# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR JAMES J. DAVIS, SECRETARY <br> WOMEN'S BUREAU <br> MARY ANDERSON, Director 

BULLETIN OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, No. 77

## A STUDY OF TWO GROUPS OF DENVER MARRIED WOMEN APPLYING FOR JOBS

By EMILY C. BROWN



Pamphlet

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1929
[Public-No. 259-66th Congress]
[H. R. 13229]
An Act To establish in the Department of Labor a bureau to be known as the Women's Bureau

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That there shall be established in the Department of Labor a bureau to be known as the Women's Bureau.

Sec. 2. That the said bureau shall be in charge of a director, a woman, to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, who shall receive an annual compensation of $\$ 5,000$. It shall be the duty of said bureau to formulate standards and policies which shall promote the welfare of wage-earning women, improve their working conditions, increase their efficiency, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment. The said bureau shall have authority to investigate and report to the said department upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of women in partment upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of women in lish the results of these investigations in such a manner and to such extent as the Secretary of Labor may prescribe.
Sec. 3. That there shall be in said bureau an assistant director, to be appointed by the Secretary of Labor, who shall receive an annual compensation of $\$ 3,500$ and shall perform such duties as shall be prescribed by the director and approved by the Secretary of Labor.

SEC. 4. That there is hereby authorized to be employed by said bureau a chief clerk and such special agents, assistants, clerks, and other employees at such rates of compensation and in such numbers as Congress may from time to time provide by appropriations.

Sec. 5. That the Secretary of Labor is hereby directed to furnish sufficient quarters, office furniture and equipment, for the work of this bureau.

Sec. 6. That this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.
Approved, June 5, 1920.
п

## CONTENTS

Letter of transmittal
Letter of tran
Part I. Applicants
 ian Association
 Placement Age-
Mari Marital status Education and training
Applicants to a department store

## TABLES

Table 1. Reason for seeking work, by marital status and age
2. Reason for seeking work, by situation as to support by husband
3. Reason for seeking work, by source of income other than woman's earnings
4. Placement and type of work secured, by age of woman
5. Occupational history of 157 women who were placed in positions.
6. Reason for seeking work, by situation as to support of husband-
 earnings-Store applicants

Page

## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

## United States Department of Labor, <br> Women's Bureat <br> Washington, October 1, 1929.

Sir : I have the honor to transmit herewith the bulletin A Study of Two Groups of Denver Married Women Applying for Jobs.
The material presented here was collected in two studies, each made in conjunction with a Denver agency. The first of these was the employment service of the Young Women's Christian Association in Denver, which cooperates with the United States Employment Service and which kept records of married women applying for work during May, June, July, and August, 1928; the second was a large department store in Denver, which kept similar records during May, June, and July, 1928. I wish to express appreciation of the cooperation of Mary R. Patton, employment secretary of the Young. Women's Christian Association, and of these two agencies in supplying the data.
in supplying the data. The material was assembled and the report written by Emily C.
Brown, formerly associate industrial economist of the Women's Bureau.
Respectfully submitted.
Hon. James J. Davis,
Secretary of Labor.
Mary Anderson, Director.

## A STUDY OF TWO GROUPS OF DENVER MARRIED WOMEN APPLYING FOR JOBS

## INTRODUCTION

In these times in which the numbers of married women who are employed outside their homes have so strikingly increased, each bit of evidence on the forces behind this phenomenon is valuable. In the small studies reported here of two groups of applicants for work-all women who were or had been married-a very great majority stated that they sought work because of economic necessity. Women who were without a husband's support were considerably more numerous than those who had husbands who contributed to their support, and more than two-fifths of those whose sources of income were ascertained had none except their own earnings.

The first part of the study was made by the Women's Bureau in conjunction with the employment service of the Young Women's Christian Association in Denver, which cooperates with the United States Employment Service. The employment office during the months of May, June, July, and August, 1928, endeavored to fill in a schedule for each of the married women who applied for work. From a total of 762 registrants, schedules for 345 married women were secured and have been analyzed by the Women's Bureau.

The second part of the study was made by the cooperation of the Women's Bureau and the employment manager of a large department store from the records of women who applied for work during the months of May, June, and July, 1928. Applications were received from 630 women, of whom 103 were married, widowed, separated, or divorced. Information was secured from this group of 103. While the group is small it includes all who applied during these months and may be taken as a small cross section of Denver's married women desiring work of this type.
While the data are fragmentary in character, they afford an illustration of a type of study that can be made with profit by such agencies in a community, often with comparatively little change in the kind of record ordinarily kept for handling their own business. When such data have been secured by agencies in many communities a valuable contribution will be made toward the building up of a body of knowledge upon the reasons why married women seek employment and toward the answering of this social question in a manner beyond the realm of speculation.
However, if such a study is to have complete significance, it should form a part of a fuller study of the employment opportunities and needs in the community, and it should be supplemented by a further study of the women not placed, of family composition, and of certain other data.

## PART I

## APPLICANTS TO THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

## Summary.

In brief, the survey shows the conditions that brought into the labor market the group of 345 women who were or had been married and who were among those who applied for work to the Young Women's Christian Association during the months stated. It was a Women's Christian Association during the months stated. It was a
group ranging from less than 18 to more than 80 years of age, but group ranging from less than 18 to more than 80 years of age, but On the whole the women were untrained, less than 30 per cent having completed high school, and a large proportion having engaged in personal or domestic service. There were, however, a number of clerical workers and a few factory workers and others. Ninety per cent of the women reporting worked because of economic necessity; 74 per cent of them were without a husband's support, while more than one-half of those whose husbands contributed found the contributions irregular or inadequate to needs. One-half of the women reporting had no income but their own earnings; almost half had children under 16. In spite of this evidence of the need for employment, only 45 per cent of the applicants found positions through this office.

## Reason for seeking work.

What were the reasons why these women sought employment? Table 1 shows that while 34 failed to report, 281 , or 90 per cent, of those reporting said economic necessity forced them to seek opportunity to earn. Preference was given as the reason by only 30 of the women. Of those who worked from preference 22 were married, all of these being 25 years old or more, and 1 did not report her marital status. Seven widows, all 50 years of age or over, said that they worked from preference, and in connection with these the employment secretary stated:
This I feel sure was due to an attack of family pride. Perhaps they did have children who could support them, but for some reason they did not feel like accepting their help.

Table 1.-Reason for seeking work, by marital status and age

|  |  | Number of women who were- |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Reason for seeking work and marital | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Total } \\ & \text { numal } \\ & \text { neror } \\ & \text { women } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{array}{\|l\|} \hline \text { and } \\ \text { ander } \\ \text { and } \\ \text { years } \\ \hline \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { 18 } \\ \begin{array}{c} \text { and } \\ \text { ander } \\ \text { 2oars } \\ \text { years } \end{array} \\ \hline \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|c\|} \hline \text { and } \\ \text { rand } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { as } \\ \text { years } \end{array}$ | $\left.\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { and } \\ \text { rander } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { years } \end{array} \right\rvert\,$ | $\left.\begin{array}{\|c\|} 30 \\ \text { and } \\ \text { rand } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { years } \end{array} \right\rvert\,$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \begin{array}{c} \text { and } \\ \text { rand } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { 5ors } \\ \text { years } \end{array} \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|c\|} \hline 50 \\ \text { sud } \\ \text { runder } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { years } \end{array}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { cor } \\ & r \text { years } \\ & \text { and } \\ & \text { aver } \end{aligned}$ | (tag $\begin{gathered}\text { Agot } \\ \text { rot } \\ \text { port. } \\ \text { ed }\end{gathered}$ |
| Total | 345 | 1 | 11 | 41 | 56 | 81 | 81 | 42 | 21 |  |
| Total reported | 311 |  | 11 | 39 | ${ }^{54}$ | 74 | 71 | 34 | 18 |  |
| Economic necessity <br> Married <br> Widowed <br> Divorced <br> Separated or deserted <br> Marital status not reported | $\begin{gathered} 281 \\ 109 \\ 109 \\ 35 \\ 35 \\ 23 \\ 23 \\ 30 \end{gathered}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 11 \\ & 5 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} 39 \\ 23 \\ 23 \\ 2 \end{gathered}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 66 \\ & 29 \\ & 12 \\ & 10 \\ & 13 \\ & 13 \end{aligned}$ |  | - $\begin{array}{r}29 \\ 17 \\ 1 \\ 1\end{array}$ | 14 2 10 10 |  |
| Preference <br> Married <br> Marital status not reported |  |  |  |  | 7 | 8 <br> 7 | ${ }_{6}^{6}$ | ${ }^{5}$ | 4 |  |
| Reason not reported.-. | 34 |  |  | 2 | 2 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 3 |  |

Of the 281 women who said it was economic necessity that made them seek work, 109, or 42 per cent of those who gave their marital status, were married, 29 of those reporting on age being under 25 years of age. The 149 who were widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted formed a group of rather older women. Of those reporting age, only 18 were under 25 , while 71 gave their ages as 40 or over. The sources of income of these women tell much of the story of why they were applicants for work. Table 2 shows the situation as to the support received from the husbands.
Table 2.-Reason for seeking work, by situation as to support by husband

| Reason for seeking work | $\begin{gathered} \text { Total } \\ \text { number } \\ \text { of } \\ \text { women } \end{gathered}$ | Womenreceiv-ingsupportfromhus-band | Women receiving no support from husband |  |  |  |  |  |  | Noreportas tosup-portbyhus-band |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Total | Husband dead | Husband divorced separated or deser ing | Husband ill or cripple | Hus- band unem- ployed | $\begin{gathered} \text { Hus- } \\ \text { band } \\ \text { in } \\ \text { prison } \end{gathered}$ | No report as to for nonsupport |  |
| Total | 345 | 178 | 221 | 91 | 68 | 23 | 28 | 4 | 7 | 46 |
| Economic necessity |  |  |  |  | 63 | 23 | 28 | 4 | 7 |  |
| Preason not reported. | 34. | 2 | 20 | 15 | 5 |  |  |  |  | 12 |

${ }^{1}$ Contributions were inadequate for needs, however, in 45 cases as follows: 6 received partial support from separated or divorced husbands, for 12 the husband's earnings were inadequate, for 17 the husband's
work was irregular, in 9 cases financial emergency such as poor crops or unusual bills required the wife's assistance, and in 1 case the wife needed to assist her parents.

Of the 345 women, 46 failed to report as to such support. There were 221 women- 74 per cent of those reporting-who had no support from their husbands. In 91 cases the husband was dead; in 68 he was divorced, separated, or deserting; in 23 he was ill or physically incapacitated; in 28 unemployed; and in 4 in prison. Seventy-eight of the women- 26 .per cent-had some support from their husbands, but 12 of these said that their husband's earnings were inadequate, and 17 that his work was irregular, while 9 wanted to help him in some financial emergency, and 1 worked to help support her parents. In 6 cases only partial support was received from a separated or divorced husband. Of the women who worked from preference, only 7 had no support from a husband, while 22 had such support although in 3 cases it was irregular. Of the women who worked of necessity the great majority were without a husband's support. Only 54 - a little over one-fifth of those report-ing-had support from their husbands, and a large proportion of these qualified that statement by indicating the inadequacy or irregularity of the husband's earnings.

The presence of young children gave added responsibility to many of these women. One-half of those who reported that they were without a husband's support had children under 16, nearly a fifth of them having two children or more. Less than 40 per cent of the widows had young children, but of the women whose husbands were divorced, separated, or deserting, ill, unemployed, or in prison over 60 per cent had children under 16. In the case of those who had some support from their husbands, 45 per cent had young children.
$77199^{\circ}-29-2$

A few of these women who were seeking employment had sources of income other than from their own labor or from their husbands' contributions. As can be seen from Table 3 a considerable number failed to report on this point.

Table 3.-Reason for seeking work, by source of income other than woman's earnings

| Reason for seeking work | $\left\lvert\, \begin{gathered} \text { Total } \\ \text { number } \\ \text { of } \\ \text { women } \end{gathered}\right.$ | Women <br> having <br> no in- <br> come <br> but <br> own <br> earn- <br> ings | Women having income from source as specified |  |  |  |  |  | No report as income |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Total having income | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Hus- } \\ & \text { Hands } \\ & \text { earn- } \\ & \text { ings } \end{aligned}$ | Sons' <br> daugh- <br> terrs <br> teari- <br> ings <br> ins | $\begin{gathered} \text { House } \\ \text { or room } \\ \text { rent } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Insur- } \\ \text { ance } \end{gathered}$ | Source not re- ported ported |  |
| Total | 345 | 90 | 90 | 178 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 165 |
| Economic necessity Preference Reason not reported | $\begin{gathered} 281 \\ 30 \\ 34 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 89 \\ & 21 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 62 \\ 24 \\ 4 \end{array}$ | 54 22 2 | 4 2 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 130 5 30 |

## 1 See footnote, Table 2 , on inadequacy of the contributions. 2 Support self to be independent of children.

Of those who reported, exactly one-half had no income but their own earnings, while the others had other income from their husbands or other sources. Income from sons and daughters or other sources was reported in only 11 of the 90 cases having income other than the woman's own earnings.
Such facts as these, although not complete, furnish incontrovertible evidence of the necessity for a large proportion of these women who were or had been married to contribute to the support of themselves or their families, if indeed they were not solely dependent upon their own earnings. It remains to be seen how many of them secured positions through their applications to this employment service.

## Placement.

From a total of 345 applicants, $157-45$ per cent-secured positions, while 41 were referred to positions which they did not accept, and 147 others were not placed. Even of the group who considered it a necessity to earn, only 46 per cent were placed by this agency.
Some of the explanations of the lack of success of over half of the applicants lie in work preferences, obligations or handicaps, and instability or incapacity. There were some who would accept only a type of work for which they were not fitted, some who desired housework where they could have one or two children with them. Some women came once but did not return or did not keep appointments made for them to interview employers. Some were handicapped by ill health, mental deficiency, deafness, inability to speak English, or other difficulties.

The data presented in Table 4 show that the younger women were at an advantage in the search for employment. Almost one-half of the applicants under 30 were placed. Of those from 30 to 50 only 46 per cent were placed, while of those 50 years old or more only 37 per cent found employment. Of the women of 30 years or older who
were placed the great majority found jobs in housework or hotels and restaurants. Among 21 women 60 years of age or over, only 8 found positions through this agency, and these ranged in age from 60 to 68 years, and all found housework jobs. Among the 13 women 60 years or over who were not placed, 4 were from 68 to 72 years, while 1 woman of 88 was unsuccessful in her application. A partial explanation of the fact that more married women are placed in housework than any other occupation may lie in the fact that Denver is not primarily an industrial city and this is one type of work to which these workers can easily adapt themselves.

Table 4.-Placement and type of work secured, by age of woman

| Placement and type of work secured | $\begin{gathered} \text { Total } \\ \text { num } \\ \text { ber of } \\ \text { woman } \end{gathered}$ | Number of women of each age |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Agenot re ported |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | 16 and under 18 years | 18 and under 20 years | 20 and under 25 years | 25 and under 30 years | $\begin{gathered} 30 \\ \text { and } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { un } \\ \text { years } \end{gathered}$ | $\left\lvert\, \begin{gathered} 40 \\ \text { and } \\ \text { under } \\ \text { und } \\ \text { years } \end{gathered}\right.$ | 50 and under bor years | $\begin{aligned} & \text { yon } \\ & \text { years } \\ & \text { and } \\ & \text { over } \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Total | 345 | 1 | 11 | 41 | 56 | 81 | 81 | 42 | 21 | 11 |
| Women who were placed | 157 |  | 8 | 23 | 23 | 38 | 37 | 15 | 8 | 5 |
| Domestic and personal service: Housework <br> Hotel or restaurant Laundry Nursemaid or practical nurse Companion $\qquad$ | $\begin{array}{r} 74 \\ 26 \\ 7 \\ 11 \\ 1 \end{array}$ |  | 4 | $\begin{array}{r}4 \\ 6 \\ \hline\end{array}$ | 10 1 1 2 | 23 4 2 2 2 | 21 7 2 1 1 | 9 3 1 1 1 | 5 1 2 | 2 2 1 |
| Clerical <br> Manufacturing <br> Sales | $\begin{array}{r} 19 \\ 10 \\ 9 \end{array}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \\ & 2 \\ & 1 \end{aligned}$ | 5 2 | 2 | ${ }^{6}$ | 1 1 4 | 1 |  |  |
| Women referred to places which were not accepted <br> Other women not placed | 41 147 | 1 | 3 | $\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ 13 \end{array}$ | $\begin{gathered} 4 \\ 29 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 10 \\ & 33 \end{aligned}$ | 9 35 | $\begin{gathered} 7 \\ 20 \end{gathered}$ | 3 10 | ${ }_{4}^{2}$ |

## Age.

These seekers for employment, all of whom were or had been married, were by no means a group of young women unburdened by responsibility. Only 53 of the 334 who reported on age were under 25 ; less than a third were under 30. In each of the decades beginning at 30 and 40 there were 81 women; 42 were in the next decade, and 20 were from 60 to 72 . One old nurse, 88 years of age, sought opportunity to support herself and her blind husband. Of the 11 who reported that they had been employed in factories during the past year, all but 1 were under 40 years of age. The clerical workers as a whole were a young group, only 7 out of 34 being as much as 40 . Of the 100 who had engaged in domestic and personal service, on the other hand, 43 were 40 or over.

## Marital status.

Information on their present marital status was given by 317 women, of whom 137 were married, 91 widowed, 49 separated or deserted, and 40 divorced. Although nearly one-half of the married women were under 30 , three-fourths of those widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted were 30 or over.

Nearly one-half of the women who reported had children under 16. Of 129 married women, 55 , or 43 per cent, had young children, while of 174 women who were widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted, 92 , or 53 per cent, had young children. Ninety-four of these women who sought employment had only one child under 16 , but 36 of them had two children, 23 had three or four, 3 had five, and 1 had six children. For 259 children of these applicants the ages were reported, and of these nearly 61 -one-fourth-were under 4 years, while 131-more than one-half-were under 8 years of age, and only 31 were 14 or more.

## Education and training.

A wide range was found in the educational background of these applicants. Of the 299 women who reported on their education, 42 had not completed grade school, while 87 left school after the eighth grade; 81 had some high-school work, while 48 others had completed the high-school course; 28 had gone to college, but only 6 of them had completed the course and graduated; 13 had attended them had completed the course and graduated; 13 had attended
normal school. To summarize, only 89 -less than 30 per cent-had normal school. To summarize, only 89-less than 30 per cent-had ing. Business training in addition was reported by 49 women and other special training by 4.
For the women studied education appeared to make little difference in their chance of getting employment. Of those who had not finished high school about the same proportion-45 per cent-was placed as of the smaller groups who had finished high school or had had further education. Only 18 of the 49 women who reported business training were placed. Of course, no generalizations can be made from these facts, since such a large proportion of the positions filled by this employment service are in domestic and personal service.
Special training of some sort was reported by 75 women, business school by 49 , normal school by 13 , nursing by 10 , and training in dancing and sewing by 1 and 2 , respectively. Of the entire 75 , only 14 were placed in positions to which their training directly led, while 16 were placed in other types of work. Of the 49 with business training, 10 found business positions, and 8 went into other kinds of employment. Six of the 13 with normal-school training secured nonteaching positions. Of the 10 nurses, 4 took nursing positions, and 2 other jobs. The 3 women with other training were not placed.

## Occupational history.

The reports of these women on their occupations are very incomplete. By grouping them according to the occupation in which they were placed by the employment service, or, in the case of those not placed, grouping them according to their employment in the past year when they reported on that point, indication of occupation is secured for 236 of the 345 women. Two-thirds of the group were engaged in domestic and personal service, and of these 100 did housework, and 11 laundry work, 31 held hotel and restaurant jobs, and 16 did other work of this general classification. In addition, 42 were in clerical work, 16 in manufacturing, and 20 in miscellaneous occupations including selling, telephone operating, managing an apartment house, and dancing and school teaching.

Table 5.-Occupational history of $15 \%$ women who were placed in positions

| Occupation in which placed | Number of women |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Total | Occupation in past year |  |  |  | Occupation in first job |  |  |  |
|  |  | None | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Same } \\ & \text { occu- } \\ & \text { pation } \end{aligned}$ | Other | Not reported | None | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Same } \\ & \text { occu- } \\ & \text { pation } \end{aligned}$ | Other | Notreported |
| Total | 157 | 4 | 55 | 27 | 71 | 2 | 54 | 34 | 67 |
| Domestic and personal service: | 72111010 | 2 | 2992221912 | $\begin{array}{r}113 \\ 4 \\ 2 \\ 1 \\ 1 \\ \hline 1 \\ \hline\end{array}$ | 31123 | 1 | 21103 | 1028283 | 4281 |
| Housework <br> Hotel or restaurant <br> Laundry $\qquad$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nursemaid or practical nurse |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clerical ${ }^{\text {Comanion--------------------- }}$ |  |  |  |  | 7 | 1 |  | $\stackrel{1}{5}$ |  |
| Manufacturing |  |  |  |  | ${ }_{4}^{6}$ |  | ${ }_{2}^{2}$ | 2 |  |

${ }_{1} 5$ were in hotels, 1 was a companion, 2 were practical nurses.
Table 5 shows the occupational history of the 157 women who secured positions through this service, 86 of whom reported their work during the preceding year. For 55 of these the positions sework during the precedoce in the same occupation in which they had been working, while fore 27 the occupation was different, and 4 had not worked in the year before. The first job held was in the same occupation as that now accepted according to the reports of 54 women, although 67 did not report on this point, and 2 had never been employed before.
In addition 54 women who were not placed, but who had been employed in the year preceding, reported on their occupational history. For 44 of the 54 women, their first job was in the same tory. For 44 or the 54 women,
occupation as that of the past year.
For 29 women who had difficulty in finding work during the preFor 29 women who had difficulty in finding work during the pre-
ceding 12 months, information is available as to the sources of ceding 12 months, information is an ifficulty. While the information is only fragmentary it shows some of the problems faced by such a group and indicates reasons which may account for the small proportion of the entire group of 345 who were placed. Ten of these women found it hard to get work because of the general unemployment situation, and all but 1 of the 10 were under 40 years of age. Lack of training and experience was reported by 6 women, of whom 3 were 40 or more and 2 had completed high school or gone further with their education. Age or physical defects were the hampering facts for 4 of the 29 women, 3 of them being 50 years or over in age. Special family circumstances-such as the need to keep children with them, stranger in the city, and low salary-were difficulties in 9 of the cases. Of the 29 women who reported on difficulties in finding work, 17 were under 40 and 12 were 40 or more. While 6 did not report on their education, 17 had less than a complete high-school training and $G$ were high-school graduates or had gone further in academic education.

## PART II

## APPLICANTS TO A DEPARTMENT STORE

A consideration of the data from the employment division of the cooperating department store shows that 103 of the women applying for work were or had been married, and these ranged in age from 18 to $61 ; 21$ of them were under 25 and 30 under $30 ; 28$ were 30 and less than 40,18 were 40 and less than 50 , and 10 were 50 and over, while for 17 the age was not reported. Of those who reported on their marital status, 50 were married, 18 widowed, and 26 divorced or separated. Though nearly one-half of the married women seeking work who reported their age were under 30, four-fifths of those widowed, divorced, or separated were 30 or over.

A substantial proportion of these applicants for work who reported on this subject had young children. About one-half of those widowed, divorced, or separated had children under 16, while 12 of the 40 married women who reported had children under 16. Of the 35 women with young children, 22 had one child only, but 3 had four children, and 2 , both of them divorced or separated, had five children each.

The occupations of the husbands were reported in only 31 of the cases. The occupations ranged from unskilled labor up to professional work, but the most frequently occurring were in commercial occupations, manufacturing, and in the building trades.

Practically all those reporting had attended grade school. Over half reported some high-school work and 13 had had some college work. Their occupations, as indicated by their employment during the previous 12 months, included needlework, millinery, and sew-ing-machine operation reported by 15 ; sales work reported by 17 ; office work by 5 ; domestic service by 6 ; and a miscellaneous list of other occupations, such as telephone operating, keeping a rooming house, and acting as demonstrator, as a doctor's assistant, and as a rural mail carrier.

What were the reasons why these women sought employment? Eight declared that they worked from preference, but. 86 said it was economic necessity that forced them to seek work. Nine did not report on this point. Of those who worked from preference, all were married and five were under 25 years of age. Of those whose economic needs forced them to seek opportunity to earn, 36 were married, all but 9 of the 31 reporting age being 25 or over. Fortytwo women who were widowed, divorced, or separated from their husbands were forced by economic necessity to seek work; they were an older group, only 7 of those reporting age being under 30 .

The sources of income of these women, as shown in Table 6, throw light on the problems that drove them to hunt for jobs. Of the 8 women who worked from preference, all received support from their husbands. Thirty-two women whose husbands contributed to the
family income reported that it was necessary for them to work, while 40 were without a husband's support because of his death, illness, divorce, or desertion, or other reasons and so were obliged to seek work. In all, 45 women received support from husbands, but in 3 of these cases the husband was out of work at the time of the study. Of the 43 cases in which there was no husband's support, 18 of the husbands were dead, 14 were divorced, separated, or deserting, and 7 were ill; in the case of 4 who failed to contribute, the reason was not stated. Fifteen women did not report as to any the reason was not stated. Fi
support from their husbands.
Other high lights are given to this picture when we see that of these women who sought work, although their husbands were contributing to the family income, nearly one-third of those reporting had children under 16, while of those without a husband's support 45 per cent had young children.

Table 6.-Reason for seeking work, by situation as to support by husbandStore applicants

| Reason for seeking work | $\begin{gathered} \text { Total } \\ \text { num- } \\ \text { ber f } \\ \text { worr on } \end{gathered}$ | Women receivingsupport fromhusban | Women receiving no support from husband, for reason specified |  |  |  |  | No re-portas tosup-portby hus-band |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Total | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Hus- } \\ & \text { band } \\ & \text { dead } \end{aligned}$ | Husband divorced, siparated, or de- serting | $\begin{gathered} \text { Hus- } \\ \text { band } \\ \text { iil } \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { No } \\ \text { report } \end{gathered}$ |  |
| Total | 103 | 145 | 43 | 18 | 14 | 7 | 4 | 15 |
| Economic necessity |  |  | 40 | 16 | 14 | 7 | 3 | 14 |
| Reason not reported- | ${ }_{9}^{8}$ | ${ }_{5}^{8}$ | 3 | 2 |  |  | 1 |  |

${ }^{1}$ Three of these husbands were out of work and not contributing at time of study. In one case the sup-
port was alimony from a divorced husband.
Table 7 gives information on sources of income other than earnings of the women who were seeking employment. Sixteen of the women who reported had no other source of income whatsoever, 44 received contributions from the husband, and 3 from sons and daughters, and 1 received alimony; 39 failed to report on other source of income.

Table 7.-Reason for seeking work, by source of income other than woman's earnings-Store applicants

| Reason for seeking work | $\left\lvert\, \begin{gathered} \text { Total } \\ \text { number of } \\ \text { women } \end{gathered}\right.$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Women } \\ \text { having } \\ \text { no in- } \\ \text { come } \\ \text { but oung } \\ \text { earnings } \end{gathered}$ | Women having income from source as specified |  |  |  | No reas to other income |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Total | Husbands' earnings | Alimony | Sons' and daughters' earnings |  |
| Total | 103 | 16 | 48 | 144 | 1 | 3 | 39 |
| Economic necessity Preference Peason not reported | $\begin{array}{\|r\|} \hline 86 \\ 8 \\ 9 \end{array}$ | 16 | 34 8 6 | 31 8 8 | 1 | 2 | - 36 |

[^0]Information on living arrangements was secured from practically all these women, and it is sufficient to show the double task of homemaking and outside employment carried by many of them. Nineteen women were boarding and 31 lived with relatives, but 47 kept house. Six women did not report on this. Housework was done by others in the case of 13 women who reported; but 40 women, 16 of whom reported having children under 16 years, did the housework themselves.

Eighty-three of the 103 women applying reported on their employment status during the previous year. Only 54 had been employed. Of the 67 seeking work because of economic necessity, 49 had been employed in the past 12 months. Six of the eight seeking work from preference had had no employment in the 12 months.
Of the 103 applications, only 6 were successful. Four women were given temporary positions, and two became permanent members of the force. How the other 97 met the problems that drove them to seek for work is unanswerable from these records.

## PUBLICATIONS OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU

[Any of these bulletins still available will be sent free of charge upon request.]



[^0]:    3 of these husbands were out of work and not contributing at time of study.

