

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

CARPET AND RUG COMMITTEE APPOINTED

Appointment of a committee to recommend a minimum wage for the carpet and rug industry was announced today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor.

The committee is authorized under the Fair Labor Standards Act to recommend the highest minimum wage up to 40 cents an hour which will not cause substantial curtailment of employment.

The carpet and rug industry which under the definition includes not only wool and cotton rugs and carpets but also those made from grass or paper or other fibers, employs some 33,000 workers. According to Wage and Hour Division economists, about 1,000 of these are paid at a rate of less than 40 cents an hour, the highest minimum the committee can recommend.

The "Carpet and Rug Industry" is defined as:

- "(a) The spinning, dyeing, finishing or processing of carpet yarns which contain any carpet wool.
- "(b) The manufacturing, dyeing, finishing or processing of rugs or carpets from any yarns or fibers, or from grass or paper, but not including bath mats or the manufacture by hand of rugs or carpets."

A memorandum explaining the definition, to Colonel Fleming from Burton D. Oppenheim, Director of the Industry Committee Branch of the Division, states:

"By implication, the manufacture of rag carpets and rugs is exempt from the definition because such rugs are not made directly from yarns or fibers. The manufacture of rag rugs has not been included because such rugs are primarily made by hand and to a large extent by home workers. As a matter of fact, any carpets or rugs made by hand are excluded from the definition which would exempt Navajo rugs and hooked rugs made by home workers."

The manufacture of bath mats is under the Textile Wage Order.

Arthur D. Hill, Boston attorney, a public member, will be Chairman of the Committee. Mr. Hill has already served as a public member of the Paper Industry Committee under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Other public members of the committee are Thomas L. Norton, professor of Economics, University of Buffalo; William E. Simkin, Associate Impartial Chairman for the Full-fashioned Industry, Philadelphia; W. I. Westervelt, President, Labor Relations Associates, Chicago, Illinois.

For the employees: Emil Rieve, of New York, General President, Textile Workers Union of America; Frank Middelaer of Thompsonville, Connecticut, and Robert Oliver of Yonkers, New York, both of the same union; and Francis P. Fenton, Director of Organization, American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.

For the employers: J. L. Eastwick of Charles P. Cochran Company, Bridgeport, Pa.; Luther H. Hodges of Karastan Rug Mills, Spray, North Carolina; R. G. Knowland of the Bigelow-Sanford Carpet Company, New York; and Carl E. Steiger of the Deltex Rug Company, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

The members of the committee were selected after consultation with both trade associations and union groups active in the industry.

Any wage recommendation of the committee will be the subject of a public hearing at which any interested person may appear before a wage order for the industry is issued. The initial meeting of the committee will be announced in the near future.

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