

PART III

HOURS OF HOTEL AND RESTAURANT WORKERS

The hours of restaurant workers can not be classified and treated in the same manner as those of employees in either factories or stores. When the factory whistle blows, all the workers are supposed to start work at the same time. Although stores are like restaurants in that many of the employees therein come directly in contact with the public, the hours during which they are at the service of the public are within regular time limits, and the shoppers accommodate themselves to the schedule of the stores. But when it comes to satisfying the hunger of the public the owner of the restaurant can not be quite so arbitrary as the owner of the store. People may want to eat breakfast at 7 a. m. or earlier, while, on the other hand, they seldom dine before 6 p. m., and many prefer a later hour. Restaurants which serve three meals daily can hardly be open less than 13 or 14 hours. Many restaurants serve not only the three regular meals a day but also cater to those who want after-theater supper parties. To other restaurants the person in search of food may go at any hour of the day or night. The restaurants included in the survey ranged all the way from those in stores, which served only luncheon, luncheon and afternoon tea, or late breakfast in addition to these meals, to those which displayed signs announcing to the passer-by, "Open all night." Of the 19 restaurants surveyed in Chicago, 5 kept either all or some of their dining rooms open from 6 or 7 a. m. until from 10 to 1 o'clock at night. Two others were 24-hour restaurants.

Thus the manager of a restaurant has before him a very distinct problem connected with the distribution of his labor force. Not only does he have to provide service over a long period of hours but he has very definite peaks of demand with periods in between when very few people desire to be served. Some restaurants are entirely closed in this period between meals and give no service at all at odd hours. As a result there is considerable irregularity in the working week of the restaurant employee. The restaurant owner may have solved his problem by having one woman employee work on a certain schedule for one week or more and then change off with some one on another schedule, or he may have her work so arranged that she comes on duty at different hours on the various days of the same week. Often, too, the day of the restaurant worker, from the time when she comes to work to the hour when she finishes for the day, is broken by rather long periods when she is off duty.

SCOPE AND METHOD

These general statements relating to the problem of hours in restaurants will serve to show why the material concerning the hours of restaurant workers has been treated differently from that for other workers. It is impossible to talk of daily scheduled hours, since the number of hours a day expected from a woman employed in a restaurant may vary with each day in the week. Nor is it always possible to get data on the woman's schedule showing the arrangement of shifts for each day. Consequently, an attempt was made to secure for each