

Part IV

EARNINGS

There are two important factors in the study of earnings—rates or what the industry agrees to pay the worker and earnings or what the worker actually finds in the weekly pay envelope. In the present study, these figures have been obtained both for a representative week for all workers in the firms studied and for a year for workers who had been on the firm's payroll a year. A study of earnings in one week is important in that both the permanent and the less stable workers are represented. A study of a year's earnings is still more fundamental since it shows what the industry is yielding its permanent workers in terms of annual income and to what extent these workers can rely upon a full time wage.

BASIS OF PAY¹

The laundry industry has adopted the piece work system to a small extent only. Ninety-three per cent of the workers were paid for time worked, 7 per cent on the basis of output. Piece work was found to the greatest extent among New York City press operators, to some extent among hand ironers, occasionally among New York City flat workers, and up-State classifiers and starchers. Among time workers, weekly rates were most usual, with 85 per cent of all workers paid on this basis. A considerable number of workers, mostly up-State, had hourly rates, a few daily rates. In the discussion of rates which follows, piece workers, having no comparable rates, are not included, while the rates of hour and day workers have been reduced to weekly figures for purposes of comparison. Appendix Table X, p. 49, shows the method of pay of each type of operative.

WEEKLY RATE OF PAY²

Excepting piece workers, the median weekly rate of pay of women in the laundries studied was \$14.76, that is, one-half the women had rates which were lower than this amount and one-half had rates which were higher. Six per cent of the workers were hired to work for less than \$12 a week. Only 8 per cent had rates of \$20 or more.

The median rate for all workers varied little in and outside New York City. It was slightly higher up-State, \$14.86, as compared with \$14.72 in New York City. New York City, however, had relatively more women on rates of \$20 or more, and fewer in the under \$12 group. This distinction between localities is brought

¹ Based on 63 laundries reporting basis of pay, 34 in New York City, 29 up-State, and on 3,205 workers, 2,209 in New York City, 996 up-State.

² Based on 61 laundries reporting rates of pay and scheduled hours, 34 in New York City and 27 up-State, and on 2,898 workers, 2,039 in New York City and 859 up-State.