UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

WOMEN'S BUREAU

READING LIST OF REFERENCES

ON

HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT

Bulletin No. 138



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary

WOMEN'S BUREAU MARY ANDERSON, Director

READING LIST OF REFERENCES ON HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT



BULLETIN OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, No. 138

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, Women's Bureau, Washington, October 31, 1935.

MADAM: I have the honor to transmit for publication a list of

references for reading on the subject of household employment.

Greatly increased activity among employees and employers in the search for a workable program for the raising of standards in domestic service is an encouraging condition in this chaotic field of employment. The references assembled here should serve as a guide to the information necessary to intelligent opinion on the important questions involved.

The list was prepared by Jean Collier Brown, of the division of public information, assisted by Elizabeth Batson, of the editorial division.

Respectfully submitted.

MARY ANDERSON, Director.

Hon. Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor.

FOREWORD

In 1930, at the time of the latest population census, 1½ million women were working as household employees, and more women were employed in this field than in any other occupation. And yet probably no occupational group of women workers has suffered more severely from lowered standards of employment during the depression period. Thousands of such workers were dismissed from their jobs when employers felt the pinch of hard times, and on seeking new employment these workers found that they had to face bitter competition with unemployed women from other occupational fields, forced to hunt housework jobs as a last resort. As a consequence, wage scales for household employment have dropped appallingly throughout the country even while increasing demands have been made upon workers' time and strength.

In the main, standards of employment for household workers are left to the determination of individual employers. The section of the recently enacted Federal Social Security Act relating to unemployment insurance excepts household workers from its provisions. In no State are domestic employees protected by hour legislation, and only one State has set minimum wage rates for such workers. In only a very few States are household workers included in the provisions for accident compensation. Though the number of household workers injured on their jobs is not known, the presence of significant accident hazards in the home is indicated by an estimate of the National Safety Council to the effect that each year as many persons—men, women, and children—die from accidents in the home

as from those caused by motor vehicles.

An urgent need for a vigorous and intelligent program directed toward raising employment standards in domestic service is obvious. It is also evident that more adequate training facilities for household workers will have to be provided if improved standards are to be maintained. In these respects it is encouraging to note that many employers and workers alike, as individuals and in groups, are actively studying the field of household employment, looking forward to the establishment of standards that will insure just and adequate working conditions and improved training facilities. To the end of encouraging such study through directing those interested to the best of the available literature in the field, the following reading list of references has been prepared. This list, consisting mainly of references to material appearing in the last 10 years, is not allinclusive, but it is hoped that it will serve as a guidepost to much that should be of use to persons interested in the complex problems of today's household workers.

The Women's Bureau will welcome suggestions concerning recent material for inclusion in later editions of this list, particularly references to studies of household employment and to training projects

conducted by specific groups or communities.

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