

Release Monday
September 2, 1940

R- 998

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

\$2,616,617 IN RESTITUTIONS COLLECTED BY
WAGE-HOUR DIVISION; COMPLAINT
INSPECTIONS INCREASING

Workers throughout the United States have received a total of \$2,616,617 in restitution payments by employers of back wages and overtime due them under the wage-hour law, it was announced today by Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor.

This results from a general speed-up in operations and wage-hour law enforcement, largely due to simplified field procedure, the Administrator said. These restitutions have increased each month since the Administrator on May 27, 1940, instructed the Field Force to adopt a more liberal policy toward disputed items in such cases. That order made restitution and the task of computing it the responsibility of the employer, with the Division merely assisting in the computing and payment.

Total restitution collected up to January 31, 1940, amounted to \$555,147, whereas in the following six months (February to July inclusive) the Division collected \$2,061,470 -- or about 3-3/4 times as much as in the previous fifteen months. The largest amount collected in any one month was \$474,466 in July, which is only slightly less than the total collected during the first fifteen months of the Act's effectiveness.

"This is clear proof," said Colonel Fleming, "that a liberal policy results in definite advantages in terms of dollars and cents, to both employers and employees."

The Administrator has also had prepared a survey of the complaints received and investigated. This shows that the number of complaints is not falling off,

but is increasing slightly each month, and that while the complaint backlog has been increasing it should now begin to decline. This, it is believed, will be accomplished by increasing the number of complaint inspections each month and by dropping non-valid complaints.

Total complaints of wage-hour law violations were 20,172 on January 31, 1940, and 34,912 on July 31, 1940, an increase of 14,740, or 73.1 percent during six months of this year. For the same period total complaint inspections rose from 2,595 to 6,211, an increase of 3,616 inspections, or 139.3 percent. The backlog of complaints grew, at the same time, from 17,577 to 26,656, an increase of 9,079, or 51.7 percent.

Complaints received have averaged 2,400 each month during 1940. July, the heaviest month so far, shows 2,772 complaints received and 2,039 complaint inspections made. August is expected to show 3,500 such inspections, September even more, and subsequent months continuing increases. This expectation of Wage-Hour officials is based upon the previous record in complaint inspection increases -- which is from 256 in January, 1940, to 2,039 in July, an increase of 1,783 inspections, or 696.5 percent.

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