

New release

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

PROVISIONS FOR LEARNERS IN GLOVE INDUSTRY MADE PUBLIC.

Glove manufacturers may obtain special certificates authorizing the employment of learners at a rate of 25 cents an hour for 480 hours and to the extent of 5 per cent of the total workers for certain occupations in the leather dress, knit fabric, work and knit wool glove factories if experienced workers are not available, according to a "Determination and Order" issued today by the Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor. Employers desiring to obtain these certificates should write the Wage and Hour Division at Washington for application forms.

At the same time the Division issued a "Notice of Opportunity to Petition for Review" which provides that any person aggrieved by the "Determination and Order" may petition for Administrator's review by filing such a petition within fifteen days (Federal Register, February 20, 1940). The Determination was signed by Merle D. Vincent, Director of the Hearings Branch of the Division, who presided at the hearing on applications from the Work Glove Institute, the National Association of Leather Glove Manufacturers, Inc., The Underwear Institute, and others.

On the necessity of certificates for learners for hand and machine stitching operations in leather dress gloves factories, Mr. Vincent said:

"In Fulton County, New York (where approximately 85 per cent of leather dress gloves are produced) there is an adequate supply of trained workers at this time. The average annual labor turnover does not exceed 2 per cent.

"Normally there is no need for a learner exemption. However, occasionally special circumstances arising out of the necessity to train workers

on some new and special type of operation may necessitate the employment of learners. In such circumstances, it was testified by both employer and employee representatives, it is customary for employers and organized workers to determine through collective bargaining the conditions upon which learners will be employed.

"Likewise, the applicants testified that it is possible that impending State legislation regarding home-work may radically change the existing situation in Fulton County. Therefore, in order to provide for possible special or future needs, the applicants requested that the basic findings be made in order that the unions and the association might know the limits within which the learner provisions in their contract should be drawn. The representatives of the National Association of Leather Glove Manufacturers and the Joint Council of Glove Workers of Fulton County joined in this request, and the other unions made no objection thereto." In the other branches of the glove industry, Mr. Vincent found that the need for learners was variable.

In fixing the rate for glove learners, Mr. Vincent took into consideration the statutory minimum wage scale of 30 cents an hour which now applies to the glove industry, and the proposed minimum wage of 35 cents an hour recommended to the Administrator by the Apparel Industry Committee for the leather dress, knit fabric and knit wool glove workers and $32\frac{1}{2}$ cents for the work glove workers. Since a single rate applicable to both wage scales is administratively desirable, Mr. Vincent determined the 25-cent rate, and added: "A future minimum higher than 35 cents per hour may require some adjustment in this learner rate."

Special certificates for employment of beginners at the subminimum wage

will be issued for these occupations: Hand and machine stitching operations on leather dress gloves, machine stitching operations on knit fabric and work gloves, and finger knitting and finger closing operations on knit wool gloves. The determination limits the number of learners to 5 per cent of the total number of workers in the plant engaged in such occupations, but as many as five learners may be authorized in any certificate. The learning period is limited to 480 hours.

Concerning piece work, Mr. Vincent said: "In plants where experienced operators are paid on a piece work basis, learners shall be paid at least the same piece work rate and shall receive earnings paid on this rate if they earn in excess of 25 cents per hour."

Mr. Vincent's determination on special certificates was:

"Any special certificate issued pursuant to this order may be cancelled as of the date of issue if it is found that such certificate was issued when experienced workers were available or if the applicant knowingly made false or misleading statements in his application, and may be cancelled prospectively or as of the date of violation if it is found that any of its terms have been violated or that skilled workers have become available. No certificate issued pursuant to this order shall be valid after October 24, 1940, unless extended by order or otherwise."

The order explained the definition of the term "learner" thusly:

"(a) In the leather dress branch, a person who has not been employed during the preceding three years for more than 480 hours in the aggregate in hand or machine stitching operations on leather dress gloves.

"(b) In the knit fabric branch, a person who has not been employed during the preceding three years for more than 480 hours in the aggregate in machine stitching operations on leather dress or knit fabric gloves.

"(c) In the work glove branch, a person who has not been employed during the preceding three years for more than 480 hours in the aggregate in machine stitching operations in any type of glove manufacture.

"(d) In the knit wool branch, a person who has not been employed during the preceding three years for more than 480 hours in the aggregate on finger knitting and finger closing operations."

The term, "Glove Branch of the Apparel Industry," he added, "includes leather dress gloves, knit fabric gloves, work gloves and knit wool gloves."

He ordered that "the record be kept open to receive additional testimony on the possible need for and terms of the employment of learners at subminimum rates in the cutting occupation in the leather dress branch of the Glove Branch of the Apparel Industry."

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