

There are, however, at least three aspects of the TVA power program which do have universally valid significance. The first is the demonstration which the TVA has given of the promotional effect of lowering electric rates. In the TVA territory average home use of electricity for the fiscal year 1945 was 1754 kwh. as compared with 1186 kwh. for the United States as a whole. Second, the TVA has proved that a public agency can administer a gigantic power operation without succumbing to the bureaucracy

and the political favoritism and the inefficiency which some Americans seem to believe are inevitable consequences of public administration of a business service. Finally, the TVA experience has demonstrated that power can be employed as an effective, financially self-supporting partner in a public program of regional development aimed at the wise utilization of natural resources and the raising of general living standards. These are the real lessons of the TVA power program.

Reconversion and the Employment of Women

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While the observations reported in the article are derived from studies in the United States, the general principles stated by the author and the conclusions arrived at seem to apply equally to the industrial sections of the Dominion.

THE close of the war in Europe, and in its turn the Japanese surrender, were followed immediately by extensive lay-offs of workers in industries in the United States, particularly of those making munitions, aircraft, and other direct war supplies. The indications are that these lay-offs struck with especial force on women workers. In common with men, they had difficulty in finding new jobs at anything that required the best skills they had been exercising during the war. But even more than that, they frequently have found less opportunity than men to get any type of employment at all.

It is not surprising that the loss of jobs was most severe in the major war-industry centres. This had especially serious effects in those localities that offered little diversity of employment along other lines.

Impact of Lay-offs on Women

It was precisely in those war industries that employed great numbers of women that lay-offs came most promptly and severely. For example, in aircraft and parts plants (engines excepted), roughly a third of the workers were women. In May, 1945, the War Department announced cuts in this industry that were expected to reduce employment by 30 per cent, and this was greatly increased after the middle of August. A similar situation occurred in various branches of munitions' manufacture.

But more than this, lay-offs affected women in much larger proportions than men. Even in the mid-war period and long before its close (1943 and 1944), women constituted 40 or 50 per cent of those reported affected by cut-backs in a large sample of war plants, though they were only 35 per cent of all those employed. Later, from June to September, 1945, according to reports of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, women were separated from their jobs at a much faster rate than men in every munitions industry group; and both numbers and proportions of women also declined in non-munitions industries. In these three months, about 1 in 4 women factory

workers had lost their jobs; 3 in every 4 of those who had been in aircraft and ship building. From August to September alone 72 in every 1000 women workers in manufacturing plants were laid off, as against only 42 in every 1000 such men workers.

With changes so great and occurring so rapidly, the wonder is that the entire economy in the United States was not even more seriously disrupted than it was. But many of those laid off found other work, and at the close of 1945 the unemployed, far from being 6 million persons as had been predicted, were but little more than half that many. Only one and three-quarter million persons were then seeking work, in addition to one and one-half million service men returned but still on vacation and not yet job hunting.

Women's Difficulty to Find Work

However, the picture was least rosy for women, for they had considerably more difficulty than men in finding new work. In three cities where special studies of this situation were made, 60 to 80 per cent of the jobs open were for men only. Many of the women who were seeking employment there, had been doing skilled or semi-skilled work, but jobs of that type were now all but closed to them. Less than 1 in 5 of these women previously had experience in clerical, sales or service work, yet 2 or 3 in every 5 of the jobs available to them were of these types. For the country as a whole, the United States Employment Service reported that less than a third of the persons being placed in new non-agricultural jobs were women.

Reconversion Wage Declines

Women, in common with men, have suffered reductions in pay envelopes during the reconversion period. Even those workers who kept their jobs usually have experienced a shortening of work hours. Though this was a relief from the physical pressure of long work periods, nevertheless it brought wage reduc-

tions for workers paid by the hour as most factory workers are. Where overtime has been worked, this pay loss is greater in proportion than the hour reduction, because the hourly pay rate is increased for overtime hours (over 40 a week).

However it is probable that this particular feature of pay reduction has affected women less in proportion than men, since overtime work has been somewhat less prevalent for women than men. It has been rather in changing to different work, or in being unable to obtain jobs, that women have suffered their most widespread shrinkage in pay envelopes. If they could find employment at all, they frequently had to take reductions in wages, for those industries now chiefly offering jobs to women—the service and civilian supply industries—customarily paid at lower rates than did the war industries where they had been working. It is easy to understand that a woman earning \$30 or \$40 a week in war manufacturing would hesitate to accept a job in a service industry at only \$16 a week, especially as living costs, far from declining, had advanced about a third. It also is easy to see that the general situation as to rise in living costs, and the lack of available jobs that paid enough to meet the advanced costs, would contribute to cause the series of strikes that have occurred in efforts to force remedies before the situation became even worse.

Women and Unemployment Benefits

An important influence toward relief of hardship during these tremendous job dislocations has been the payment of unemployment compensation. Frequently in areas of contracting war industry more women than men have claimed these benefits, since women were laid off in larger proportions and had greater difficulty in getting new jobs. In the late fall of 1945, women constituted 60 per cent or more of the claimants in three representative cities in which special studies have been undertaken, as well

as in many others (sometimes as high as 75 or 80 per cent). Among cities having such high proportions of their claimants women were Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and a number of places in Ohio.

But to claim unemployment insurance does not necessarily mean that benefits actually are received. Unemployment compensation is—in contrast to Canada—administered by the individual States and not by the Federal Government. Thus there are some 48 different systems, each with its own rules, though some provisions prevail rather generally. Moreover, before any benefit can be received a waiting period of at least a week must ensue, the time varying somewhat from State to State.

During the war, many workers, both men and women, left their home states to take work elsewhere. When these war jobs ended and they returned home and could not get work, many states did not grant unemployment insurance because the job that was lost, was not within the state. At the same time the worker could not get benefits from the state he or she had left, since no longer residing there.

Aside from these circumstances which affect workers of both sexes, women encounter added difficulties in obtaining benefits, because they are affected more generally than men are by special provisions in the laws or the interpretations of the laws in the majority of states. For example, in about half the states workers cannot receive benefits if they left a job for any reason not "attributable to the employer." Women claimants thus are denied benefits if they quit the job for the purpose of some household emergency, such as giving care temporarily to a member of the family who is ill, or to a child when the usual program of care breaks down temporarily, or if they must move the family to a new place to which the husband's work has been transferred, and in which the women are unable to find jobs.

Furthermore, any claimant must be "available for work," and under certain conditions may be disqualified for refusal to accept a job offered. This works a particular hardship on women, since jobs of the skills they have developed are less likely to be open to them than to men, and the openings most numerous for women are often in domestic or other services at low pay. If a woman experienced, say, as a precision worker should refuse service employment at a fourth of the wage she formerly made, she might in some states risk loss of benefits. Such difficulties are likely to affect more women than men, since the latter more frequently are preferred for the fewer more skilled jobs available.

Amendments to the unemployment compensation laws are proposed to alleviate some of these inequities, but in the meantime they still exist during this period of reconversion, and they tend to be particularly serious for women workers.

Women Leaving the Labor Force

That many women would return to their homes after the war is an easy prediction. Despite more than 100 years of gradual or rapid increase in the employment of women outside their homes in this country, the great majority of them were not in gainful work outside the home. Even at the war peak, almost two-thirds of the feminine population of working age were not gainfully occupied, though to be sure those who were not earners were rendering all sorts of unpaid services vital to the nation, both in their homes and in their communities.

Many women who took jobs largely for patriotic reasons, including married women and single women whose marriages were delayed because of the war, now wanted to leave the labor force. Service men's wives never were a very large proportion of the total women workers, though they constituted larger proportions in a few areas, but of those who had taken jobs many wanted to remain at home when their husbands returned. In

fact, various studies have shown that on the average three-fifths of the service men's wives planned to stop work after the war.

All told, the number of women in the labor force had shrunk from August to December by a little over 2 million or by something more than a tenth of the number employed at the war peak. Even though some part of this shrinkage may be due to seasonal factors, still it is considerable and the next six months or year probably will see further declines. This exodus from the labor force on the part of some groups of women should by no means obscure the far more important fact that many women were a permanent part of the labor force long before the war; this number and more must continue in employment. After all, less than a third of the total woman labor force at the war peak were additions beyond the pre-war number.

Women Workers' Increase Permanent

One of the characteristics of a dynamic industrial society is a steady increase in the employment of women in gainful work. In this country fewer than 2 million women were so occupied in 1870. Thirty years later, by 1900, the number had more than doubled and reached 5 million. In another thirty years, by 1930, it again had more than doubled, and was then ten and three-quarter million.

The volume of women's employment is especially sensitive to influences that make for the expansion or contraction of the economy as a whole. War periods accelerate the normal increase in the number of women in the labor force. This has been the experience both in World War I and in the present war. The post-war contraction in the woman labor force does not return it to its former size, as with an over-stretched rubber band. Even women who did not expect to do so may continue to work for a variety of reasons. Some who have thought they would leave the labor

force find that loss or disablement of the family wage earner makes it impossible for them to do so. Furthermore, depletion of the male population causes many women who would have married to remain single, and to support themselves by their own earnings.

It has been estimated that by 1950 the labor force will include nearly 17 million women, an increase of some 4 million over 1940. The question is interesting as to how much of this increase can be attributed to war influences, and how much would have been expected under normal conditions if there had been no war. Best current estimates would appear to indicate that from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 million, only about 3 to 6 per cent of the entire woman labor force of 1950, can be attributed to war causes. The remaining women probably would have been earners in 1950 even had there been no war.

New Features in Woman Labor Force

The woman labor force of 1950 may be expected to show some characteristics differing from that of earlier years. These are due in part to war changes, in part to other population trends that were in evidence even before the war.

Consider, for example, the changes in distribution of women workers among various occupations. The shifting during the war period was very marked. It was the needs of war factories that called the women in greatest numbers, both from their homes and from other types of occupation, such as service industries and the teaching profession. The net result of this was that while in 1940 about 21 per cent of all employed women were in manufacturing industries and a similar proportion were in service industries, in 1944 nearly 34 per cent of all civilian women workers were in factories and only 16 per cent were in services. The desire for more dramatic patriotic service, the insistent demands of war industries, and the better pay and conditions of work that they offered all contributed to this result.

As to the probable occupations of women after reconversion is virtually over, there is as yet no count to aid us later than the 1944 one of the war period, just cited. However, studies in which women war workers expressed themselves as to what they planned to do in the future indicate that, if the opportunities can be found, women in the post-war labor force will want to continue as factory workers in proportions larger than in 1940 though not so great as during the war; and that somewhat smaller proportions of them than formerly intend to work in service industries.

Another distinguishing feature of the post-war woman labor force is in the increases among workers in somewhat more advanced age groups than formerly. The pull of war work tended to draw into employment more of these somewhat older women. For the most part, those of 20 to 35 either were already at work before the war, or they had family cares that precluded gainful employment for them. Hence the war labor force included somewhat larger proportional increases of women beyond 35 than of those 20 but under 35. These older women were less likely to have very small children or other imperative household cares, and they could respond to war industry needs. Many of them developed new skills of value to industry, and therefore are the more likely to expect to remain in the labor force for a time. Powerfully contributing to this increased number of older women workers is the fact that the entire population is aging. In the total woman population of working age in each decade (those 14 years old or more) those of 45 but under 65, who still might be likely to work before retirement, constituted 25 per cent in 1940, though in 1890 these age groups were only 20 per cent of the whole.

General Conclusions

A general summing up of the effects of reconversion on working women shows women laid off their jobs in larger pro-

portions than men; these lay-offs affecting them far more severely in some localities and some industries than in others; increases in women's claims for unemployment benefits often outrunning men's, although regulations as to receipt of these payments tend to rule out larger proportions of the unemployed among women than men; wage declines; and greater difficulties for women than men to get new jobs, especially at skills in any degree comparable with those they have been exercising. Though living costs are increased considerably, pay has been reduced markedly, both because of shortened hours and because the lack of better paying jobs has forced workers to shift to those that pay lesser amounts.

The more permanent result of the changes that have been occurring, will be that the number of women in the labor force will exceed that of the pre-war period. This increase is a normal part of a long-time trend, and only a small proportion of it can be attributed chiefly to war developments.

Occupational changes will result in more women than formerly seeking manufacturing jobs, and fewer wanting work in service occupations. Comparison of the post-war with the pre-war labor force shows increased proportions of the women workers to be in the age groups above 35 years.

Women's fortunes depend largely on generally healthy economic conditions, accompanied by a high employment level. It follows that women workers have a primary stake in measures designed to attain and hold a high level of peacetime employment; and in the development of yet more adequate and more inclusive social security provisions. Even if employment conditions are largely favorable, some of the particular war-industry communities that are most markedly affected by reconversion have little new opportunity for women workers, and a good overall level of employment in the country as a whole may not afford sufficient openings for those residing in such areas.