordingly. Two white shirtwaists a week are the least that a young woman can manage on when she wears this style of dress. These alone would amount to 50 cents a week, or \$2 a month. The conclusion we may draw is that most girls manage to wear clothes that do not need frequent laundering. For the articles that have to be washed, the little square, which has served as kitchen,

diningroom, bedroom and parlor, can now take its turn serving as a washroom. Hence it is that if a girl is fortunate enough to live where electric light is used, and still more fortunate enough to possess the luxury of an electric iron, she learns that several newspapers spread under a sheet on the rug make a tolerable ironing board. The work must be done on her hands and knees, but the good pennies saved and the pile of fresh clothes are worth the effort. Others have found that windows make good smoothers if handkerchiefs are put on quite wet, rubbed till all the air bubbles are gone and left over night. The hems may be shrunken, but on the whole, this process does very well and does not really show after the handkerchief is crumpled once or twice.

TABLE 31.

Average Sum Spent Annually for Laundry by 509 Wage Earning Women, classified by occupation and on basis of "at home" or "adrift."

Occupation.	Annual Cost—At Home.	Adrift.
Laundry .....	\$ 12.00	\$ 7.85
Factory .....	8.91	11.80
Department Store.....	24.28	16.27
Office .....	14.35	21.33
Miscellaneous .....	23.25	21.48

### Doctor's and Dentist's Bills.

Amounts both for the girl at home and adrift vary but little in this column. One reason for this is that no matter what the occupation or station, if one's teeth are aching and one's organism rebellious, relief must be sought from the proper person. The highest sum, \$37.50 a year, spent by laundry girls adrift, is small. The chapter on Conditions of Labor showed that some kinds of work cause nerve strain and other ills as serious; the investigation showed the fact that many young women avoid a doctor's care because of the expense, and sometimes because they know that it will mean an order to stop work—an order which to them seems impossible to fulfill. Medicines and eye-glasses are items which must not be forgotten here. Both are a decided expense, but the latter often means a repeated one on account of breakage. The physician's care which other girls have received is not indicated in the "Doctor's Bills" table, because many physicians make it a rule not to charge girls who are struggling for a living. The same can be said of dentists, and much credit is due men of the profession for their silent but genuinely charitable work.

TABLE 32.

Average Amount Spent Annually on Doctor's and Dentist's Bills by 509 Wage Earning Women in Portland, classified by Occupation and as to living "at home" or "adrift."

No.	Occupation.	Average Annual Expense—At Home.	Adrift.
36	Laundry .....	\$ 16.00	\$ 37.50
100	Factory .....	27.60	18.40
116	Department Stores.....	29.23	23.82
88	Offices .....	25.28	26.34
169	Miscellaneous .....	27.47	26.52

It may be to the point to mention here the hospital associations which some firms have inaugurated. In one firm membership was compulsory, with dues of \$1 per month. Members were compelled to consult the Association doctor, whose services were free to them; private hospital care was obtained for them, sometimes at the rate of \$8 per week, sometimes free of charge. Another firm has a space in its application blank where applicants are asked to state whether they are willing to join the association. Applicants for work are not likely to refuse anything within reason, accession to which will get them work. "Junior" employes, by which is meant those earning in the neighborhood of \$25 a month, are charged 25 cents a month dues. "Senior" employes, or those earning over \$10 a week, are charged 50 cents a month. Benefits of membership are \$1 a day while out of work. Members may consult their own physicians, though the Association employs one of its own. Consultation with the Association physician is charged for in spite of membership. For this reason the old employes are diffident about belonging.

### Lodges and Church Dues.

The very small amounts spent in these instances indicate that where retrenchment can be made, it is done. If a regular churchgoer contributes 5 cents per Sunday to the collection box, surely the least that she could do, this would amount to

TABLE 34.

Average Sum Spent Annually for Lodge and Church Dues by 509 Wage Earning Women in Portland, classified by occupation and as to living "at home" or "adrift."

No.	Occupation.	Average Annual Expense—At Home.	Adrift.
36	Laundry .....	\$ 6.25	\$ 5.25
100	Factory .....	9.96	7.40
116	Department Stores.....	12.19	9.72
88	Office .....	9.13	9.10
169	Miscellaneous .....	12.26	7.90

\$2.60 a year. Lodge membership demands from \$3 to \$5 a year, and others require more. Yet one group of women, laundry workers adrift, spent \$5 a year for church and lodge dues. The department store and miscellaneous groups living at home are exceptions in spending \$12. The others at home, as well as adrift, do not spend more than \$9.

### Recreation and Vacation.

Maximum average amounts spent for these items amount to \$36.62; the minimum amount recorded is \$12.50. Of the four specified trades, the three groups of women adrift spend more for recreation and vacation than do the women living at home. This would tend to show that the girl at home can get decent amusement cheaper or else has friends to rely on for her good times. There is not the same temptation for the girl at home to seek fun outside as there is for the girl adrift, whose lonesomeness in her one room drives her inno-

cently to seek diversion that eventually ends disastrously for her.

TABLE 35.

Average Sum Spent Annually for Recreation and Vacation by 509 Wage Earning Women in Portland, classified by occupation and as to living "at home" or "adrift."

No.	Occupation.	Average Annual Expense—At Home.	Adrift.
36	Laundry .....	\$ 18.25	\$ 12.50
100	Factory .....	12.91	16.60
116	Department Store.....	21.48	36.62
88	Office .....	20.14	35.78
169	Miscellaneous .....	22.02	20.83

### Education and Reading.

Sums spent for this purpose indicate that mental recreation or training of any kind is almost entirely lacking among the wage-earning women. Several reasons may be given for this. One is that the great majority of them have to leave school before their education is half completed. A second reason is that when they reach home at night they are too tired to read or study music. A third is that they haven't the money to use this way if they wished to. Laundry girls spend the least of any group; \$6.30 for those at home, \$4 for those adrift. Factory girls adrift spend the largest sum, but department store girls living at home average about the same. Office girls spend nearly \$8 per year; less than we might expect from this better trained class.

TABLE 36.

Average Sum Spent Annually for Education and Reading by 509 Wage Earning Women in Portland, classified by occupation as to living "at home" or "adrift."

No.	Occupation.	Average Annual Expense—At Home.	Adrift.
36	Laundry .....	\$ 6.30	\$ 4.00
100	Factory .....	6.68	10.30
116	Department Store.....	10.11	6.69
88	Office .....	7.78	7.98
169	Miscellaneous .....	9.45	8.92

### To summarize the Cost of Living:

Investigation has shown that \$10 a week is the very least on which the average self-supporting woman can live decently and keep herself in health in Portland. This means a steady income of \$520 per year. How this would have to be spent were women in all cases living as they should, is indicated by the following schedule:

TABLE 37.

	Per Year.
Room and Board, \$25 per month.....	\$300
Clothing .....	130
Laundry Bills.....	25
Carfare .....	30
Doctor's Bills.....	15
Lodge and Church Dues.....	10
Recreation, including vacation.....	25
Education and reading.....	10
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$545</b>

If we were to omit the sum allowed for recreation, \$25 a year, we would bring the actual cost to \$520 a year, or \$10 a week, for bare necessities. That a legitimate amount of recreation is a necessity to maintain the efficiency of a worker is a theory that some persons insist upon, but which others refuse to admit.

## PERSONAL STORIES

Miss A., a stenographer 19 years old, 1½ years' experience, working in office for \$22 a month. A friend happened to invite her to lunch on Saturday. She discovered that Miss A's money had given out the day before; that she had had no dinner Friday evening, nothing to eat on Saturday, and had expected to have nothing to eat until Monday, when she would receive her next check.

Miss B works at the 5c, 10c and 15c store, earns \$4.50 per week. Said that her salary was so small that she has to work for her room and board. Gets up in the morning and gets breakfast before she goes to work, washes dishes when she comes home at night, does family's washing and ironing on Sunday. Her people are unable to help her.

Miss C works at candy factory. Is living with her mother now. Was rooming with another girl before mother came to city. Said that usually they both had beaux and went out for good times. Chum goes with a man now who, Miss C. thinks, pays for her meals and carfare. Chum is earning only \$6 per week, but has more money and clothes than she used to. Thinks that she "lives with the man," as she has three meals now also, which she didn't have before. She herself often has offers from men to be "charity girl" in exchange for amusement and meals, but she refuses. States that if she ever gets down and out, she will accept. She says that they tell her when she refuses that they are glad she is a good girl; they just wanted to find out. Chum can't live at home on account of cruelty of stepfather. Both girls about eighteen years old.

Miss D. works in candy factory. Says it is dirtier than ———, another noted place. Girls have to go downstairs to toilet and use the same one that the men use. "The dirtiest place I ever worked in."

Miss E., in alteration room of large store, received \$23.50 per week. Made all her own clothes, trimmed her own hats, walked to and from work. Spent \$320 per year for room and board, \$200 for clothes, \$35 per year for carfare, \$52 per year for laundry, \$10 for church dues, \$10 for education, etc. Total expenses, \$627; total income, \$1,175. Is a sensible, elderly girl, an example that even with good management, cost of living, with decent standards can scarcely be brought under \$600 per year.

Miss F., stenographer in law office at \$5 per week says, "I did the stenographic work for two offices and that is the reason I quit, as I thought it was too much work for only \$20 a month."



Miss G., working in government office at \$25 per week, spends \$192 per year for room rent, \$225 for food, \$25 for laundry, \$25 for carfare, \$285 for clothing, \$25 for dentistry, \$50 for recreation and vacation, \$15 for books and newspapers. She says: "Expenses shown are actual and based on economy and self-denial. Clothing purchased is worn out in office. No social or evening dresses taken into consideration."

Miss H. earns \$5 per week in candy factory. Was living with mother and so didn't estimate cost of living. Said that she had worked in department store for nine months. Asked for a raise and was told that after Christmas she would get one. After Christmas, she was dismissed.

Miss I., working in candy factory, \$5 per week, states that after standing on her feet for ten hours at her work, she is required to sweep the floor in the evening. Lives with her mother; says that if she didn't, she could not live on this salary.

Mrs. XYZ. earns \$6 per week doing daywork. Is attempting to support two children. Gets \$12 per month from husband, who is out on parole.

Miss J. works in cannery and averages \$7.20 per week. Says she was the fastest worker they had, and that the most money she could make per day was \$1.20; sometimes 80c, 50c and 40c.

Miss K., also in fruit cannery, earns \$5.40 per week. She lives 15 blocks from working place, but walks back and forth as she can't afford to ride.

Miss L., in same place, states it is harder than any work she has done with less pay; a filthy place. Building is unfit for women to work in. Earns \$2.50 per week.

Miss M., stock girl in tailor shop in suit house, earns \$6 per week; lived at home, and paid no room rent or board; made all own shirtwaists, dresses, underwear; trimmed hats; does all her own laundry except collars. Income, \$312 per year; expenses, noon lunches downtown, \$62.40 per year; carfare, \$36; laundry, \$6; clothing, \$135; recreation, including swimming lessons, \$30; church dues, \$6; books and newspapers, \$3. Expenditures, \$272.40; income, \$312. Note here that this girl does not pay for dressmaking, trimming of hats, laundry, room and board.

Miss N., working in department store at \$7.50 per week, gives a moderate, reasonable list of expenditures. Said that if she didn't have help, she would starve, or what is worse, get her living some other way.

Mrs. ABC. earns \$18 per week in department store; has a little boy to support. Says that this wouldn't cover her expenses if her landlady did not help her take care of her little

boy, whom she has to support. Is trying to pay for her own home on the installment plan; makes all the little boy's clothes at night.

Mrs O., a girl of 18, works in a 5c, 10c and 15c store; earned \$4 at the start, now \$6.10; has baby to support; doesn't know where her husband is. Mother takes care of baby, but she boards out; pays \$3 per week for room and board. They have mush and toast for breakfast; potatoes and gravy, and sometimes meat for dinner; walks to work every morning, though she lives a long distance from the store; goes without lunch unless she can hustle a fellow. Girls in store sometimes take up a collection for her.

Miss P. works in 5c, 10c and 15c store, living at home; earns \$4 per week. Says that after paying carfare, she has only money enough to pay for her clothes.

Girls in same establishment stated that when they went to the head of one department and told him they could not live on \$4 a week, knowing that they could not do much better there, he found work for two of them outside.

Miss Q. earns \$9 a week in laundry. States that often she goes without evening meal because she can't afford it.

Mrs. R., janitress, earns \$7.50 per week. Has a little girl to support, pays \$20 for their room and board; has \$10 left for their clothes and school expenses.

Mrs. S., working in department store at \$45 per month, says: "I maintain a mother and daughter. I have a large surgery bill of over \$200, and am unable to pay a cent of it; had a hard sick spell of 14 weeks, and a year later fell on auto oil on the street and broke my ankle. I never had a vacation with pay in my life; never was granted a vacation. Had to give up my lodge dues because I could not pay them. I support the three of us on my salary. Have been maintaining a home for seven years; have spent all I made and am deeply in debt, and work as I may, I cannot get out of debt."

Mrs. T., an elderly woman canvasser, \$1.50 per day, says: "If you do not dress nicely, the firm will not keep you. I am helping to support my deserted daughter and three grandchildren. I receive a little aid from my son."

Mrs. U., demonstrator, \$9 per week, has an income of \$468 per year; expenditures, \$445.10. She spends \$100 on clothing, \$283 on room, board and carfare. She says: "You can see by the above figures that one does not have much money left for any vacation. The employers are now expecting us to dress better, and are hiring only help which can dress well, and letting the older help out."

Miss V., general work in hairdressing parlors, says: "I must pay \$25 to learn the trade. I have to borrow all this

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money and pay it back when I am earning. After I finish my trade, I get \$7 per week."

Miss W., manicure in hairdressing parlors, \$10 per week, says: "It takes six months of hard work to learn this trade, and then the first wage you earn is \$6 per week. I have worked two years, and get \$10. If I didn't live at home, I couldn't live on this wage."

Miss X., millinery shop, \$12 per week, says: "There are many things I would like to do to improve myself, but my salary only allows me the bare necessities of life."

Miss Z. works in a laundry at a wage of \$9 per week. She states that frequently at the end of the day she is so exhausted that she cannot eat; in one way she is grateful for this weariness because she cannot afford three meals a day, and if she were not tired and felt the need of them she would miss them.



# Welfare Legislation for Women and Minors

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By

REV. EDWIN V. O'HARA

*Chairman*

*Social Survey Committee of the  
Consumers' League of Oregon*



An Address delivered at the annual meeting of the Consumers' League of  
Oregon, held at the Portland Hotel, Portland, Ore.  
Tuesday, November 19, 1912

## PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSED BILL FOR AN INDUSTRIAL WELFARE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN AND MINORS IN THE STATE OF OREGON.

The Governor shall appoint a non-paid Commission of five members, to be known as the Industrial Welfare Commission.

It shall be the duty of this Commission to ascertain the wages, and hours of labor, and conditions of labor, of women and minors in the various occupations in which they are employed.

To this end the Commission shall have power to examine all pay rolls and records showing wages and hours of labor of women and minors.

If, after investigation, the Commission considers that in any occupation the wages paid to female employes are less than enough to maintain the worker in health, or that the hours or conditions of labor are prejudicial to the health of the workers, the Commission is empowered to call a Conference of employers and employes in said occupation.

It shall be the duty of this Conference to report to the Commission a statement of the minimum cost of decent living for the women employes, and the number of hours and conditions consistent with the health of the worker.

The Commission shall review these recommendations and may approve or disapprove any or all of them. If it approves the recommendations of the Conference, it shall give notice of a public hearing on same, and after such public hearing may issue an obligatory order, fixing wages and hours, and conditions of labor.

If the Commission disapproves the recommendations of the Conference, it may re-submit the question to the same or another Conference.

The wages, hours and conditions of labor of minors may be determined in a similar manner.

There shall be right of appeal to the Circuit Court should the determinations of the Commission be considered unjust.

## 1. The responsibility of the State:

The welfare of society imperatively demands the protection of women and minors from all grave and wide-spread influences which would undermine the health or morals of the former or retard or stunt the natural development of the latter. The physical health and moral character of womanhood are the *sine qua non* of social progress. The health and morals of the race will not rise above the standards maintained by the mothers of the race. We live in an age which is demanding better conditions for the rearing of children, — an age which is seriously discussing radical and revolutionary methods to provide that children shall be “well-born.” The primary condition of healthy offspring is a healthy motherhood. Likewise the well-being of society involves the protection of growing boys and girls from conditions of life and labor which are prejudicial to their physical, mental and moral development. The men and women of the future who will have to assume the responsibilities of the world’s progress are the boys and girls of today. Their health, the training of their minds and the formation of their characters is a matter of such consequence to society that it must take precedence over every commercial consideration. No commonwealth can hope to be perpetuated, not to say make progress, which fails to ward off from its women and children pernicious conditions of living and labor. Hence it is that the state must be held responsible for the enforcement of living wages and reasonable hours and decent conditions for its laboring women and minors.

## 2. Insufficient wages a cause of wholesale destitution.

It has been a popular theory that poverty and its attendant evils were inflicted upon people because of their own faults. There is an element of truth in this view, but social investigators will agree that it explains but a small fraction of the industrial deficiency of today. It is acknowledged, too, that there are many persons afflicted with some mental defect which renders them industrially unfit, but the explanation of the overwhelming problem of dependency and delinquency which confronts private and public charity, must be wider and deeper. “There is forced upon us,” said a well-known speaker at the last National Conference of Charities and Corrections. “There is forced upon us the slow, reluctant recognition that there is no more efficient cause of wholesale destitution in the United States than industry.... Insufficient wages underlie a vast proportion of the need for correctional and reformatory work. They entail upon the community child labor, tuberculosis, underfeeding,

lack of refreshing sleep and the consequent nervous breakdown. They underlie industrial employment of mothers whose neglected children consequently fail in health and morals. The children in turn crowd the hospitals, dispensaries, juvenile courts and custodial institutions.... Insufficient wages are proof of incompetent management and of the greed of employers. They presuppose the existence in the community of dishonorable earnings by women employes or charitable supplements to honest girls and their families. Such outside aid must be permanent and continued." (Mrs. Florence Kelly, General Secretary National Consumers' League).

### 3. Parasitic industries' subsidized by the poor.

We often point with pride to the vast amount of charity and philanthropic effort that is lavished on the unfortunate. It would be immensely more to the point to provide a modicum of social justice for the workers, and thus prevent them from becoming objects of charity. In any justly and reasonably organized society, each industry should support the people employed in it. An industry which fails to do so is a parasite upon its employes and their homes. A department store, candy factory, or laundry which pays its young women employes less than they can decently live upon and maintain themselves in health, is in the class of the parasitic male cirripeds, which depend for their existence and nourishment upon the females of the same species. Such an industry is subsidized by its employes. A girl who works steadily for ten hours a day for a wage of five dollars a week, and who has to pay nine dollars a week for room, board, carfare, clothing and laundry, is really contributing not less than four dollars a week subsidy to the profits of the business. The problem is, — where does she get the four dollars? Either her home, her father, mother or brother pays it, or the home gets it from the public or private charity, or it is taken from the earnings of shame. It would seem that if any unprofitable industry is so necessary to society that it must be subsidized, the subsidy should come from other source than the homes of the poor, or the earnings of a life of shame. In parasitic industries, the burden is placed upon the shoulders of the very portion of society least capable of bearing it.

### 4. The case of the girl at home.

There is a widespread opinion that a young woman living at home may reasonably be employed at a less wage than her sister,



who is "adrift," that is, one who has only herself to support. This view involves a double fallacy. Even if a girl lives at home, her food has to be paid for, and she occupies a room which could otherwise be rented to some girl adrift, and bring into the family exactly the sum paid for a room by the girl adrift. Hence the expense of a girl living at home is not substantially less than that of a girl adrift. And all reason demands that the industry should bear that expense. Again, the girl adrift has no one but herself to provide for. The girl living at home, on the contrary, seldom goes into industry unless she is forced to support herself, and often contribute to the support of aged parents or other dependent relatives. Yet there are stores which justify the miserable pittance they give their employes on the specious pretext that they only employ girls who live at home, and consequently that no wrong is done. Such stores foster the opinion that a large percentage of the girls they employ are working only for "pin money,"—just to keep busy and supply themselves with little luxuries. Every investigation which has been held completely negatives this view. The investigators in Portland have found that only an insignificant fraction of the women workers could afford to live at home without work. And in Milwaukee—to instance another typical investigation—of 1189 wage-earning girls interviewed, only six were working from choice.

##### 5. The basis of present wage rates for women.

"Existing wage rates are unbearable," says the authority already quoted, "because they rest on the economic error that all women wage-earners are supported, — at least in part — by men; that every woman has a father, brother, husband, son, or some male relative earning enough money to furnish the bulk of her maintenance, so that she need make merely a contribution. One need not speak in detail of the thousands of widowed mothers with children, of the faithful wives whose husbands are tubercular or are in lunatic asylums or penitentiaries, or disabled by poisons or other industrial injuries.... Women's wages rest on the hypothesis that some contribution comes from elsewhere than themselves. An ugly item in recent finance is the circular issued by the Woolworth Company (United 5c and 10c Stores), notifying subscribers that the investment would be profitable because of the small wages paid to clerks by reason of their youth and consequent cheapness.... I do not believe that wages are adjusted in innocent ignorance. I believe that it can be said justly that wages in the vast field of

retail trade rest upon knowledge that the payroll is eked out by the social evil." These convictions of the General Secretary of the National Consumers' League are shared by social workers in every large city of the country.

#### **6. A sin crying to Heaven for vengeance.**

The case of the girl "adrift" merits special consideration. She is a large factor even among the native American population of western cities. There are hundreds of girls in Portland who have cut loose from family ties in the east, hoping to better their economic condition by coming west. Other hundreds are set adrift here by the shipwreck of homes due to intemperance, divorce or destitution of the parents. Scores of these girls are getting five dollars, six dollars and seven dollars a week in our retail stores, laundries, offices, and factories. It is unnecessary to argue that no young woman can live decently and maintain herself in health upon so meagre an income.

It does not follow that all girls adrift who work for these wages are supplementing them by lives of shame. There are scores of girls here who are living in miserable rooms without heat in winter, who do not get a new dress once a year, but make over their old one until it becomes threadbare, and who can afford but two meals a day. These girls are leading virtuous lives, but they are living on the verge of starvation. How long will their health stand the strain? How long will their resolutions of clean living hold out under the temptation? We are horrified at the recital of atrocities in Africa, where natives are forced to work for their masters under the lash. What shall we say of leading citizens of every large American city who gather in dividends from industries that grind down American girls to indecent and starvation wages, and deliberately pile up profits from the earnings of their shame? Is it not written "He that shedeth blood and he that defraudeth the laborer of his hire are brothers. The bread of the needy is the life of the poor; he that defraudeth them thereof is a man of blood."

#### **7. Every section of the state is vitally concerned.**

Nor should it be supposed that only the larger cities have an interest in this matter. Even supposing it were true that sufficient wages are being paid in the smaller towns, the question is still of vital concern to them. Girls from every village and hamlet are gravitating to the larger centers. No day passes that does not bring

to Portland its quota of girls from the towns and country districts of Oregon in search of employment. They arrive here without friends or influence, without the home circle on which to fall back, perhaps away from home for the first time. Here they come, bright, eager-faced, light-hearted girls; but unskilled, and totally inexperienced. They find a cheap lodging place and begin looking for work.

The big retail stores, naturally, are the Mecca of their first pilgrimage. They make their way to the superintendent's desk, and are accorded an interview with the wonderful man who has so many positions within his gift. They want work? Yes. They are inexperienced? Yes. Well, there are many applicants and few positions, but he will try them out as inspectors. There are ten hours a day to work, of course, and inspectors must be bright and active and careful not to miss an hour through illness or other cause, or they will be docked, because, you know, the store is under heavy expense and must have strictly business methods. And the wages? Why, twenty dollars a month with the prospect of being raised to twenty-five and even thirty dollars a month in the course of a year or two. This is no imaginary situation. There are in Portland individual establishments which employ from sixty to ninety young women inspectors (wrappers) for these wages. I recall the case of one of these girls, who, after some months at the beginner's wage (\$20 per month), asked for a raise in wages, and was given the munificent increase of 50 cents per month! What a roseate prospect opens out before our new arrival in the world of industry! Twenty dollars a month to pay for her room, board, clothing, laundry and carfare, not to speak of stamps with which to send news of her industrial independence to her home to assure her parents that their misgivings about her success in the metropolis were unfounded.

Suppose our friend goes to a paper box factory and is engaged on piece work. She will stand for ten hours a day over a nauseating pot of glue and as she goes to her humble lodging at night, trying to get some fresh air into her lungs on the way, she will figure up her profits at from 65 cents to 80 cents. If she applies at a candy factory or a 5c & 10c store, her experience will not be materially different. These are the actual conditions which will confront an inexperienced girl who comes from any part of the state to seek work in Portland. These are actual, not imaginary conditions, for our investigators have not been satisfied with hearsay, but have themselves gone to work in these various industries

under these conditions. It can readily be seen, therefore, that every section of the state is vitally concerned in the wage conditions of the larger centers.

#### **8. Make freedom of contract an actuality.**

It is urged that any legislation dealing with wages is an invasion of the right of free contract. The answer is obvious. Who will talk of a "free contract" when a young woman with no influence and but a few pennies between her and starvation applies for work in one of our large industries? Freedom is the merest fiction in such a case. "The need of the work is so great and the workers are so numerous that employers may dictate their own terms, limited only by their sense of social responsibility and by the restricted competition of other employment opportunities." What the Consumers' League is urging is not legislation which will destroy freedom of contract, but legislation which will make freedom of contract an actuality and not a ghastly mockery, as it is at present. We want wage bargains to be real bargains, based on mutual knowledge of the facts, and not on the necessities and ignorance of the weaker party.

#### **9. Secrecy about wage schedules; what it evidences.**

One of the striking facts about women's wage schedules is the secrecy which surrounds them. In some cases, the employers impose a promise of secrecy. In many cases, he terrorizes the employes by the fear of dismissal should they let their wages become known. To such an extent is this terrorism carried that in certain large retail establishments in this city, girls working in the same department are afraid to tell each other their wages. Such secrecy is an evidence of the conviction on the part of those employers that the public has no business to know anything about their wage scale. It is a further evidence that their wage scales will not bear inspection, and that these firms are perfectly conscious that they would be held up to execration at the bar of public opinion if it were known that they were grinding down their employes to such indecent wages. The time has come when no industry may be permitted to lock up its payrolls and imperiously tell the public to mind its own business. The payrolls of industries employing women and minors are emphatically records of public concern, and should be open for inspection just as railroad tariffs are open for inspection.

## 10. No standards of wages among unorganized workers.

As a result of this secrecy concerning wage schedules for women employes, it has come to pass that there are absolutely no standards of wages among unorganized women workers. In the words of the report of the Massachusetts Commission on Minimum Wage Boards, "There is a common and widespread, but erroneous view that an economic law by some mysterious process correlates earnings and wages. There is no such law; in fact, in many industries, the wages bear little or no relation to the value or even to the selling price of the workers' output. Wages among the unorganized and lower grades of labor are mainly the result of tradition and of slight competition." The Secretary of that Commission observes, "The books of fifty-seven candy factories, laundries and retail stores were studied by the investigators of the Commission, and the result showed that no principle nor tendency, either according to the size of the establishments, their location or the class of trade to which they cater, underlay the variation in wage scales. Every employer seemed to pay for his labor what he thought 'it was worth,' a mysterious term that no employer was able to elucidate." (Survey, November 9, 1912). The same is true in Portland. There is the most astonishing variation in wages for the same grade of work. And this, as Miss Dewson, Secretary of the Massachusetts Commission, point out, is the irrefutable reply to the objection that interstate competition makes any local attempt to regulate wages impracticable on the ground that it puts an unfair handicap on the local manufacturers. Within the limits of this city may be found numerous cases where two competing concerns pay radically different wages to women employes who produce the same grade of product, and often times the concern paying the higher wage is more prosperous than its competitor.

## 11. The Wage Fund fallacy.

There are those who would discredit any attempt to raise the standard of wages among the poorest paid workers, by the statement that any addition to their wages would mean just so much subtracted from the wages of those who are now better paid. This is an attempt to rehabilitate the discredited wage fund theory of the economists of a century ago. According to that theory, the entire sum available for wages, was determinate, and consequently, the increase of the wages of any group of laborers meant the decrease of wages of some other group. There is no reputable econo-

mist today who holds this theory. It is universally recognized that efficiency in production will in free competition determine the increase in the wage scale above the standard of the poorest paid group. Still, those who are opposed to remedial legislation are assiduous in spreading the opinion among the well-paid employes that for reasons of self-interest they should oppose such welfare legislation. Supposing the wage fund theory were sound, — which it is not, — it might reasonably be asked whether the dictates of self-interest or those of elemental humanity should be listened to.

## 12. The policy of the Consumers' League.

Regulation of the wages of women in the lowest paid occupations would benefit the employes, the employers and the general public. It is demanded as an emergency act to protect the health and morals of women workers; it will raise the general standard of efficiency in industry. In Victoria, Australia, more than half of the ninety-one wage boards now in existence have been asked for by the employers, who were glad to be rid of incompetent and cut-throat competitors. Finally, the health and morals of society at large demand that poverty shall no longer be a by-product of industry. For this reason, the International Conference of Consumers' Leagues, at Geneva, Switzerland, in 1908, in which the representatives of twenty nations participated, laid down the policy for the various national organizations, the policy which the Consumers' League of Oregon is now engaged in promoting, and which may be summed up in the principle that a living wage shall be regarded as a first charge upon industry; that it shall rank with rent and interest and take precedence over profits and dividends.

## 13. An Industrial Welfare Commission.

Your Committee has prepared a preliminary draft of a bill for an Industrial Welfare Commission for women and minors. In the preparation of this bill, your Committee has had the advantage of the experience of the Massachusetts Minimum Wage Boards Commission, of the Legislative Committee of the National Consumers' League, of the officers of the American Association for Labor Legislation, and of scores of the ablest economists, legislators and business men throughout the country. There was practical unanimity among all these authorities as to the general features of the bill, and these have been incorporated in the present draft.

#### 14. Nothing radical or arbitrary in the bill.

There is nothing radical or arbitrary about the provisions of the proposed bill. It provides that each industry or occupation shall be considered according to its own needs. The determination of the wages and conditions of labor in each industry is to be made by a conference of employers and employes and representatives of the public. Before such a determination can be made obligatory, a public hearing must be held, at which all difficulties may be presented. Finally, recourse to the courts is provided in case the determinations of the Commission are judged to be unjust. The whole procedure is eminently fair, above board and democratic. The reasonableness and justice of the measure are apparent to all. Its constitutionality has been looked into by capable lawyers here and in the east who entertain no doubt that the Legislature has full constitutional authority to enact such legislation.

#### 15. Advantage of the proposed legislation.

The proposed legislation is therefore recommended for the following reasons. (Outlined by the Massachusetts Commission):

1. "It would promote the general welfare of the State because it would tend to protect the women workers, and particularly the younger women workers, from the economic distress that leads to impaired health and inefficiency.

2. It would bring employers to a realization of their public responsibilities, and would result in the best adjustment of the interests of the employment and of the women employes.

3. It would furnish to the women employes a means of obtaining the best minimum wages that are consistent with the ongoing of the industry without recourse to strikes or industrial disturbances. It would be the best means of insuring industrial peace so far as this class of employes is concerned.

4. It would tend to prevent exploitation of helpless women, and so far as they are concerned, to do away with "sweating" in our industries.

5. It would diminish the parasitic character of some industries and lessen the burden now resting on other employments.

6. It would enable the employers in any occupation to prevent the undercutting of wages by less humane and considerate competitors.

7. It would stimulate employers to develop the capacity and efficiency of the less competent workers in order that the wages might not be incommensurate with the services rendered.

8. It would accordingly tend to induce employers to keep together their trained workers and to avoid so far as possible seasonal fluctuations.

9. It would tend to heal the sense of grievance in employes, who would become in this manner better informed as to the exigencies of their trade, and it would enable them to interpret more intelligently the meaning of the payroll.

10. It would give the public assurance that these industrial abuses have an effective and available remedy."

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Copies of this pamphlet, as well as other literature and information concerning the proposed bill for an Industrial Welfare Commission can be had by addressing

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