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INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

WOMEN'S WORK
IN 1936

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" I. L. O. YEAR-BOOK 1936-37 "
(Chapter II)

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1937

Women's Work in 1936

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

In the four preceding issues of the *Year-Book*, women's unemployment has been compared with men's unemployment with reference to the seasonal fluctuations in the number of unemployed of each sex in the course of the year. These comparisons indicated a remarkable degree of regularity in the repetition of the same phases from one year to another, suggesting the existence of causes producing the same effect: the employment of female labour in certain kinds of seasonal work, etc.

This year an attempt has been made to compare, not the seasonal fluctuations of unemployment, but the general trend from one year to the next, among men and among women, in those countries for which the seasonal movements of unemployment have already been studied.

Austria. — The unemployment of women remained almost stationary between January 1936 and January 1937, the applications for employment falling slightly from 97,530 to 97,274, or by 0.02 per cent. (men 0.2 per cent.). Taking the figures of unemployed persons in receipt of benefit, there was even a slight rise, the number of women by 286, representing an increase of 0.04 per cent. (men showing a decrease of 0.06 per cent.).

Czechoslovakia. — Unemployment declined among both men and women from December 1935 to December 1936, the date of the most recent figures, but the fall was greater for men, being of 26 per cent. in the number of applications for employment and

of 25 per cent. in the number of unemployed in receipt of benefit, than for women, for whom the corresponding figures were 14 per cent. and 19 per cent. (unemployed women, December 1935: 54,264; December 1936: 43,819; applications for employment, December 1935: 168,096; December 1936: 133,707).

France. — Whereas male unemployment fell from January 1936 to January 1937 (by 17 per cent. in the number of unemployed in receipt of relief and 15 per cent. in the number of applications for employment), the number of applications for employment by women rose from 108,687 to 117,977, and the number of women in receipt of benefit from 95,265 to 105,426, increases of 8 per cent. and 10 per cent. respectively.

Germany. — From January 1936 to January 1937 unemployment diminished very considerably among both men and women, but the decline was particularly noticeable in women's unemployment, which fell from 443,144 to 277,788 (figures of applications for employment registered by the employment exchanges), or by 37 per cent. (men, 27 per cent.). The figures of persons registered as unemployed show an even steeper decline in women's unemployment: 40 per cent. (men, 23 per cent.).

Great Britain. — Between the same dates, unemployment among both women and men diminished, but the fall was smaller in the case of women: the fall in the number of applications for employment was 22 per cent. for men and 17 per cent. for women; that in the number of unemployed in receipt of benefit was 17 per cent. for men and 11 per cent. for women, the absolute figure for women falling from 273,332 to 242,537.

Poland. — The general trend of unemployment was in the opposite direction, for the figures rose from 1936 to 1937, and at almost the same rate for both sexes, the increase being 11 per cent. for men and 12 per cent. for women (women unemployed in January 1936: 68,300; in January 1937: 77,074).

To sum up, of the six countries considered, three (Czechoslovakia, Germany and Great Britain) had a fall in the number of women unemployed between 1936 and 1937; in one country (Austria) the unemployment of women remained stationary; in the other two (France and Poland) the unemployment of women increased considerably. Compared with the figures for male unemployment, those relating to female unemployment show that everywhere, except Germany, the evolution of the employment market was less advantageous to women than to men during the past year. In one of the six countries considered (France) female unemployment increased considerably, while male unemployment declined.

Special measures were adopted in several countries in order to meet the special difficulties encountered by women workers on the

employment market, and to reduce the unemployment of women.

Canada. — An advisory committee composed of women was appointed to assist the National Employment Commission. The task of this Committee is to investigate and report on measures to aid unemployed women and girls in securing employment. The programme of re-employment for girls is to comprise a number of local projects to be carried out in all the larger centres throughout the country.

Great Britain. — Plans for the transfer of unemployed from the hard-hit "special areas" in the north west to regions offering better prospects of employment were applied during the year; but difficulties were experienced in the case of unemployed women, since about half of those registered with the employment exchanges were married and could not be separated from their families; in many cases too, parents objected to the transfer of their daughters. The special training centres for the unemployed set up by the Ministry of Labour were rather more active in their work for women in 1936 than in 1935; in April 1936, according to a statement made in the House of Commons, 1,425 women were trained at the centres, as compared with 1,183 in 1935.

India. — The Government of Bihar submitted to the Government of India a scheme to provide employment for the women workers of the mines of Jharia, who, as a result of the statutory prohibition of their employment underground, will be dismissed in July 1937; it is proposed to open three schools for training women in hand and basket work and for organising the marketing of the articles produced.

United States. — The women's Division of the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) continued to be very active. According to its report presented in February 1936, 380,000 women had been given work by that date on W.P.A. projects. About half of them were given employment in serving shops, while the rest were engaged in connection with numerous other schemes, some of very great interest: about 22,000 were engaged in clerical and survey work, 12,500 in repairing library books, 9,000 in serving hot meals, in particular to under-nourished schoolchildren; others, again, in activities connected with social hygiene, music, drama, literature, scientific research, popular education, etc. In May 1936, 400,000 women (16 per cent. of the total) were employed under the W.P.A. Works Programme; about 33 per cent. of the persons employed on the projects for professional and technical work were women. The National Youth Administration of the W.P.A. has opened a number of special camps for girls and young women from 16 to 25 years of age coming from assisted families and showing an interest in continuing their general or vocational

education. At the beginning of 1936 it was estimated that 5,000 young women could be assisted through these camps.

Following on a study, carried out by the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labour, of the possibilities for re-employment of women textile workers who lost their work in New England owing to the transfer of factories to the southern States, the Department of Labour published on 5 March 1936 recommendations for developing various industries and services which might be expected to meet the economic situation and needs of the area in question. It is hoped that similar studies will be made in other States.

In addition to special measures for the absorption of the unemployed, certain general measures were adopted for improving the placing and vocational training of women.

Austria. — An Order of 2 December 1936 and two further Orders of 29 December relate to the organisation of voluntary labour service for girls, under the authority of the Women's Section of the National Front. The total number of girls affected is about 900.

Belgium. — The National Employment and Unemployment Office has carried out a number of reforms, including an improvement of the system of placing women in employment.

Finland. — An Order of 23 July 1936 authorises hospital nurses' organisations to undertake the placing of members under the conditions laid down in the new Employment Exchange Act.

France. — A Decree of 9 June 1936 defines the competency of the new Under-Secretary of State for Education, which included all questions relating to vocational guidance and training for girls and their admission to the public service.

Germany. — A National Employment Exchange Service was created for the so-called feminine occupations, to deal primarily with the placing of social assistants, youth leaders, technical assistants, teachers in schools for vocational education or agricultural domestic economy, etc. A Decree of the National Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance, dated 24 March 1937, aims also at organising and facilitating the placing of women migrant and seasonal workers in undertakings in the food industry.

By an Order of 15 August 1936, the Girls' Labour Service, hitherto under the National Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance, was placed under the authority of the German Labour Service. A Decree of 26 September 1936 provides for the systematic development of the Girls' Labour Service—hitherto voluntary—with a view to introducing com-

pulsory service. The same Decree stipulates that the strength of the Service should be increased to 25,000 between April 1937 and March 1938.

Japan. — In application of the Employment Exchanges Act of 22 May 1936, which came into force on 1 September 1936 and provides for the opening of employment exchanges by municipal and local authorities, eight special exchanges for women had been set up by 30 September, while eight other exchanges had opened a special section for the placing of women.

Venezuela. — The Labour Act of 15 July 1936 provides that wherever there is a large movement of female labour, a local employment office, to be directed by a woman, must be set up.

The tendency to direct women into domestic service, already indicated in preceding issues of the *Year-Book*, continued in some countries. Efforts were directed principally towards the organisation of systematic training, not only for the purpose of fitting unemployed factory-trained women for domestic service, but also for that of raising the professional standard of domestic service. Reference is made here only to those new measures affecting domestic employment which have a bearing on the redistribution of female labour on the employment market.

Australia. — The Ministers of Labour and Industry of the various States, at a conference held in Sydney in January 1936, recommended that a questionnaire should be addressed to all employment agencies and women's organisations, in order to obtain information on conditions of employment in domestic service. Proposals were also made by the Prime Minister to the several States for the partial relaxation of restrictions on immigration from England, and especially for the admission of female household workers.

Canada. — The opening of training schools for domestic service figures among the schemes for the placing of unemployed women.

Denmark. — With a view to remedying the shortage of labour in domestic service, the Director of Labour has organised courses of training in domestic work, the expenses being borne by the Unemployment Fund. He held that Danish women should be trained for this employment and that the number of permits granted to foreigners to enter domestic service in Denmark should be restricted on the ground that once they had been admitted they compete with national workers in the industrial field.

Germany. — A Decree of 6 February 1937 of the National Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance strengthens the organisation of the agricultural and domestic Labour Service for girls. Their agricultural training is given in camps and they help in the domestic work on farms; they

must undertake to remain in agriculture for nine months, including the time passed in the training camp. Similarly, the Girls' Labour Service is being called upon to give more help in work on the land.

Great Britain. — The employment situation in domestic service has frequently been the subject of questions in the House of Commons, owing to the reluctance of British girls to enter this occupation. According to a reply given by the Minister of Labour, the inclusion of domestic service among the occupations insured against unemployment could not be considered for the moment, but the Government had opened training centres for domestic work. In March 1937 there were 7 such centres where the pupils were given lodging, and 30 where they lived out, providing in all for 1,284 pupils. This scheme is administered by the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment. The course usually lasts thirteen weeks, or even more for young girls. The centres undertake to place their pupils in employment.

Netherlands. — The efforts, referred to in the last issue of the *Year-Book*¹, to direct national labour into domestic service continued. The Ministry of Social Affairs, with the assistance of various women's associations, organised courses of domestic instruction. Under the Decree of 6 June 1936 regulating the employment of aliens, the employment of foreign servants usually requires the written permit of the Directorate for Unemployment Insurance and Employment Exchanges.

PLACE OF WOMEN'S WORK IN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM

The improvement in the employment market has led to a considerable change in State policy and organised public opinion in regard to the paid employment of women. The great majority of official measures adopted in 1936, and of resolutions passed at meetings and congresses, were favourable to the right of women to work, or even supported an extension of their employment.

Certain restrictive measures must, however, be mentioned.

Germany. — A Decree of the Minister of Justice, dated 10 January 1936, prohibited the admission of women to the career of judge or public prosecutor. Only women assessors who have already been in service for a number of years are admitted to higher posts in the administrative service of the courts, including the position of first secretary.

In Bavaria the Church Council repealed the law admitting women students to theological examinations with a view to entering the clerical profession.

¹ Cf. *I.L.O. Year-Book 1935-36*, p. 183.

Hungary. — The Ministerial Council has adopted regulations for the profession of barrister which exclude women.

Netherlands. — The draft Bill mentioned in the *Year-Book* for 1935-36¹, limiting women's work in factories, workshops and offices, was replaced by a Bill introduced by the Minister of Labour and passed by the Lower House on 30 March 1937. This Bill provides that for occupations employing mainly male labour before 1934 public administrative regulations may fix the percentage of women and girls among the staff required to carry out a specified piece of work in a factory or workshop. This measure is regarded as an emergency measure, and it is proposed to keep it in force only for three years.

Portugal. — A Legislative Decree of 24 April 1936 provides that typing work in all the public services, hitherto done by female typists only, may be done by male typists. In application of Decree No. 24402, mentioned in the *Year-Book* for 1935-36², regulations of 24 November 1936 limit the employment of women in the hotel industry in Lisbon.

Several countries, on the other hand, abolished or relaxed previous restrictions or enlarged the field of employment open to women.

Australia. — The Industrial Court of Queensland refused a claim of a trade organisation for the prohibition of the employment of married women whose husbands earn at least the basic wage.

Belgium. — The provision of the Order of 31 May 1933, reducing the unemployment benefit of unemployed men whose wives are employed—an Order whose suspension was indicated in the last issue of the *Year-Book*³—was finally repealed.

Canada. — The regulation prohibiting the employment of married women in public service was relaxed under the Ordinance (No. 3/3020) of 26 November 1936, which gives women who have been separated from their husbands the same right as that of unmarried women to be employed in public services.

France. — The Council of State made an Order in July 1936 recognising the right of women to compete with men for all civil posts in State service, but providing for exceptions to meet the special needs of service in the case of certain posts.

For some posts the throwing open of the examinations was accompanied by the fixing of a maximum of 50 per cent. for the admission of women candidates.

¹ Cf. *I.L.O. Year-Book 1935-36*, p. 183.

² Cf. *I.L.O. Year-Book 1935-36*, p. 185.

³ Cf. *I.L.O. Year-Book 1935-36*, p. 186.

Germany. — The Order of 28 August 1934 was repealed, and that of 27 November 1936, which took its place, while it contains provisions favourable to the engagement of fathers of families of 40 years of age and over, does not provide for the replacement of the younger workers of either sex. The Women's Office of the Labour Front has pointed out that the same provisions ought to be applied to elderly women workers with dependants. Another Order of 27 November 1936 repealed that of 17 May 1934, which made the engagement of domestic servants and female agricultural workers by preserve factories, hotels, restaurants and cafés conditional upon special authorisation. As regards marriage loans, hitherto granted on condition that the woman beneficiary gives up paid employment, the Order of 28 July 1936 authorises the Minister of Finance to permit in exceptional cases the employment of such beneficiaries, even when the husband cannot be considered as indigent. At the same date the Minister signed a Decree authorising the employment of such women as charwomen or in temporary harvesting work. Later, on 30 October 1936 and 7 December 1936, two other Decrees authorised respectively the employment of beneficiaries of marriage loans as special assistants in retail establishments during the Christmas period and stocktaking sales, and their employment while the husband does his military or labour service. The committee responsible for admitting doctors to employment under the social insurance scheme laid down that insured men have no more right to demand treatment by male doctors than have insured women to demand treatment by female doctors; in consequence, the sex of a doctor should not prevent his or her admission to service with the social insurance fund of a given locality. In another decision the same committee expressed itself in favour of the principle of equality between men and women as regards their admission to employment as social insurance doctors, an exception, however, being made in the case of married women doctors¹.

Finally, on several occasions during the year, the authorities, and in particular the President of the National Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance, expressly recognised the necessity and utility of women's work, on condition that women are not employed in work harmful to their health.

Great Britain. — Measures were taken in connection with the adoption of a new Act concerning midwives to prevent restrictions by the local authorities in regard to the employment of married midwives.

Sweden. — The Population Commission and the Women's Work Committee, set up by the Government in 1935, have carried out a joint enquiry into the question of married women's work in relation to the problem of the birth rate. They recently ended

¹ Cf. *I.L.O. Year-Book 1934-35*, p. 176, and *I.L.O. Year-Book 1935-36*, p. 185.

their investigations, and concluded by condemning, from the point of view of the declining birth rate, the policy pursued by certain provincial and communal authorities and by certain large companies, which dismiss their women employees on marriage or, even if they continue to employ them after marriage, dismiss them on pregnancy. The enquiry showed that in all classes of the population cases frequently occur in which young people are able to marry only if the woman is able to retain her paid employment, at least for the time being.

U.S.S.R. — The new Constitution, approved on 5 December 1936, gives women equal rights with men in every sphere of economic, public, and social life, and in particular in all matters concerning labour, wages, education, etc. An Order issued on 8 July 1936 by the Executive Committee of the General Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. requires labour inspectors to see to the regular employment of young women on productive work and ensure their promotion to more skilled work. According to statistics published on the occasion of Women's Day, 8 March 1937, the number of women in employment continued to rise. In 1936 the Soviet economic system gave work to 8,492,000 women workers and salaried employees (1935, 7,964,000), representing 34 per cent. of the total number of employed persons (1935, 33.4 per cent.). In large-scale industry there were 2,908,000 women (1935, 2,624,000) representing 38.8 per cent of the total number of workers in such industry. 15,338 women were engaged in scientific work, and 42,353 in the medical profession, representing almost half of the total number of doctors in the Union. The number of women students in higher education, technical schools, and workers' colleges was 575,973 (1928, 129,000).

While it is impossible to cite here the motions of the many congresses which devoted concerned attention to the problem of women's place in the economic system and approved the principle of free access for women to paid employment and to the professions, the following resolutions must be mentioned: the resolution on women's right to work adopted by the International Conference of Women Trade Unionists (London, 7 July 1936) and approved by the Executive of the International Federation of Trade Unions on 22 October 1936; the various resolutions of the Congress of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (Paris, July 1936); the resolution passed by the Liaison Committee of Major International Associations in connection with its study of unemployment among intellectual workers (meeting of 7 July 1936); the decision of the National Committee of the Belgian Trade Union Committee (17 March 1936) against the exclusion of women from paid employment, on the one condition that their employment is not abused as a means of lowering wages; the resolutions of the Fifteenth Congress of the Departmental Labour Commissions of France (Mulhouse, July 1936) and of the Congress of the French National Federation of Salaried Employees' Unions (Strasbourg,

April 1936) against every restriction on women's right to work; the declaration of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (15 December 1936) calling for the abolition of the restrictions placed on the employment of married women during the depression, and for a return to full respect of women's right to work. The International Congress on Technical Education (Rome, December 1936) discussed the question of training women for their special economic functions with due regard to their competence to study manual and technical trades and without neglecting other branches open to them, such as teaching, the liberal professions, and administrative work; the Congress held that steps should be taken to develop technical schools and courses for women or open to women, to provide general instruction at school on domestic work, and to extend vocational guidance for girls.

On the other hand, while several Congresses of Christian trade unions, and in particular those of the International Federation of Christian Salaried Employees' Unions (Karlovy-Vary, 16 May 1936) and the Belgian National Federation of Christian Salaried Employees (April 1936), called for the return of the mother to the home, they did not declare themselves in favour of legal prohibition, but only of the introduction of indirect measures, such as family allowances, enabling married women to remain at home. Further, after taking note of a preliminary enquiry into the return of employed married women to the home as a means of combating unemployment, the Council of the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions decided (Luxemburg, 23 May 1936) to organise study days in September to examine the whole question of women's work; these study courses, which have not yet led to any final decisions, took place as decided.

GENERAL PROTECTION OF WOMEN WORKERS

In this section an account is given of measures for the protection of women workers supplementing the information under the headings "Employment of Women before and after Childbirth" and "Night Work of Women".

International Regulation

*Convention No. 45: Underground Work (Women), 1935*¹

Austria. — The Council of Ministers decided at its sitting on 24 June 1936 to initiate the procedure required by the Constitution for the introduction of federal legislation prohibiting the employment of women on underground work in mines and bringing national legislation into accordance with the provisions of the Convention. When this legislation has been promulgated, ratification of the Convention will be proposed to the President of the Confederation.

¹ The information given here relates only to the period 16 March 1936-15 March 1937. See the tables at the end of the volume for the general situation as regards the Convention.

Belgium. — A Bill for the approval of the Convention was submitted to the Chamber of Representatives on 9 February 1937.

Brazil. — Submitted to the National Congress on 28 October 1936 by a Message from the President of the Republic proposing approval. The provisions of the Convention are already embodied in the national legislation on the subject (section 5 of Decree No. 21.417-A of 17 May 1932).

Canada. — Referred to the Department of Justice with a view to determining whether the subject-matter involved is within Dominion or provincial competence.

China. — Ratification registered on 2 December 1936.

Cuba. — Ratification registered on 14 April 1936.

Finland. — The Government proposed ratification to Parliament on 12 March 1937.

France. — Bill for the ratification of the Convention submitted to the Chamber of Deputies on 13 August 1936.

Great Britain. — Ratification registered on 18 July 1936.

Greece. — Ratification registered on 30 May 1936.

India. — Submitted to the Governor-General in Council, who issued regulations for prohibiting the employment of women underground in mines.

Iraq. — The Government stated that the Convention dealt with a branch of industry which did not exist in Iraq, and therefore saw no need to ratify it.

Irish Free State. — Ratification registered on 20 August 1936.

Japan. — Submitted to the Privy Council on 19 December 1936.

Latvia. — Submitted to the Council of Ministers on 21 December 1936.

Netherlands. — Ratification registered on 20 February 1937.

New Zealand. — Submitted to the House of Representatives on 11 September 1936 and to the Legislative Council on 17 September 1936.

Peru. — By Decree of 6 March 1936 the President of the Republic approved the Convention and submitted it to Congress for ratification.

Siam. — The competent authorities considered that under the existing conditions of labour in the country the application of the Convention was not as yet necessary in Siam and consequently did not feel it appropriate to take any action in the matter at the present time.

Sweden. — Ratification registered on 11 July 1936.

Switzerland. — In a report submitted on 20 April 1936 to the Federal Assembly the Federal Council proposed that ratification of the Convention should be postponed.

The number of women employed in general in mines and quarries is insignificant and the ratification of the Convention by Switzerland would be of no practical importance. To make ratification possible the legislation respecting employment in factories would have to be amended by adding to some of the clauses dealing with its application, and so far as industrial undertakings are concerned which are not classified as factories, by issuing special regulations under the Act respecting employment of young persons and women in arts and crafts (section 8). These two Acts, moreover, exclude undertakings in which only members of the same family are employed, while no such exception is allowed by the Convention.

A possible amendment of national legislation to bring it into conformity with the Convention by means of a special Decree under the Sickness and Accident Insurance Act would also raise objections, since the Convention is not concerned entirely with the question of protection against accidents. Since the Convention is of no practical interest to Switzerland, the Federal Council considers that in the present circumstances it should first be ascertained what will be the attitude to the Convention of the countries which are actually

concerned by it. The Federal Council reserves the right to re-examine the question, taking into account the situation which may develop in the countries in question.

The Federal Assembly approved these conclusions on 17 and 19 June 1936.

Turkey. — The ratification of the Convention was recommended to the Grand National Assembly.

Union of South Africa. — Ratification registered on 25 June 1936.

United States. — Submitted by the President to Congress on 18 June 1936.

U.S.S.R. — Submitted to the competent authorities.

National Regulations

Besides ratifications based on legislation already in existence, the Underground Work (Women) Convention gave several countries an opportunity to make new regulations.

Belgium. — An Act of 5 May 1936, adopted as a preparatory measure to ratification, extended to quarries the legislative measures prohibiting the employment of women underground. The extension makes no change in the actual situation, since no woman is at present employed on this kind of work in Belgium.

India. — Regulation M. 1055 of 1 February 1937 advanced by two years the final date for the gradual abolition of the employment of women underground in mines, fixing it at 1 July 1937 (instead of 1 July 1939 as laid down in the Regulation of 1929). At this date the employment of women underground in mines will be absolutely prohibited except for women employed in the health and welfare services of the mining undertakings.

Several countries where the employment of women underground in mines was not practised nevertheless issued regulations prohibiting such employment: *Turkey, Syria and Lebanon*, the French Colony of *Indo-China*, the British Colonies of *Bechuanaland, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Uganda*. In the regulations concerning Cyprus and Seychelles, as well as in a new Austrian Act (No. 70 of March 1937) bringing national legislation into conformity with the Convention, exceptions are admitted, as in the Convention, for women workers not engaged in manual work.

Among other measures, the most important relate to the setting up of special services for the protection of women's work, as advocated in a resolution of the Labour Conference of the American States Members of the Organisation (Santiago-de-Chile, 2 January 1936).

Cuba. — The Decree of 3 November 1936 provides for the creation in the provincial labour offices of a labour service for women and children, placed under a woman inspector, to study, recommend, and enforce measures of protective legislation.

Paraguay. — A National Labour Department was established by the Legislative Decree of 24 June 1936, to deal among other things with the regulation of women's employment.

United States. — A special Bureau of Women and Children was established in Louisiana and a Division of Women and Children in the State Department of Labour in Rhode Island. The Department of Industrial Relations of Kentucky was made specially responsible for the application of laws relating to the employment of women and children.

Venezuela. — The Labour Act of 15 July 1936 stipulates that the inspection services responsible for supervising industrial centres must, as far as possible, employ women for the supervision of the application of laws relating to women and children.

Various regulations were issued prohibiting the employment of women in different kinds of arduous labours: in *Germany*, regulations were introduced on 22 June and 7 November 1936 dealing with the carrying of heavy loads and with working at excessive speed at belt conveyors, etc.; in *Portugal* Regulations were adopted on 3 October 1935 dealing with the handling of certain machines. Other regulations deal with unhealthy and dangerous work: *Australia* (New South Wales, Order of 29 October 1936); *Honduras* (Constitution of 28 March 1936); *India* (three Regulations of 18 March 1937); *Iraq* (Act No. 72 of 1936); *Italy* (Decree of 7 August 1936); *Turkey* (Code of 8 June 1936); the French Colonies of *East Africa*, *French India*, *Indo-China*, *New Caledonia* and *Somali-land*; the Mandated Territories of *Lebanon* and *Syria*.

Among positive measures protecting the health of women workers, the provision of seats was prescribed in *Uruguay* for women (26 June 1935) and in *Venezuela* for the whole staff of commercial establishments (30 April 1936).

Regulations were issued in *Argentina* and in *New Zealand* concerning the observance of the weekly rest for women; and new legislative provisions in *Australia* (New South Wales), *Canada* (Alberta), *United States* (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Kansas) and *India* (Central Provinces) deal with the reduction of women's working hours.

Women's conditions of employment in certain occupations were in many countries improved through regulations or made the subject of enquiries.

Belgium. — A Bill was introduced to extend the Eight-Hour Day Act to nurses and the staff of hospitals. The Minister of Labour ordered an enquiry into women's conditions of employment in large stores, and reminded the Advisory Committee on Women's Work of his request for an enquiry into women's conditions of employment in agriculture.

U.S.S.R. — A decision of 17 June 1936 granted typists a supplementary holiday of six working days, in addition to their regular annual holiday of twelve days.

The conditions of employment and life in an essentially feminine occupation, namely domestic service, are more and more occupying the attention of Governments and of trade and philanthropic organisations.

As an unmistakable sign of the interest that is being taken in this subject, mention may be made of the Resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Session of June 1936, requesting the Governing Body to place the question of holidays with pay for domestic servants on the Agenda of a future session of the Conference, and to consider whether other conditions of domestic servants' employment could form the subject of international regulation.

Besides the action mentioned in the section on employment and unemployment, certain official measures were taken to improve conditions of employment in general in this occupation. Some were only preparatory, consisting in enquiries intended to discover what abuses called for remedy and the best remedies to adopt. In some countries, however, general or partial regulations were introduced for this occupation, or draft regulations were studied.

Argentina. — The government of the Province of Cordova submitted to the Provincial Parliament a Domestic Service Bill relating to daily and weekly rest, board and lodging, etc.

Austria. — An Act of 9 December 1936 prohibits the employment of minors in domestic service by persons who have been sentenced in the courts for any offence endangering the health or physical wellbeing of others, or for an offence against public morals.

Belgium. — A Bill on domestic servants' contracts of employment was introduced in Parliament on 3 July 1936. A Royal Order of 10 May 1936 prescribes the organisation of higher courses in domestic economy and house-work.

Canada. — Government agencies in five Provinces directed their attention to the improvement of the situation of domestic servants. In Manitoba a Bill which passed its second reading would extend minimum wage legislation to domestic servants—a measure now being called for in other Provinces. In the same Province an investigating committee was formed. In British Columbia an enquiry is being made into conditions of employment in domestic service. In these Provinces, as in Alberta, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, the Governments are assisting in the organisation of training courses for domestic workers.

Estonia. — The Act relating to contracts of employment, which came into force on 1 January 1937, contains a section relating to the contracts of domestic servants.

France. — The Act of 20 June 1936 introducing annual paid holidays states that subsequent regulations will define a method of applying the reform to domestic servants. Various motions and Bills were submitted to Parliament for the introduction of family allowances for domestic servants or the regulation of their hours of work and other conditions.

Mexico. — The programme of the Labour Department includes the study of measures for the protection of domestic workers.

Sweden. — The first report of the committee of enquiry set up two years earlier was published. It recommends the creation of a State school and of courses for the development of vocational training for domestic servants, as a first step towards a general improvement of this occupation. Other reports will be published subsequently.

United States. — The Department of Labour and Factory Inspection of Connecticut recently carried out an extensive enquiry into the conditions of employment in domestic service. In the city of Saint Louis (Missouri) a more limited enquiry was also carried out.

The situation of the young domestic servants known as "muit-sai" was the subject of the following measures. In *China* Regulations of 22 January 1936 aim at the abolition of this system and provide for the immediate registration of girls engaged under it; they also prescribe the measures to be taken by the supervisory authorities in order to ensure the regulation of the conditions of employment of those girls who remain with their masters as paid domestic servants. In *Hong Kong* and *Malaya* a new enquiry was undertaken by a committee specially formed for the purpose in March 1936; the majority report of the committee favours the maintenance of the present system of regulation with certain modifications. In the Malay State of *Trengganu* similar regulations were introduced in Order No. 1 of 1354 (1935).

Private organisations also made great efforts for the improvement of conditions of employment in domestic service, collaborating in several countries with Governments.

A number of congresses, some international, e.g. Far Eastern Congress of the Y.W.C.A.; Congress of the International Association of Girls' Friendly Societies; Congress of the International Federation of National Unions of Girls' Friendly Societies, some national, e.g. the Conference held by the various Australian women's associations, discussed at length the problems connected with domestic service, and in some cases adopted resolutions with a view to practical action.

In several countries enquiries were conducted by women's associations. In *Canada* the national branch of the Y.W.C.A. proposed, for the voluntary acceptance of the employers, a code of working conditions for domestic servants; trade unions open to both men and women and women's associations in Alberta, British

Columbia, and Ontario worked for the extension of minimum wage legislation to domestic servants; in Saskatchewan they called upon the Government to prepare more general legislation relating to domestic service. In Denmark certain women's organisations set up a committee of enquiry, and presented to the Government a report upon conditions of domestic employment. In *Estonia* the Union for Social Progress carried out an enquiry into conditions of employment in domestic service. In *Norway*, where the Government set up a committee of women to study the situation of domestic servants and to prepare a Bill, a kind of domestic employment guild was formed, which adopted rules concerning conditions in domestic service, to be respected by members of the guild.

As regards home work, another essentially feminine occupation, and one fraught with very great problems at present acutely in evidence, a number of new measures were adopted during the year. They are dealt with in a section devoted especially to this profession¹.

NIGHT WORK

*International Regulation*²

Convention No. 4: Night Work (Women) Convention, 1919.

Great Britain. — Ratification denounced on 25 January 1937 in consequence of ratification of Convention No. 41.

Greece. — Ratification denounced on 30 June 1936 in consequence of ratification of Convention No. 41.

Hungary. — Ratification denounced on 18 December 1936 in consequence of ratification of Convention No. 41.

Irish Free State. — Ratification denounced on 15 March 1937 in consequence of ratification of Convention No. 41.

Netherlands. — Act voted by Parliament (Lower House 20 March 1937; Upper House 6 April 1937) denouncing the Convention.

Peru. — By Decree of 6 March 1936 the President of the Republic approved the Convention and submitted it to Congress for ratification.

Switzerland. — Ratification denounced on 4 June 1936 in consequence of ratification of Convention No. 41.

Convention No. 41: Night Work (Women) (Revised) Convention, 1934.

Belgium. — A Bill for the approval of the Convention was submitted to the Chamber of Representatives on 9 February 1937.

A Bill to bring national legislation (Act respecting the employment of women and children) into conformity with the Convention was promulgated on 7 April 1936.

Brazil. — Ratification registered on 8 June 1936.

France. — A Bill for the ratification of the Convention was submitted to the Chamber of Deputies on 13 August 1936.

¹ See below, Chapter VIII, under "Home Work".

² The information given here relates only to the period 16 March 1936-15 March 1937. See the tables at the end of the volume for the general situation regarding the Conventions.

Great Britain. — Ratification registered on 25 January 1937.

Greece. — Ratification registered on 30 May 1936.

Hungary. — Ratification registered on 18 December 1936.

Irish Free State. — Ratification registered on 15 March 1937.

Japan. — The Privy Council decided on 22 April 1936 not to ratify the Convention.

Peru. — By Decree of 6 March 1936 the President of the Republic approved the Convention and submitted it to Congress for ratification.

Switzerland. — Ratification registered on 4 June 1936.

U.S.S.R. — Submitted to the competent authorities.

Yugoslavia. — Submitted to Parliament on 31 December 1936.

National Regulations

In addition to the above-mentioned measures indicating the attitudes of different States with regard to the international Conventions, a number of new legislative enactments are to be recorded.

Albania. — An Act of 19 May 1936 prohibits night work of women between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. in handicraft and industrial establishments.

China. — Order No. 653 of 9 December 1936 extended for a further year the period preparatory to the application of section 13 of the Factory Act prohibiting the employment of women during the night.

French Colonies. — A number of regulations were adopted in the French Colonies prohibiting the night work of women: in *French India* between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. (Decree of 6 April 1937); in *Indo-China* between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. for European and assimilated women in industry (Decree of 24 February 1937), and between the same hours for Native women in industry and commerce (Decree of 30 December 1936); in *French Somaliland* between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. for Native women workers; in the French Mandated Territories of *Lebanon* (Act of 17 April 1935) and *Syria* (Decree of 14 June 1936) between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. for women in industry.

Great Britain. — The Hours of Employment (Conventions) Act of 1936, which applies the Convention in its revised form, exempts from the prohibition of night work all women in responsible positions of management in factories and mines. The amendment of the Act dealing with the employment of women in shifts, referred to in the last issue of the *Year-Book*¹, was passed (Employment of Women and Young Persons Act, 1936). The new Act authorises the Home Secretary to permit, after consultation with the workers

¹ Cf. *I.L.O. Year-Book 1935-36*, p. 196.

concerned, the employment of women and young persons aged 16 and upwards on a system of shifts at any times between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. (6 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday); the length of each shift must not exceed an average of 8 hours a day. Special conditions may also be imposed for safeguarding the welfare of the workers. An Order of 31 December 1936 defines the procedure to be followed in the consultation of workers.

In *British Honduras* the Constitution of 28 March 1936 prohibits the night work of women in general in industry, and their employment after 6 p.m. in commerce. In *Uganda*, Ordinance No. 1 of 1936 amended the Ordinance of 1931 concerning the employment of women, introducing the definition of the term "night" employed in the Washington Convention.

India. — The Central Provinces Unregulated Factories Act (No. XXI, 1937) prohibits the employment of women between sunset and sunrise in factories not covered by the Indian Factories Act of 1934.

Irish Free State. — The Conditions of Employment Act, 1936, regulates the night work of women, prohibiting the employment of women on industrial work between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. and prescribing an uninterrupted rest of 11 hours, except in certain specified cases, e.g. for supervising and managing staff. A number of Orders made under this Act authorise the employment of women before 8 a.m. in certain occupations.

Japan. — Section 7 of the Regulations concerning the employment of miners, as amended by further Regulations of 6 July 1936, prohibits the employment of women in mines between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., or by permit, between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

New Zealand. — The Factories Amendment Act of 8 June 1936 introduced a slight change in the period during which the employment of women in factories is prohibited; this now runs from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Switzerland. — A Federal Order of 9 October 1936 regulating hours in the watchmaking industry prohibits the employment of workers of both sexes between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. in small establishments not falling under the Factory Act and in family undertakings. For women, an uninterrupted rest period of 11 hours is prescribed.

Turkey. — The Labour Code of 8 June 1936 prohibits the night work of women in industry between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.

United States. — In Kansas, four Ordinances of the Labour and Industry Commission (Nos. 1-4) prohibit the employment of women in manufacturing occupations and laundry occupations

(laundry, dyeing, dry-cleaning and pressing establishments) between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., in mercantile occupations after 9 p.m. (with a few exceptions), and in public house-keeping (hotels, restaurants, etc.) between midnight and 5 a.m. for women of under 21 years of age.

In Massachusetts an Act of 1936, slightly amending previous legislation, prohibits the employment of women between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. in industry in general, and between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. in the textile industry, except where such employment is authorised by the Commissioner of Labour.

Venezuela. — The Labour Act of 15 July 1936 prohibits the night work of men between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. and that of women between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. in establishments of every kind, the only exceptions to be specified later in administrative Orders.

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN BEFORE AND AFTER CHILDBIRTH

*International Regulation*¹

Convention No. 3: Childbirth 1919

Peru. — By Decree of 6 March 1936 the President of the Republic approved the Convention and submitted it to Congress for ratification.

U.S.S.R. — Submitted to the competent authorities.

National Regulations

While there were no ratifications of the 1919 Convention in 1936, a very large number of legislative provisions were adopted and practical improvements made in regard to maternity protection.

Argentina. — The maternity insurance scheme is coming into force: a Decree of 15 April 1936 provides for the administration of the Act of 1934.

An Act of 30 December 1936 and Regulations of 11 March 1937 for its administration set up a Maternity and Child Welfare Board to study welfare questions, supervise and co-ordinate the work of official and private welfare institutions, spread knowledge relating to maternity hygiene, and establish institutions for furnishing assistance to mothers and children: consultation centres, homes for deserted mothers, maternity hospitals, home visiting services, crèches, kindergartens, etc.

Australia. — The Finance Act of 1936 provides for an increase in the credit for maternity allowances.

¹ The information given here relates only to the period 16 March 1936-15 March 1937. See the tables at the end of the volume for the general situation in regard to the Convention.

In the Mandated Territory of *New Guinea* the Native Labour Ordinance No. 20 of 1935 prohibits the employment of women during the month preceding and the month following confinement.

Brazil. — The Act of 13 January 1937 reorganising the Ministry of Education and Health provides that the Health Department shall include a section for maternity and child welfare.

Bulgaria. — A Legislative Decree of 5 September 1936 relating to contracts of employment establishes for all women workers the right to a paid maternity leave of six weeks, during which time the employer must pay half the daily wage unless the woman is insured. The Decree prohibits dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy and confinement, and provides for an extension of the statutory leave up to three months in case of sickness.

Canada. — In British Columbia, a Health Insurance Act passed in 1936, but not yet in force, deals also with maternity insurance.

Chile. — Regulations of 21 August 1936 established a voluntary insurance scheme for employers, which permits them to transfer to the Compulsory Insurance Fund, under certain conditions, their liability under the Labour Code with respect to maternity allowances. The Regulations also set up a special institution for the provision of medical care and social services for insured mothers and their infants.

China. — The Minister of Industry submitted to the Executive Yuan for approval a Bill providing for the establishment of crèches in factories.

Cuba. — Various resolutions were adopted to improve the maternity insurance scheme.

Finland. — A Bill to introduce maternity insurance was submitted to Parliament on 2 February 1937.

France. — An Act of 26 August 1936 amending the social insurance scheme for commerce and industry increased the maximum daily maternity benefit from 18 to 22 francs.

The new regulations made for the French Colonies deal particularly with maternity. A rest period of eight consecutive weeks before and after confinement, without breach of contract, and breaks for nursing purposes were established by the following Decrees: *French West Africa*, 18 September 1936; *French India*, 6 April 1937; *Indo-China*, 30 December 1936, for Native women, and 24 February 1937, for European women. In *French West Africa* the employment of pregnant women in different kinds of arduous work is also regulated. A paid holiday of four weeks after confinement was introduced in *French Somaliland* by the Decree of 22 May 1936, and in *New Caledonia*, for immigrant

Native women, by the Decree of 24 September 1935. In the French Mandated Territories of *Lebanon* and *Syria* respectively, the Acts of 17 April 1935 and 14 June 1936 establish maternity leave from one month before to two weeks after confinement. In *French Equatorial Africa* an Order of 15 June 1936, which established a Maternity and Child Welfare Institute for Natives, provides among other things for medical assistance for pregnant women, the creation of a service of visiting nurses, and the development of child welfare centres.

Great Britain. — The Public Health Act of 31 July 1936, reproducing a provision of the Factory Act, prohibits the employment of women one month before and one month after confinement, and empowers local authorities to take the necessary measures for the care of expectant and nursing mothers. The Midwives Act of the same date requires the local authorities to see that the number of midwives engaged for attendance on women in their own homes is adequate for the needs of the area, and to submit to the Minister of Health, after consultation with the voluntary organisations, proposals for the arrangements to be made for carrying out these duties. Further, a Circular of 29 May 1936 deals with day nurseries provided by the local authorities for the children of mothers who go out to work, and draws the attention of the authorities to the desirability of establishing such nurseries.

Guatemala. — The Public Health Code of 7 September 1936 provide for the creation of a child welfare service, which, among other duties, is to organise maternity hospitals, pre-natal and post-natal consultation centres, services of visiting nurses, and education in motherhood and the rearing of children.

Iran. — A Factory Regulation of 10 August 1936 provides for the granting of maternity leave, with full wages, on presentation of a doctor's certificate. It also states that breaks must be allowed to enable mothers to feed their children and that suitable premises must be set apart for this purpose.

Iraq. — The Labour Act of 25 April 1936 introduced an optional rest period of two weeks before confinement and compulsory rest period of three weeks after confinement, without dismissal during the whole period of absence.

India. — The Provinces of Bengal and Madras adopted regulations in application of the Factories Act, requiring factories employing not less than 50 women workers to create a day nursery for children under six years of age.

In the Province of Delhi a Notification of 26 November 1936 contained the provisions of the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act: paid leave must now be granted from four weeks before to four weeks after confinement, without dismissal, to women who have

been employed by the same employer for a period of nine months or more.

In the States of Indore and Mysore maternity benefit legislation closely resembling that just mentioned was adopted.

Japan. — A Bill relating to mothers' and children's aid was introduced in Parliament, which proposes various measures of assistance such as maternity allowances for the mothers of young children.

Mexico. — Regulations of 25 June 1936 concerning industrial hygiene provide that the Department of Health must determine the cases in which industrial undertakings are to establish crèches and day nurseries for the children of their workers.

Norway. — The new Workers' Protection Act of 19 June 1936 increased the statutory leave before confinement from four to six weeks, and maintained the leave of six weeks after confinement. This leave may be extended for a further period of six weeks in the case of sickness consequent upon pregnancy or maternity. The Act forbids the dismissal of the workers during this statutory leave and provides for assistance from public funds in cases of need; such assistance is not considered as poor relief.

Paraguay. — The Legislative Decree of 24 June 1936 set up a National Labour Department to deal among other things with maternity assistance.

Peru. — The Act of 12 August 1936 introducing compulsory social insurance provides for the following maternity benefits: medical attendance and medicaments, daily cash benefit equal to 50 per cent. of wages for 36 days before and 36 days after confinement, and a nursing allowance equal to 25 per cent. of wages for eight months.

Portugal. — A Decree of 4 February 1936 concerning the sick-leave of State employees grants full wages to women in case of confinement, for a period of 20 days.

Spain (Catalonia). — A Decree of 8 October 1936 exempts working women from the payment of their share of maternity insurance contributions scheme, this share being borne by the employer alone.

Sweden. — The Population Commission mentioned above was required also to study the problem of maternity protection. In pursuance of its recommendations the Government submitted to the Riksdag a Bill to improve the measures of maternity assistance.

Switzerland. — An Order of 9 October 1936, regulating work done outside the factory in the watchmaking industry, extended

to women employed in small establishments and family workshops in this industry the provisions of the Factory Act relating to maternity: leave of six weeks or, on request, of eight weeks, after confinement, without dismissal.

Turkey. — The Labour Code of 8 June 1936 prescribes for women employed in industry three weeks' leave before confinement and three weeks after, which may be extended to six weeks before and six weeks after, the employer being forbidden to dismiss the worker and required to pay half of her regular wages during her absence. Breaks for nursing purposes and the establishment of crèches are also provided for.

U.S.S.R. — An Order of 27 June 1936, abolishing the right to abortion for economic reasons, very much strengthened the various measures of maternity assistance, extending to all working women the right to 56 days' leave before and 56 days after confinement, increasing supplementary insurance benefits (layette allowance of 32 to 45 roubles, nursing allowance of 5 to 10 roubles), setting up a system of State assistance for mothers of more than six children, and providing for a large increase in the number and size of maternity hospitals, crèches and day nurseries. A second Order of 29 June 1936 amended the legal provisions relating to insurance benefits, in order to bring them into line with the maternity leave provisions of the Order of 27 June 1936. Finally, an Order of 5 October 1936 imposes penalties for the refusal to employ a woman on the ground of her pregnancy, and the reduction of her wages on the same ground.

Venezuela. — The Labour Act of 15 July 1936 provides that working women must be absent from their work during six weeks before and six weeks after confinement, without being liable to dismissal, and the introduction of a system of social insurance providing maternity benefit sufficient for the maintenance of the mother and her child. Breaks for nursing purposes must be allowed, for which suitable premises must be provided.

ECONOMIC PROTECTION OF WOMEN WORKERS

The interest taken in the problems relating to the economic situation of women workers did not diminish during the year. The following brief summary of the principal events of the year, however, can only give a very incomplete idea of the extent of this interest, for this is a field in which practical measures, too varied for description in a short survey, occupy a much more important place than legislation.

In the international sphere a beginning was made with the carrying out of the decision of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, mentioned last year, concerning the development of studies of the economic situation of women workers.

A plan of study was drawn up, and the first five subjects for investigation were defined: (a) the evolution of women's employment in various industries and occupations; (b) unemployment among women; (c) the facilities for vocational training open to women; (d) the comparative rates of men's and women's wages; (e) the family circumstances of gainfully employed women and their responsibilities, if any, for dependants.

Consultation of the members of the Correspondence Committee for Women's Work and international women's organisations was organised with a view to the collection of information on the first two subjects. A large measure of collaboration thus exists in the study of these problems, and data are now reaching the Office from all over the world. It should be specially mentioned that at the request of the International Conference of Women Trade Unionists (London, July 1936) the International Federation of Trade Unions decided to participate in this enquiry by calling upon its national sections to send in to the International Labour Office any relevant information at their disposal.

Among new measures taken in various countries for the improvement of the condition of women workers, those providing for the establishment of minimum wages occupy an important place. As these measures are discussed in another chapter¹, only a brief reference will be made to them here. It should be noted, however, that even when they affect workers of both sexes, it is the women workers who benefit most from them. Two countries (Canada and the United States) have continued to make extensive use of wage legislation applied specially to women's wages. In both these countries, however, wage legislation is developing in the direction of fixing general rates for all workers.

In *Canada*, despite the development of the compulsory extension of collective agreements setting up minimum wage rates for both sexes, and in addition to the wage laws and regulations for both men and women, a number of Orders were promulgated (in British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Quebec) in execution of the laws relating to women's minimum wages. These Orders raise weekly rates, reduced the hours of work to which these rates apply, or extended existing legislation to new occupational categories or to sparsely-populated centres hitherto not covered. In Quebec an Order is even in preparation which will cover all women workers and salaried employees in commerce and in industry who are not yet covered by special Orders.

In the *United States* two awards of the Supreme Court, one declaring unconstitutional the New York State Minimum Wage Law for women, based on the principle of the fair wage, and the other confirming the Washington State Law based on the principle of the living wage, have totally reversed the previously existing situation; for in 1923 the Supreme Court had declared unconstitu-

¹ See below, Chapter IV, under "Wage Policy".

tional a law based on this latter principle, with the result that subsequent legislation had been based on the principle of the fair wage with a view to avoiding constitutional objections.

These awards, though they have caused a certain confusion, have nevertheless failed to slow down the efforts made by the State authorities of the Union for the raising of women's wages by legislation. In 1936, Rhode Island organised a system for the fixing of women's minimum wages under the provisions of the law passed in the preceding year, and Massachusetts amended its legislation on several points. Orders in application of existing systems were issued in the last-named State and also in New Hampshire, Ohio and North Dakota; while preliminary measures, such as the appointment of wage committees and the organisation of enquiries into wage rates in various industries, were taken in Connecticut, Illinois, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. The State of New York continued its investigations with a view to the introduction of new legislation replacing the law declared unconstitutional. At the time of the invalidation of the New York law, the Secretary of Labour of the United States convened a conference of the States which had passed wage legislation, and these States recognised the need for continuing their efforts.

Finally, the Third Conference on Labour Legislation, convened by the Secretary of Labour on 11 November 1936, recommended the study of the principles which should form the basis of a model law under a possible constitutional amendment. It also recommended that the States now operating minimum wage laws should continue to administer those laws as in the past, and that States without minimum wage legislation should institute wage investigations to show the urgency of such legislation. Finally, it recommended that when once constitutional means had been devised for setting minimum wage standards, the States should as rapidly as possible enact minimum wage laws for women and minors, and when the time seemed ripe for men as well.

In 1937, as a consequence of the decision of the Supreme Court upholding the law of the State of Washington, the movement for minimum wage legislation for women grew in intensity. In March Bills were under consideration in thirteen States, as well as in the District of Columbia, some of these Bills relating particularly to women and minors, others to workers of both sexes. Among the measures applicable to both sexes, those contained in the Federal Act of 1936 regulating conditions of employment in undertakings furnishing supplies to the Federal Government, and providing for the fixing of equal wage rates for all workers employed in the same work, are worthy of special mention.

In addition to the enquiries carried out with a view to the fixing of wage rates, a number of other official investigations took place in the United States, such as the enquiries conducted by the Women's Bureau of the Federal Department of Labour into the position of women workers in various States (Arkansas, Delaware,

Florida, Michigan, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia) and in several industries (silk dress making, men's clothing industry, large stores, etc.), and those by the Women's Bureaux of the various States, among which figures the important enquiry conducted by the Women's Division of the New York State Department of Labour into the wages and family responsibilities of women workers in various economic branches (laundries, restaurants, beauty parlours).

The details of the various wage regulations applying to both sexes cannot be entered into here, but attention may be drawn to the provisions of the new legislation of *Argentina* (Finance Act of 1937), *China* (Minimum Wage Act of 23 December 1936), *Mexico* (Decree of 12 December 1936 concerning the sugar industry), *Venezuela* (Labour Act of 15 July 1936, providing for the payment of equal wage for equal work without distinction of sex). In *France* certain of the collective agreements which were made generally binding, such as that relating to the silk-weaving industry in the south-eastern Departments, prescribe the application of the same principle of equal pay; while other collective agreements, though setting up different rates for men and women, nevertheless considerably reduced the existing differences between men and women workers' remuneration. Equality of pay without distinction of sex was also recognised in certain of the collective rules published in *Germany*, although in general these rules lay down different rates for the two sexes. In *Sweden* an official committee, after studying the reforms needed in the remuneration of public servants, expressed itself in favour of the principle of equality between the sexes, and the Minister of Finance approved its conclusions. Finally, in *Mexico* an extensive enquiry was undertaken by the Minister of Labour with a view to determining in what measure the principle of equal pay without distinction of sex, as laid down by the Labour Act, was respected.

On the other hand, various regulations or awards promulgated during the year in *Australia*, *Bolivia*, *Greece*, *Italy*, and *New Zealand* were based on the principle of different rates for male and female workers.

As regards the legal status of women's occupations, the following decisions tending to raise their status must be mentioned: *France*, a Bill adopted by the Chamber of Deputies relating to the organisation of the profession of certified nurse and male nurse; a Circular of February 1937 reserving to welfare workers and certified visiting nurses employment in the public administration and in State subsidised organisations; and a Decree of March 1937 organising a skeleton service of colonial nurses and midwives; *Germany*, Orders of October 1936 concerning the professional training of welfare workers, and of April 1937 concerning the professional training of dietitians; *Great Britain*, Act of 1936 reorganising the profession of midwife; *Italy*, a Legislative Decree of 15 October 1936 relating to the organisation of schools of obstetrics and to

the juridical regulation of the profession of midwife; *Norway*, an Act of 19 June 1936 regulating, among other occupations, that of masseuse.

The measures examined above relating to the improvement of conditions of work in domestic service aim also at the raising of wages as well as at the betterment of other conditions. This remark is still more true as regards measures relative to home work¹, irrespective of whether they are intended to abolish home work and its depressing effect on the wages of women workers in workshops in the same branch, or aim directly at raising the wages of women workers working at home. However different the means used may be, the end envisaged remains the same: the improvement of the economic condition of a large body of women workers.

PAMPHLET