

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

COLONEL FLEMING APPOINTS COMMITTEE  
TO RECOMMEND MINIMUM WAGES FOR PUERTO RICAN INDUSTRIES

Appointment of a special industry committee, authorized by recent congressional amendment, to determine minimum wage rates for Puerto Rico, was announced today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, United States Department of Labor. (Federal Register August 6, 1940)

The committee, of which Monsignor Francis J. Haas will be chairman, consists of five residents of Puerto Rico and four residents of continental United States. The Puerto Rican membership was selected by Administrator Fleming from a large number of nominees submitted by Admiral William D. Leahy, the governor of Puerto Rico, while nominations for continental membership were made from names submitted by labor and industry leaders.

The committee is expected to go to Puerto Rico in September and, after a personal survey of the Islands, begin its hearings. Colonel Fleming will direct the committee to make its initial inquiry into the needlework industry, in which the Insular Department of Labor estimates there are approximately 50,000 home-workers and 20,000 factory workers.

Under the congressional amendment, the committee is empowered to fix a minimum wage below the present statutory wage of 30 cents an hour, providing such wage rate will not give "any industry in Puerto Rico or in the Virgin Islands a competitive advantage over any industry in the United States." The committee, in common with all other industry committees created by the Wage and Hour Division, will be limited solely to recommendations of the minimum wage and can not make any recommendations regarding hours or other working conditions which are governed by the Fair Labor Standards Act itself.

The membership of the committee is as follows:

For the public - Monsignor Francis J. Haas of Catholic University, Chairman; Dr. Jose M. Gallardo, Insular Commissioner of Education; and Martin Travieso, Justice of the Insular Supreme Court.

For industry - Maria Louisa Arceley of Mayaguez, engaged in needlework; P. J. Rosaly, Manager of the Bank of Ponce; and H. O. Bergdahl, Merchandise Manager of Associated Merchandising Corporation.

For labor - Prudencio Riviera Martinez, Insular Commissioner of Labor; Sherman H. Dalrymple, Vice President of the Congress of Industrial Organizations; and David Dubinsky, President of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union.

Colonel Fleming plans to open the committee proceedings in San Juan. Economists of the Wage and Hour Division have been making intensive surveys in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for the last five months, and the results of their work are expected to be completed and digested in time for use by the committee.

Immediately after the amendment was signed by President Roosevelt, Colonel Fleming sent Mr. Oppenheim and Harold D. Jacobs, Assistant Administrator, to the Islands to make a special survey preliminary to appointment of the special industry committee. In their work, they received the hearty cooperation of Governor Leahy, of various Insular bureaus, and of Charles A. Wood, Territorial Representative of the Wage and Hour Division, and his staff.

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