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

INACTIVE

PUERTO RICAN COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS NEEDLE WORK RATES

A scale of hourly wage rates for needlework in Puerto Rico from 12-1/2 cents to 22-1/2 cents has been recommended by a special committee which has been conducting hearings on the Island on the economic and competitive conditions of this industry, according to a cable received today from Msgr. Francis J. Haas, Chairman.

Under a recent congressional amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act (Federal Wage and Hour Law), the committee was empowered to recommend 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 voted these rates for home work: 12-1/2 cents an hour for work on handkerchiefs, household articles, cotton underwear, infants' dresses, needlepoint and tufted rugs; 15 cents an hour for work on silk underwear and fabric gloves; 18 cents an hour for work on leather gloves; and 20 cents an hour for work on children's, ladies', men's and boys' apparel.

For work in factories the committee recommended 20 cents an hour for handkerchiefs; household articles; children's, ladies', men's and boys' apparel; cotton underwear; infants' dresses; needlepoint; tufted rugs; all gloves; and 22-1/2 cents an hour for silk underwear.

Msgr. Haas' cable said that members of the committee were signing a report which would be forwarded to Colonel Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. A public hearing before the Administrator on the recommendations at which any interested person may appear will be held later.

(5838)

At the same time a cable was received from Charles A. Wood, Territorial Representative of the Wage and Hour Division for Puerto Rico, stating that a judgment had been issued by Judge A. R. De Jesus enjoining 15 additional needlework employers against further violation of the minimum wage and maximum hours provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. This judgment was entered with the consent of the employers, Mr. Wood said, and the addition of these fifteen employers to the roll of those enjoined meant that injunctions now cover every needlework operator on the Island not otherwise made a defendant in special actions brought by the Division.

The membership of the committee which made the hourly wage rate recommendations for the needlework industry on the Island is:

For the Public - Monsignor Francis J. Heas 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 Frank M. Mayfield, President of the National Retail Dry Goods Association.

For Labor - Prudencio Riviero 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.

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