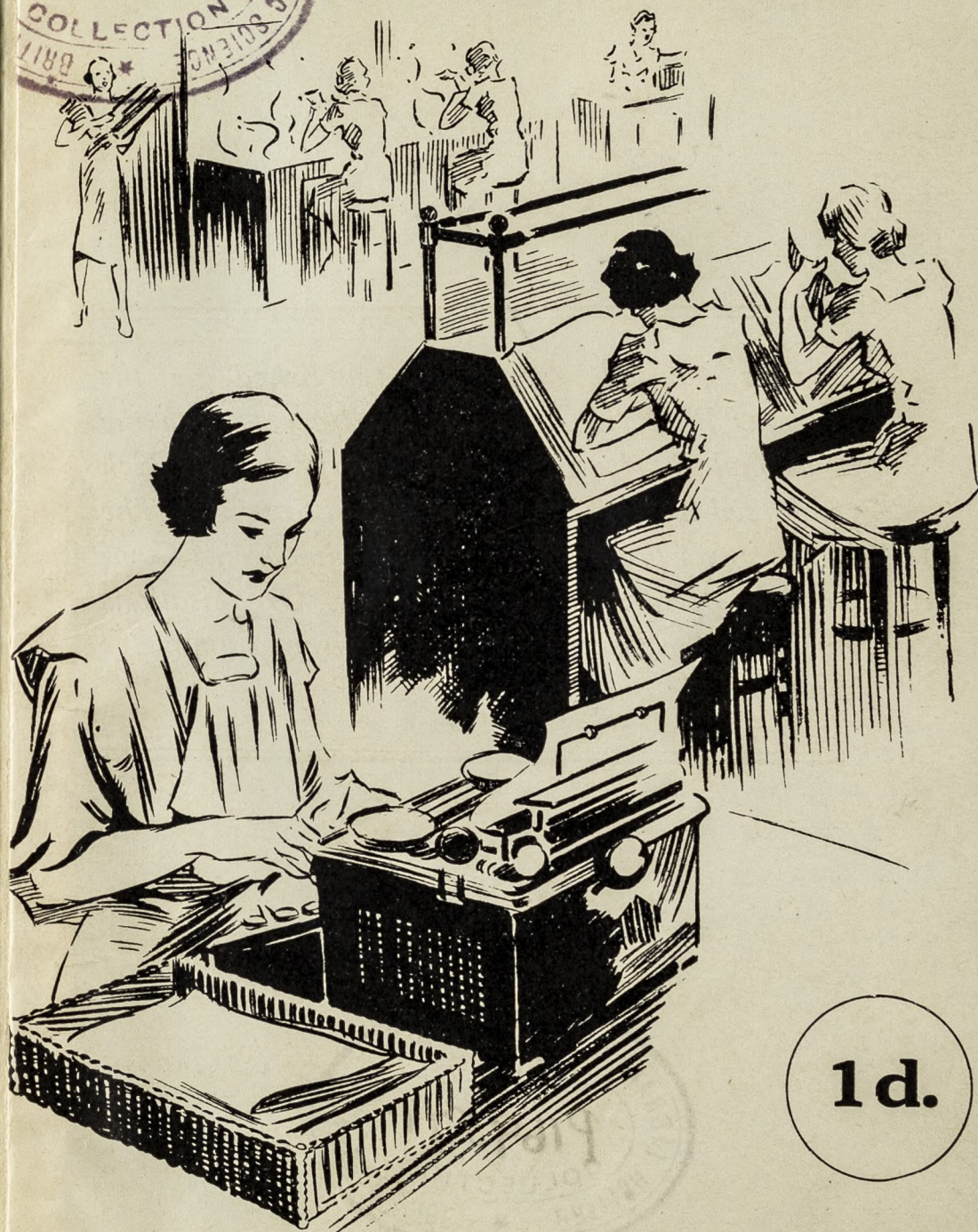


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# WOMEN IN OFFICES...

OF POLITICAL & ECONOMIC  
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Women -  
Employment  
U.K.

## WOMEN IN OFFICES

The employment of women in offices dates, in general, from the end of the last century and the beginning of the present century. Though a certain number of women were employed some years before this—in the Post Office in 1871—they did not enter to any extent until the typewriter came into general use. Their entry into offices coincided with the use of machines and to a large extent their work since then has been bound up with the machine.

### INCREASE IN CLERICAL EMPLOYMENT

The past thirty or forty years has seen a great increase in clerical employment of all types for both men and women. Small local businesses have given way to national and even international companies and corporations. Such enterprises require large clerical and administrative staffs to deal with complicated and extensive systems of accounts, costing, correspondence and filing. During recent years, costing, estimating and statistical work in particular has increased and it is the boast of great industrialists that they can assess the cost of any new commodity they propose to place on the market down to a fraction of a penny. Distribution, advertising, printing, insurance, banking and accountancy have all been extended by increased mass production. It will be seen therefore that women entered offices at a time of expansion and though their numbers have increased greatly during the past thirty years, they cannot be said to have taken work away from men; it would be more correct to say that they have taken a share of new work which did not exist previously. A comparison of the numbers of women employed in clerical occupations in 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931 gives some indication of the extent to which this class of occupation has extended and shows also the growing importance of this section of workers.

In 1901, there were 55,784 commercial women clerks employed; in 1911 this number had risen to 117,057, or nearly double the figure of ten years earlier. Women clerks in insurance in the same period rose from 931 to 4,031, and law clerks from 367 to 2,159. It is not possible to give an accurate comparison of these early figures with more recent statistical returns but comparative figures for 1921 and 1931 will show that the increase in this class of workers has been continuous and heavy. In the 1921 Census figures 429,921 women were scheduled as Clerks, Draughtsmen and Typists; in 1931 the same classification showed a total of 579,945. The increase in women's employment in the Civil Service is shown in recent figures. In 1928, 72,756 women were employed as non-industrial staff. In 1934 this figure had risen to 77,329.

### **GRADES OF CLERICAL WORK**

It will be realised that in dealing with women in offices we are dealing not with one type of work but with many, involving different methods of entry and different educational standards. At one end is the elementary school girl who enters an office at the age of 14 as "office girl" and at the other end is the University woman who takes professional examinations and undertakes specialised work. Between these two lie a great variety of occupations and it will not be possible in the scope of this Report to deal in detail with all the finer distinctions. We propose, therefore, to cover only the general field of office work, available to the girl who enters from a Central or Secondary school, and to give only the main divisions.

### **GENERAL EDUCATIONAL STANDARD**

In general, a Central or Secondary school education is a necessity for the main classes of office work in which women are employed. Reference has been made to the girl who enters at 14 as office girl but it must be emphasised that this method of entry all too frequently leads to blind alley occupation except where strong organisation exists among the workers. In the unre-

gulated sections of the distributive trades, for example, girls are taken on at 14 and dismissed at 18. An elementary education, unless supplemented by other training, will not carry a girl very far in an office.

Many Central and Secondary schools give commercial training during school life. The difference between the two groups is that the secondary school girl receives her specialised training at the end of a secondary education and the central school girl as a part of her general education.

Some mention must be made of the "Commercial Colleges" or "Commercial Training Schools" which exist in large numbers throughout the country. Much of the criticism made against private schools may justly be made against these institutions. They are for the most part private concerns and they are subject to no inspection by the Board of Education or any other authority. Whilst a number are excellent institutions, there are undoubtedly a large majority of them badly-staffed, badly-equipped centres giving a smattering of knowledge in exchange for fees. It is probable that the best commercial schools would welcome Board of Education inspection and recognition.

Brief mention must be made of evening classes for commercial and general education, under Local Education Authorities. The arrangements made are usually good and many thousands of office workers benefit each year by the cheap and efficient provision made. At the same time, we shall surely one day regard as barbarous a system which forces children to continue their education at the end of a hard day's work instead of providing them with a full and adequate education before their working days commence. In some provincial towns, arrangements are made for youngsters in offices to attend afternoon classes, and pending the general adoption of a proper full-time educational standard, this would appear to be a desirable alternative to evening study.

## MAIN DIVISIONS OF WOMEN'S WORK

The work of women in offices falls in general into the following groups: typing (copying, invoice, etc.), dictaphone typing, shorthand-typing, personal and private secretaries, ledger work and minor grades of accountancy, and machine operations of all kinds. There is very little demand for general clerical workers, except in the Civil Service and a few large undertakings, as the introduction of machines has wiped away much of the work formerly performed by "general clerks."

It is impossible in this section to do more than touch upon some of the main fields of employment and the conditions and salaries attaching to them. It will be realised that a large number of clerical workers, both men and women, are unorganised and their conditions are therefore unregulated. The salaries of the organised groups can be given with some confidence, but elsewhere it is only possible to quote from information received and give a general picture.

## SALARIES

**Civil Service:** Trade Union organisation is good in the Service and conditions are well defined. Women are mainly employed as Writing Assistants, which covers routine clerical duties and machine work; as Clerical Officers, covering more responsible forms of clerical work; and as typists and shorthand-typists. Entry to the permanent staff is by examination. Salaries: Clerical Officer (London), £93, rising to £252. Writing Assistants (London), 28/- at age of 16, rising to 57/-. Shorthand-typists (London), 40/-, rising to 72/-. Copy Typists (London), 30/- (under 17), rising to 57/-. There is very little temporary employment except in Employment Exchanges under the Ministry of Labour. The rates for this work are: Grade III Clerks, 41/1, rising to 53/-; Grade II Clerks, 46/6, rising to 56/6.

Apart from the grades covered above, there are special Post Office grades such as sorting assistants, girl probationers, counter clerks and telephonists, telegraphists,

and telephone supervisors. Recruitment to the lower grades is by nomination or examination, usually between the ages of 15 and 18 (14 to 15 in the case of girl probationers). Rates in London are as follows:—

Girl Probationers—11/- to 25/- (age 19).

Sorting Assistants—21/9 to 55/1.

Counter clerks and telegraphists—28/- to 70/-.

Telephonists—28/- to 61/6.

There are in addition a large number of women in sub-Post Offices who are not employed by the Post Office and whose rates are below those of the Post Office staff.

**Local Government:** Conditions and salaries vary according to the Authority. The largest Authority in the country, i.e., the London County Council, employs women mainly as typists and general clerks. Entry to the permanent staff is by examination and the salary scale of the general clerical grade is 24/-, rising to 100/- per week. Unfortunately, all Local Authorities do not pay rates of this type and there is need for strong organisation in this group. A recent advertisement issued by an East Coast town Authority illustrates this point:

Shorthand-typist (female), competent, req. age 19 to 30; single or widow; one month's trial, wages 27/6 per week.

**Banks:** No Trade Union agreements exist for women in banks and the recent introduction of machines by the bigger banks has led to the use of junior labour which makes any estimate of salaries difficult. Women are confined to machine work or shorthand-typing. There is no examination on entry but in general, a secondary school education is required, plus commercial training or machine training.

**Insurance:** Trade Union organisation for women in Insurance Offices is growing, and where organisation exists salary scales have been negotiated. Unfortunately, however, there is still very strong anti-trade union prejudice in the minds of a number of Insurance Managements and in most of these offices no definite salary scales

exist, and the salaries paid are very frequently considerably below the average commercial rates paid in the same locality. A typical scale obtained by Trade Union negotiation commences, at age 17, at 15/- a week (plus lunches valued at 4/- a week) rising to £3 15s. 0d., and in the case of Supervisors to £5. The recent introduction of machinery on a large scale is tending to bring a new type of junior labour into the offices and is lowering the standard of salaries.

In general, the offices require a secondary school education, and in some cases matriculation or its equivalent is demanded, plus the usual commercial or machine training.

**Railways:** The majority of office workers are under Trade Union agreements. Women are employed as Shorthand-typists, machine workers, telegraphists, telephonists, on accounts, or routine clerical work. The general standard of education is Secondary, and girls pass into the Second Class subject to passing the examinations prescribed by the employing Company. The salary scale is, on joining, or at age 16, 17/6 per week; at 17, 21/6; at 18, 30/- rising to 60/-. Class I, commencing 65/- to 70/-. Special class over 70/-.

A number of women clerks are employed in the ancillary services whose rates are not governed by Trade Union agreements.

**Printing Trades:** Women in printing offices are mainly employed as shorthand-typists and a high degree of Trade Union organisation exists. Negotiated scales are as follows: London Newspapers: Clerks (age 16), 30/-, rising to 80/-. Shorthand-typists (age 18), 60/-, rising to 85/-. In magazine houses, scales range from 25/- (age 16) to 65/-. There is no examination set by employers but matriculation or Secondary education is demanded in some cases.

**Distribution:** Except for the comparatively small section covered by Trade Union agreements, the conditions prevailing in this large and important group can only be described as chaotic. In contrast to other grades of clerical employment, there is no general educational

standard for entrants and office workers are employed from age 14 upwards. Organised groups are in receipt of salaries varying from 37/6 to 45/-, according to district. It should be noted that all clerical workers in the Co-operative movement are covered by Trade Union agreements.

In the unorganised sections, rates from 8/- upwards are paid. Examples of such rates may be quoted. A clerk in a drapery stores, age 19, is paid 12/- per week; another, age 19, is paid 15/-; an adult worker, a cashier aged 23, is paid 25/- per week. These examples could be multiplied but they indicate the salaries prevailing in unorganised sections of distribution.

## COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

This large group must also be classed as mainly unorganised and in consequence conditions vary greatly. In the main a Central or Secondary education is necessary and some large employers set a simple examination for entrants. Work is mainly shorthand-typing and machine operating. There is a great demand by employers for the young, well-educated girl who, after several years' experience, can still be paid as a "junior." In London salaries ranging from 35/- to 45/- are offered for this type of worker because the demand has created an artificial shortage. Adult shorthand-typists in London receive 50/- to £3 per week.

In the smaller towns, rates ranging from 30/- to 45/- are usual for adult workers. 50/- is considered good. In a small south-coast town, rates are quoted as 15/- to 20/- for trained juniors, 30/- for adults. From one of the "distressed areas" towns, on the north-east coast come reports of salaries of 8/- to 15/- per week for juniors, and 25/- to 30/- for adults. The prize specimen from this area is an offer of 3/- per week to a trained junior. Comparatively prosperous undertakings in the Midlands pay 30/- to shorthand-typists and a recent offer is recorded of 37/6 for shorthand-typing and two foreign languages. In the West of England, 25/- to 30/- is usual

in small unorganised offices. In contrast to the above, where women workers are organised, agreements have been secured by which ordinary clerks in London rise from 25/- a week at 16 years of age to 65/- per week at 22 years, with higher rates for special qualifications; and in the provinces women general clerks start at 20/- per week at 16 years of age and rise by annual increments to 60/- per week, and 80/- per week for higher positions. Even in the West of England (which is a black geographical area for clerks) rates have been secured for organised women clerks ranging from 17/- per week at 16 years of age to 46/- per week by annual increments.

### **PERSONAL AND PRIVATE SECRETARIES**

Women are widely employed for this class of work, as secretaries to Heads and Departmental Heads of commercial undertakings, and to public and professional men and women. The qualifications necessary for such posts vary greatly. The secretary to a politician must necessarily have a good knowledge of current political events, and secretaries to doctors, literary men, etc., need specialised knowledge. In almost every case, however, good speeds in shorthand and typing are a necessity, and a knowledge of accounts is an advantage. Essential qualities for the private secretary are tact and discretion. The educational standard ranges from secondary to University, according to the type of post, and experience of a general nature is desirable. Salaries vary according to the responsibility placed on the secretary. It is sometimes said that secretaries are paid not for what they do but for what they know, and it is certainly true that many personal, business and State secrets pass through the hands of private secretaries.

### **HOURS OF WORK**

With the glaring exception of the distributive trade, office hours rarely exceed 48 per week, and in many cases are much less than this. In the Civil Service, there is a working day of 6½ hours in London (with a slight increase for staff outside London): in the railway service, the average working week is 40-42: in the printing trade, there is a 39 hour week, in London Newspaper offices and

in other establishments a 41½ hour week: the banks have on average a 7-hour day and in general commercial private undertakings, the average working week is 40-42 hours.

The black spot in this connection is the distributive trade: retail, wholesale undertakings and warehouses. Clerical workers attached to retail shops normally work the same hours as the shop assistants, which in many cases are excessively long—in some cases 60 hours or more per week, except among Co-operative Societies, where the working week averages from 39 to 44 hours according to agreement. There is no statutory limitation of hours except for workers under the age of 18, who by the Shops Act of 1934 are limited to 52 hours (48 hours after 1936) when they are "employed about the business of a shop." This is the only legal limitation of hours as far as clerical workers are concerned.

A Convention has been adopted by the International Labour Organisation limiting the hours of salaried employees in general, to 48 per week, but this Convention has not been ratified in this country.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Paid holidays are the general rule for clerical workers. In comparatively rare cases only one week's holiday is given, but two weeks is the usual period and there is a growing body of clerical workers who secure three weeks. Thus, in the Civil Service holidays for Writing Assistants and Clerical Officers range from 18 working days to 24 working days: in the Banks, three weeks' holiday is usual: in some printing establishments three weeks' is given after two years' service, and in some commercial establishments, three weeks is the rule for senior staffs.

With the exception of the distributive trade, Saturday afternoon is the recognised half day and the five day week is a growing practice. A number of firms maintain a skeleton staff on Saturday mornings and release staff by rotation. The normal Bank Holidays are paid holidays.

## OVERTIME

Except in certain well-organised sections, unpaid overtime is very prevalent for clerical workers. In the Civil Service and on the railways, payment is made, similarly where agreements exist in the distributive trade, provision is made for payment for overtime. The great mass of unorganised women work overtime as and when required, with "tea-money" as their only recompense, and shorthand-typists in particular are required to be in attendance on an unpunctual employer no matter what the normal working day may be.

A word may be said here about the private secretary and resident secretary. It is recognised that hours must be elastic in such posts but they are frequently made unbearably so by inconsiderate employers and a seven day week for the resident secretary is no unusual thing.

## MODERN TENDENCIES IN OFFICE WORK

Two factors have appeared in offices which are revolutionising clerical work in large scale undertakings. One is the introduction of office machines; and the other the standardising of clerical processes, with sub-division of work and measured output. These two processes are intermingled, since it is the machines which have made sub-division and measured output a possibility to a large extent.

On the accounts side, book-keeping, calculating and adding machines have replaced in large undertakings the old system of ledger entries, costing, calculating and the preparation of wage sheets. The work is so arranged that one girl undertakes one process only; her output and the output of others on the same work can be counted and compared and an average day's work can be assessed.

On the correspondence side, the introduction of the dictaphone has led to similar results. The girls do not in such cases work for one or two individuals taking shorthand notes and typing back their own work. They are attached to a typing pool with twenty, thirty or a hundred other typists. To this pool come all the dictaphone discs from all departments, which are distributed among the

typing staff. The girls sit at their machines all day, with headphones over their ears, typing back from the dictaphone discs. At the end of the day, the number of lines, or the number of words they have typed can be counted. The process can be, and is, carried further. An ingenious new machine has been devised, called a tapometer, which records the number of taps made by the typewriter and in some instances a bonus system is introduced on this device—so much per week and a bonus on the taps above a certain average. The similarity between this and factory systems of work measurement and speeding-up will be readily seen. Subtle methods of speeding-up are employed in some instances. A chart is displayed on the wall, showing various averages over a period. The record of the previous day is written up as an indication of what is expected. Workers with a low average are questioned on their inability to achieve the records of others, and those with a high average receive letters of congratulation from the management.

Leffingwell, the American authority on scientific management, in his book "Office Management," makes no secret of the reasons for these new methods. He says "In the unstandardised office the pace is naturally set by the slowest worker instead of the fastest. But once the quantity of work can be measured and compared with a standard the output immediately begins to increase. Add to this measurement a definite standard of output that is expected and the most surprising increase in output is almost immediately noticeable." He gives examples of how work can be measured. "Let us say that an office works 540 minutes a day for 5 days, and 240 minutes on Saturdays, which would mean 2,940 minutes worked by each clerk per week. If there are 100 clerks, they will work 294,000 minutes, and if 2,000 orders are received in a week, the number of clerical minutes per order will be 147." It may be added that this neat theory does not always work out quite so tidily in practice and employers who have standardised are finding it difficult to overcome the problems of "queries" in clerical work.

In large mechanised offices, speeding-up methods, combined with the incessant noise from many machines,

create a nervous tension, the effect of which can as yet only be guessed. Employers justify speeding-up on the grounds that machine work is routine work, requiring little skill or knowledge. It cannot be over-emphasised that all forms of machine work require a high degree of concentration and attention, and when such work is carried out under conditions of strain, the effect on the health of the worker is likely to be disastrous.

### **BLIND ALLEY WORK IN OFFICES**

As far as women are concerned, it is probable that a great deal of office work should be rightly classed as blind-alley. The problem divides itself into two parts.

Firstly, there is the employment of junior labour for certain classes of work. In the distributive trade, for example, employment figures show that nearly one-half of those employed are under 21 years of age, and the incidence of unemployment rises sharply for the older groups. Unemployment amongst the age group 16-21 is more than three times that of the age group 14-16. Young girls are normally employed in cash desks. In the printing trade also, blind alley work is performed by girls in connection with newspaper insurance, publicity schemes and competitions.

The other aspect is equally important, namely, the employment of large numbers of adult workers on so-called routine processes on machines. It has been pointed out that machine work is mainly undertaken by women and although it is too early to judge the final effect of mechanisation, it is apparent that those who take up machine work will remain on machine work all their working lives, since avenues of promotion to other work are few.

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANAGERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK**

Apart from the particular difficulties arising from mechanisation, opportunities for women in offices are still restricted. Old prejudices die hard and the idea that women are capable of accepting responsibility, taking

charge of departments (except as supervisors of women staff) or determining policy, is still strange and unwelcome in many quarters. The result is that capable women are compelled to watch responsible posts allotted elsewhere because of the legend that they make excellent personal secretaries but must not be put in charge of male staff. In the railway service, for example, 95 per cent. of the women employed are in the lowest grade (on the men's side, not more than 50 per cent. of the total male staff may be employed in the lowest grade at any one time). In the banks, women are confined entirely to machine work, and shorthand-typing, with the exception of a few women who secured posts of responsibility during the war and have managed to retain them. There are few, if any, openings for women in the higher fields of insurance.

The Civil Service position shows a welcome contrast. The Royal Commission of 1931 declared that there should be a "fair field and no favour" for women in the Service and although complete equality has not yet been secured, the position is very hopeful for the women.

### **EQUAL PAY**

Throughout the whole field of clerical employment, unequal payments are the general rule as between men and women. In some cases, the issue is evaded by establishing separate grades of work on which women only are employed. In the railway service, for example, women are not placed in the general grades but in a grade apart. In the Civil Service, the Writing Assistant grade is confined entirely to women. In many cases, however, it is possible to point to men and women, employed on similar duties, entering the employment by similar methods but in receipt of two different scales of salary. The Civil Service Clerical Officer grade is an example.

A welcome contrast is the Union agreement concluded with Russian trading concerns in this country, where payment is made irrespective of the sex of the worker.

There will be no question that unequal payments are unjust to the women but it is not always realised that



they are also a danger to the standards of men. Employers are not unwilling to employ cheap labour wherever it is to be found, and there is evidence that the introduction of machines, operated almost entirely by women, is leading to the displacement of men clerks.

### THE HEALTH OF THE OFFICE WORKER

The recent debate in the House of Commons on the Offices Regulation Bill has drawn public attention to the evil conditions under which many clerks are forced to work. Unlike factory workers, clerical workers have no protective legislation to ensure a minimum standard of cleanliness and decency in their working conditions. Many offices are still situated underground, in basement rooms which in some cases are little better than cellars. Eminent doctors have spoken in the strongest terms on the effect on general health of being shut away from daylight and the sight of the sky for many hours each day, but basement offices continue to be used, not only in old buildings but in new modern blocks of offices. Reports received by the clerical organisations show that sanitary arrangements in many offices are deplorable. A mother writes: "My daughter, a perfectly healthy girl, developed a toxic condition due to chronic constipation from which she has not entirely recovered. The room she is working in now is clean, light and airy but the damage the 'slum office' did still remains." It is a tragic fact that the percentage of tuberculosis is high among office workers, and digestive troubles, eye strain and nerve strain are very prevalent.

The Offices Regulation Bill, which would ensure a minimum standard of cleanliness, heating, lighting and ventilation, freedom from overcrowding and adequate sanitary arrangements, has been once more rejected by the House of Commons, on the grounds that such matters can be dealt with under Public Health Acts; this in spite of the fact that it is freely admitted that Local Authorities will not undertake the responsibility of inspecting offices under these Acts. There is the further, and very real, difficulty that inspection under the Public Health Acts only takes place on complaint and as the Under-Secretary

for the Home Office admitted in the recent Debate, "If the onus of complaint is put on an individual or a number of individuals, in an office or any other establishment, there is a definite risk—it is not necessary to put it higher—of victimisation." He suggested that these difficulties can be obviated by the new Consolidated Public Health Act.

It is evident from the recent Debate that strong pressure will be needed before adequate steps are taken to safeguard the health of the office worker.

### SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT

The woman clerk shares with other workers a fear of unemployment and a dread of the future. Employment in many cases is precariously based on "a week's notice on either side" and this week's notice may be enforced even after many years of faithful service.

The position of the senior women is particularly precarious. During the slump of 1931 many employers took advantage of the situation to dismiss their older women employees—more particularly if they were in receipt of a good salary—and replace them with juniors. The appointment of a young director or manager is sometimes followed by a process known as "clearing out the old fogies." When clerical workers are dismissed at the age of 45 or 50 after years of service with one firm, whether they be men or women their chances of securing employment are small.

The organisations concerned have promoted a Bill for compensation for non-manual workers who are dismissed through no fault of their own. The Bill provides for payment by the employer in such cases of compensation amounting to one-twelfth of salary, or one month's salary for each year of service. The need for such provision is very great but whether the Bill will receive the support of Parliament is another matter.

The provision of adequate retiring pensions is another aspect of the same question. Superannuation provision is made by some large firms but the host of clerical workers employed in ones and twos in small undertakings have only the Old Age Pension at 65 to look to in the future.

As far as women are concerned, their salaries throughout their working lives are frequently too small to enable them to supplement this Pension with their own savings.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE OFFICE WORKER**

The special problem of the office worker when unemployment arises, may be summed up in the phrase "keeping up appearances." The shorthand-typist or woman Secretary must be smart and well-cared for if she is to make a good impression on a prospective employer, quite irrespective of her merits or qualifications. Unemployment Benefit at the rate of 15/- per week is quite inadequate for this purpose, and prolonged unemployment has special terrors for such workers, who find their chances of employment receding as clothes become shabby and shoes wear out.

Their difficulties are increased by the existence of fee-charging private employment agencies. These agencies have established themselves as intermediaries between the employer and the worker and their purpose, to put it plainly, is to sell employment at so much a time. Employers are accustomed to ring up certain agencies when they require staff, often without appreciating what is involved in the transaction. The agent in turn has a list of unemployed girls, who have probably paid half a crown for the privilege of "registering" and a notification of the vacancy is sent out by the agent. The girl who secures the post is then asked for a sum of money, usually amounting to one week's salary, but in some cases to as much as 5 per cent. on a year's salary. The fact that the girl may be unemployed again in a month or two does not concern the agent.

Other aspects of this question are equally unsatisfactory. Girls are sent out by agents to temporary work and are asked for 10 per cent. of their salary each week; or in many cases they are paid by the agent who retains a proportion of the salary earned by the girl. The proportion varies. During the height of the summer season, when temporary workers are scarce in London, the agent will pay a shorthand-typist £3 per week but may be receiving £4 or £4 10s. from the firm. At other times,

the firm may pay £3 and the girl receives 35s. It should be noted that the agent takes no risks. The girl is not retained on the staff of the agency and paid a retaining salary. She is merely picked up when required and dropped again.

The clerical organisations have fought this system for many years and the workers' representatives to the International Labour Organisation secured a Convention in 1933 for the abolition of profit-making Employment Agencies. This Convention has not been ratified in this country. The Government at that time gave it as their opinion that the Fee-Charging Agency is "a legitimate form of private enterprise," and this is still their attitude towards the problem.

### **WOMEN OFFICE WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONISM**

It must be overwhelmingly clear from the Report that the urgent need of the office worker is a strong Trade Union movement. In those sections where powerful Organisations have been established, the workers have been safeguarded against the worst evils of low wages, bad conditions and insecurity. The need for strengthening the movement is obvious. Mechanisation without safeguards for the workers may lower their status, damage their health and increase their insecurity. Unhealthy offices remain. The older woman is threatened with unemployment and poverty. The remedy lies in the Trade Union movement which can do and is doing for this great army of workers what it has done for other sections in the past.

The women of the Labour Party, the Co-operative Movement, and the Trade Unions are urged to draw the attention of the public to those conditions of office work which call urgently for improvement, to secure support for legislation which the Unions are seeking to promote with a view to improving conditions of work and raising the standards of office workers. In particular they are asked to use their influence to persuade women office workers to organise in Trade Unions, as Trade Unionism for the office worker as for the manual worker is the only way to improved status and economic security.

“WOMEN IN OFFICES”

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