

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

PUERTO RICAN COMMITTEE TO STUDY LEAF TOBACCO INDUSTRY

On instructions of the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor, the Special Industry Committee for Puerto Rico, will begin an investigation of conditions in the leaf tobacco industry of the Island. The committee will hold a public hearing April 22 at 10:00 A.M. in Room 3229 of the Department of Labor Building in Washington. Interested persons may appear upon giving notice by April 10 to the Industry Committee Branch, Wage and Hour Division. (Federal Register, March 11, 1941)

Resignations of Laurence J. Martin, of Washington, D. C., and P. J. Rosaly, of Ponce, Puerto Rico, as employer representatives on the committee, were announced today. At the same time the appointment of Belarmino Suarez, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Thomas C. Breen, of New York, to the committee was announced. The two new members are closely associated with the Puerto Rican tobacco industry. Belarmino Suarez is president of Tabacaleros Unidos, a leaf tobacco association of Puerto Rico. Thomas C. Breen is a member of the board of directors of the Cigar Manufacturers Association of America, Inc., and for a number of years associated with the Puerto Rican American Tobacco Company. Both are familiar with general conditions on the Island as well as the trade problems of growing, handling, stripping and marketing of Puerto Rican tobacco.

The Puerto Rican committee is charged with investigating conditions in the industries of Puerto Rico and recommending to the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, minimum wage rates for all employees who are engaged in commerce or the production of goods for commerce. These rates which may be lower than 30 cents but not higher than 40 cents, must be the highest which will not curtail

employment on the Island or give any industry there a competitive advantage over an industry in the United States. The Administrator will hold a public hearing in Puerto Rico after the recommendations of the Committee are received.

The Administrator has directed the investigation of the leaf tobacco industry of Puerto Rico although under the present regulations most of the employees of this industry on the Island are exempt from the provisions of the Wage and Hour Law.

The investigation, however, is being undertaken at this time in order that the Administrator may have before him a minimum wage recommendation when considering in the near future possible revisions of the regulations defining the "area of production."

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