

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION  
Washington, D. C.

NO LEARNERS FOR NOVELTY CURTAIN MANUFACTURING

No learner certificates will be issued to manufacturers of novelty curtains, Merle D. Vincent, Director of the Hearings Branch of the Wage and Hour Division, ruled today. The ruling was the result of reopening the hearing in the matter of learners for this branch of the textile industry.

While the findings and determination in the matter of learners for the textile industry as a whole, issued November 7, 1939, allowed novelty curtain manufacturers an eight-week training period at 25 cents an hour to the extent of five percent of the total number of sewing machine operators, no learner certificates have been issued any curtain manufacturers under these provisions.

Learners were allowed the novelty curtain branch of the textile industry in the original findings as a result of an application and appearance at a hearing by the New England Curtain Manufacturers Association.

Subsequently, the Curtain Manufacturers Guild, Inc., of Brooklyn notified the Administrator that neither its officers nor its members had seen the notice of this hearing. Their application for a reopened hearing was granted and on December 13, 1939, this was held. Marvin Rosenberg, President, and B. H. Siegeltuch, Secretary of the Curtain Manufacturers Guild, Inc., appeared and testified. No other witnesses appeared. They testified that their membership represented 60 percent of the production in this industry; that sewing machine operation in making these curtains is a simple, semi-skilled operation which is quickly learned by beginners. Mr. Rosenberg testified that the novelty curtain branch of the textile industry is not in any need of learners.

The witnesses read into the record an excerpt from a brief filed by the New England Curtain Manufacturers Association with the Textile Industry Committee, the Committee which recommended the current 32-1/2-cents-an-hour minimum wage for the textile industry. The excerpt from the brief, prepared by the same counsel of the New England Curtain Manufacturers Association, who testified to a need to employ learners at less than the minimum rate in the novelty curtain branch of the industry -- testimony which resulted in the allowance of the eight-week learning period in the original findings -- reads:

"The labor required is predominantly unskilled or at the most semi-skilled, the product being a very simple one to manufacture, consisting most of cutting, hemming, and ruffling the material. More than half of the employees are engaged primarily in the trimming, folding and packing. The only skill required is straight sewing so that experience merely makes for speed and does not require any particular craftsmanship. Employment is fairly steady during the entire year."

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