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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Wage and Hour and Public Contracts Divisions
165 West Forty-sixth Street
New York 19, New York

COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO RECOMMEND MINIMUM WAGE IN COMMUNICATION,
UTILITIES, AND MISCELLANEOUS TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRIES

L. Metcalfe Walling, Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division of the U. S. Department of Labor, announced today the appointment of an Industry Committee to recommend a minimum hourly wage rate for the Communication, Utilities, and Miscellaneous Transportation Industries, as defined by the Division.

Special significance is attached to this committee, the 69th of its kind, the Administrator pointed out, for a recommendation of 40 cents an hour by this committee as well as two others which meet this month, would clear the way for establishment of a 40 cent minimum hourly wage for all industries covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Thus, through the Committee procedure authorized by the Act, the 1945 deadline set by Congress for establishing a universal minimum wage of 40 cents an hour would be anticipated by two years. In all other covered industries, except those for which the three committees are meeting in October, that minimum has been established or recommended, Mr. Walling stated.

The Committee is to meet in New York City, October 22, at 10 o'clock, at the Hotel Victoria. Named as chairman is Elmer F. Andrews, the first administrator of the Wage and Hour Division. He is now with private industry. Membership is divided equally among representatives of management, labor, and the public.

Public members, besides Mr. Andrews, are Clarence E. Ayres of Austin, Texas; Glen E. Carlson, Redlands, California; Frederick W. Carr, Boston; and Caroline F. Ware, Vienna, Virginia. Those representing management are John H. Agee of Lincoln, Nebraska; Charles F. Cole, San Francisco; Ralph H. Kirball and J. H. Ross, New York City; and H. Carl Wolf, Atlanta. Employees are to be represented by Ray A. Dodge of the Utility Workers Organizing Committee and Joseph P. Selly of the American Communications Association (CIO); Richard R. Jenkins of the National Federation of Telegraph Workers (Independent); and John C. Hamby, of the Telegraph Employees Union and Boris Shishkin, economist (AF of L).

The committee is being called to recommend to the Administrator the highest minimum rate (above 30 cents but not to exceed 40 cents) that will not substantially curtail employment, giving due regard to economic and competitive conditions in those industries. Administrator Walling further pointed out that the recommendation of the committee will be confined solely to the question of the minimum wage and will in no way affect the applicability of the overtime and exemption provisions of the Act.

The committee will meet almost five years to the day the Fair Labor Standards Act went into effect. At that time, Administrator Walling recalled, the minimum wage was set at 25 cents an hour in the face of threats that such a high minimum would force many firms out of business and result in a serious curtailment of employment. Through the action of Industry Committees it was gradually brought to the 40 cent level.

More than 500,000 establishments and 21,000,000 employees are covered under the Wage and Hour Law.