

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

LUGGAGE COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDS 40 CENTS MINIMUM

A unanimous recommendation for the establishment of a minimum wage of 40 cents an hour in the manufacture of luggage, leather goods and women's handbags was filed today with Thomas W. Holland, Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, U. S. Department of Labor. The recommendation was made by a Committee equally representative of the public and the employers and employees of the industry. The Committee was under the Chairmanship of Joseph A. McClain, Jr., Dean of the School of Law, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. If approved by the Administrator after a public hearing, the recommended minimum would increase the hourly wage rate of about 12,500 of the 34,000 employed in this type of manufacture. The date of the hearing, at which any person may appear, will be announced shortly by the Administrator.

The manufacture of luggage and leather goods has been at a 35 cents an hour wage minimum rate since January 6, 1941, at which time approximately 4,500 employees of the 17,000 employed in the industry received wage increases. A 35 cents an hour minimum wage rate was established for the manufacture of women's handbags July 15, 1940, as a division of the Apparel Industry; this increased the wages of some 5,000 of the 15,000 workers employed in such manufacturing.

In recommending a 40-cent minimum rate to the Administrator, the Committee adopted a resolution suggesting that such a rate should not become effective before the last Monday in June or the first Monday in July 1942. The Committee was also unanimous in its recommendation to the Administrator that "if, after proper inquiry, the Administrator deems it advisable, he hold a hearing for the Luggage, Leather Goods and Women's Handbag Industry to consider the problem of learners."