

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

FLEMING APPROVES 36 CENT WOOL MINIMUM

Approval of the 36 cents-an-hour minimum wage recommended by the Wool Industry Committee was announced today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor.

The effective date of the wage order will be June 17.

A study of the wage structure in the wool industry made in 1938 indicated that some 11,000 workers in the industry, which employs about 140,000 altogether, were making less than 36 cents an hour. Last fall many woolen mills gave their workers general increases of 7 percent. This increase undoubtedly reduced the number affected by the recommended minimum, economists of the Wage and Hour Division explained. However, they said, probably not many of the 11,000 had been affected by the wage increase. The increase occurred in the larger mills of the industry and most of the workers getting less than 36 cents an hour were employed in small mills.

While the Woolen Industry is carried on in some 750 establishments located in 31 states, 80 to 90 percent of the production is in the New England states, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The value of the product according to the census of 1935 was \$564,071,000.

The 36 cent minimum was recommended by a committee equally representative of the public, the employees, and the employers, under the chairmanship of Donald M. Nelson, chairman of the Executive Board of Sears, Roebuck and Company. While recommending the minimum by a majority vote of nine to four, the committee expressed dissatisfaction with the definition separating the woolen industry from other sections of the textile industry using a percentage of wool. The committee unanimously requested the Administrator to revise the definition which allowed the

nufacture of fabrics up to 25 percent wool content by weight, and yarn up to 5 percent.

In his Findings and Opinion, based on the record of a public hearing on the industry committee's recommendation, Colonel Fleming found that the definition "is appropriate and reasonable."

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