

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

DISTRICT WAGE BOARD TO MAKE WAGE-HOUR INVESTIGATIONS

An agreement between Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Katharine F. Lenroot, Chief of the Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor, and the District of Columbia Minimum Wage Board, providing for inspections and investigations in complaints of violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act in the District of Columbia, has been concluded, it was announced today.

Mrs. William Kittle, Chairman of the District Minimum Wage Board, signed the agreement in its behalf. It had previously been approved by Claude H. Woodward, Director of the Better Business Bureau of Washington, D. C., Inc., representing employers, and Arthur L. Schoenthal of the Building Trades Council of the American Federation of Labor, who represents employees on the Board. Mrs. Kittle is the public member and has been chairman since the Board was re-established in 1936. The old District Board was abolished after the Supreme Court decision in 1922 declaring the District minimum wage law for women and children unconstitutional.

Mrs. Kittle has been actively engaged in the movement for the protection of women and children in industry for more than 20 years. Prior to coming to Washington ten years ago, she was chairman of the Women in Industry Committee of the Wisconsin League of Women Voters. Without compensation she conducted cost of living surveys in 15 Wisconsin cities on behalf of the Industrial Commission of Wisconsin which provided the basis of a wage and hour law for women and children there. None of the members of the District Board receives compensation.

The agreement is in accord with contracts signed with state departments of labor by which the state agencies conduct investigations and inspections as representatives of the Wage and Hour Division and the Children's Bureau. All of these agreements bear the approval of Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.

Under the plan of cooperation the District Board will appoint another full-time inspector for investigation of complaints against concerns in the District engaged in interstate commerce. All inspectors of the Minimum Wage Board will investigate for violations of the Wage-Hour Law in establishments in which they regularly make inspections. There are now a chief inspector and four district inspectors attached to the Board.

Under the terms of the agreement, complaints received by the Wage and Hour Division will be forwarded to the District Board offices in the same manner that complaints are now sent to regional offices in the various regions into which the country has been divided for purposes of enforcement of the Wage-Hour Law.

Litigation resulting from investigations will be conducted by Federal officials in the District except suits by employees for the recovery of wages due. The Act provides that employees may sue their employers for wages due, and in addition, may recover an equal amount in liquidated damages plus attorneys' fees.

The agreement provides that the District Board will be responsible for the effective performance of the cooperative plan of work and will exercise general administrative control for the Wage and Hour Division and the Children's Bureau over the work done in the District in making inspections and investigations under the Act.

The full-time inspector to be appointed under the Act will be selected from civil service lists of District residents. This will also be true of the clerk-stenographer who will handle the clerical phases under the supervision of the District Board.

The Wage and Hour Division and the Children's Bureau will reimburse the District Board for salaries and other expenses incurred in the enforcement of the Wage-Hour Law. The District Board will submit quarterly reports as to its activity in the investigation of concerns engaged in interstate commerce in the District and specific reports as required by either the Wage and Hour Division or the Children's Bureau.

The agreement provides that, upon notifying the Board, the Wage and Hour Division or the Children's Bureau may at any time conduct any special or routine investigations deemed necessary for the effective administration of the Act. Attorneys from the Wage and Hour Division and the Children's Bureau will be available for consultation with the District Board.