

THE WOMEN WORKERS

Since the human factor in industry naturally is the most important from the point of view of production, the workers' energies, which contribute so essentially to output, should not be subjected to undue wear and tear in the industrial field. Too frequently the management is prone to overemphasize the importance of care and improvement of machinery and neglect the care and consideration of the workers who operate such machinery. In consequence the employers suffer the penalty of crippled production arising from the fatigue, ill health, or other disaffection of employees whose interests have not been sufficiently considered.

Apart from the poor mechanics of the question, the nature and requirements of the workers are of much greater significance than are the structure and care of machines, since the well-being of the workers is imperative not only for the success of industry but for the structure that is at the foundation of industry, namely, a healthy society.

The wages, hours, and working conditions of women are the greatest questions concerning the central figures which all these things affect, the women themselves. But the public is interested to know, also, whether those women are native born or foreign born, young or old, married or single. Do they live at home, with home duties and responsibilities, or do they board, with only their own livelihood to consider? These also are important questions affecting the woman worker, and no one can appreciate fully the problems connected with women in industry who does not regard the women not only as wage earners but as human beings. To understand the needs of women at work it is necessary to learn the conditions under which they live, to analyze their home responsibilities in addition to the responsibilities of their work in the factories, to know their obligations to dependents and their requirements of living. Such facts have been presented in most of the 60 reports published by the Women's Bureau since its inception. In addition to wages, hours, and working conditions, personal data have been secured by means of cards distributed among the women, who themselves answered the questions. More important still were the visits made by the agents of the bureau to the women in their own homes, at which times were secured authentic data in regard to home conditions and responsibilities.