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

HEARING ON LEARNER AND APPRENTICE RATES IN DIAMOND INDUSTRY SET FOR  
JUNE 27 AT NEW YORK

A public hearing in New York has been called by the Wage and Hour Division to consider two problems in the diamond industry, which has been expanding in the United States and Puerto Rico due to the Nazi occupation of Holland and Belgium. Evidence will be taken on the necessity of allowing employment of learners at less than the minimum wage in view of the existing approved apprenticeship standards. The question of wage rates for apprentices in Puerto Rico in relation to apprentice rates on the mainland will also be considered. The hearing will be held at 10 A.M. June 27, in the United States Court House, Foley Square, New York before Oscar Ross, Examiner for the Division, as presiding officer.

An application of G. Elfenbein, Inc. of New York to employ learners in the manufacture of "meles" (diamonds of one-quarter of a karat or less), will be considered at the hearing.

G. Elfenbein, Inc. applied for a special certificate authorizing the employment of learners in the occupations of diamond cutting, sewing and lopping for a learning period of one year, at the following wage rates: \$3.00 per week for the first six months and an increase of \$1.00 per week for each succeeding week up to and including the 52nd week at which time the learners will be paid a wage of \$29.00 per week (with the understanding that any learner certificate issued by the Wage and Hour Division would cover only that portion of the training period during which the learner is paid less than the minimum of 30¢ an hour or such higher minimum as may be made applicable by a wage order).

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The Diamond Workers' Protective Union of America, Brooklyn, New York (A. F. of L.) opposes the application on the grounds that if granted it would break down present apprenticeship standards in the industry approved by the Federal Committee on Apprenticeship. The United Diamond Manufacturers Association has joined with the Union in opposing the granting of the application.

The Diamond Workers' Protective Union has also objected to wage rates authorized in special certificates which have been issued for the employment of apprentices in the diamond cutting industry in Puerto Rico, which provide for an apprenticeship period of three years at weekly rates of \$3.00 for the first three months, \$3.50 for the second three months, \$4.00 for the fifth three months, \$7.00 for the sixth three months, \$8.00 for the seventh three months, \$9.00 for the eighth three months, \$10.00 for the ninth three months, \$11.00 for the tenth three months, \$12.00 for the eleventh three months. The apprenticeship agreements provide that \$13.00 a week shall be paid for the twelfth three months.

The Diamond Workers' Protective Union maintains that these rates have created an inequitable situation "which threatens the wage scale of the diamond industry in the United States," and have requested a public hearing.

Any person interested in appearing at the hearing may do so by filing notice of intention and the approximate time required with Mr. Ross, Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. prior to June 25, or if unable to appear may file briefs before July 7, 1941.

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