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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
Washington

FLEMING SIGNS ORDER INCREASING RATE OF 60,000 SHOE WORKERS

More than 60,000 shoe workers, of the 240,000 employed by the industry, were guaranteed an increased hourly wage rate in an order signed today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor.

Workers in this number, largely engaged in piece work operations, were recently found to be earning less than 35 cents an hour, the minimum wage for the industry established by today's wage order, which becomes effective ^{Monday,} April 29, 1940, the approximate date requested by the industry. The order puts into effect the unanimous minimum wage recommendation of a committee, which investigated the industry, under the chairmanship of Msgr. Francis J. Haas of Catholic University. The committee was comprised equally of representatives of the employers, the employees, and the public.

The shoe wage order will bring to more than 300,000 the number of workers whose wage rate has been ordered increased by the Administrator. Previously, wage recommendations, all above 30 cents but not above 40 cents an hour, have been approved for the textile, hosiery, millinery, knitted outerwear and knitted underwear industries. The statute itself increased the rates of 690,000 workers to 30 cents an hour.

"Establishment of this minimum wage will do much to protect employers who have been endeavoring to maintain decent wages in this highly competitive industry," said Colonel Fleming after signing the order. "The 60,000 shoe workers who will immediately benefit by this guarantee of 35 cents an hour are located in many States, but are largely concentrated in New England and the St. Louis area.

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"Although there were just as many shoe workers making less than 35 cents an hour in New England as in the Middle West, the New England Shoe and Leather Association approved the 35 cent recommendation.

"Several representatives of the manufacturers emphasized the necessity for uniform and universal enforcement as this industry has more than 2,000 establishments. This will be quite a job in policing.

"Twenty-one thousand of these 60,000 workers are located in New England. A study made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics just a year ago revealed that 12,000 shoe workers in Massachusetts were realizing less than 35 cents an hour. There were 5,000 such in New Hampshire and 4,000 in Maine.

"Some 20,000 workers were making less than 35 cents an hour in the Middle Western area. There were 9,000 such in Missouri, 5,000 in Illinois and about 1,400 in Tennessee. There were about 3,800 in Ohio. There are relatively few shoe establishments and shoe workers in the Southern States.

"There was a 5 cent differential in the shoe minimum wage under N.R.A. between men and women workers. There was also a differential based on population. That is, in cities of more than 250,000, men were to be paid not less than 37-1/2 cents and women not less than 32-1/2 cents. There were three such classifications-- the lowest minima applying to establishments in communities of less than 20,000-- which were 35 cents for men and 30 cents an hour for women. Today a classification based on sex is prohibited in the Statute. The committee decided against population classifications."

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