


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Wage and Hour and Public Contracts Divisions  
165 West 46th Street  
New York 19, N. Y.



NEW YORK, Oct. 24 --- Commemorating the eighth anniversary - October 24 - of the Fair Labor Standards Act, which he termed an economic charter for low-paid workers, L. Metcalfe Walling, administrator of the Wage and Hour and Public Contracts Divisions, U. S. Department of Labor, declared today that "it is imperative that we raise the minimum wage under this basic wage and hour law and extend its benefits to workers not now covered."

Restricted as the Act now is to employees engaged in interstate commerce or in the production of goods for interstate commerce, including those engaged in occupations necessary to such production, only 20,000,000 of the nation's present labor force of approximately 60,000,000 men and women are covered by its minimum wage and overtime provisions, Mr. Walling pointed out.

He pointed out further that although the statute's 40-cent minimum wage is meaningful to relatively few of the 20,000,000 covered workers, there are "far too many of the remaining millions of workers who receive less than the modest 40-cent minimum provided in the Fair Labor Standards Act."

He urged, within the extent of Congressional power, extension of the law's benefits to many of these workers so that they would receive not only the benefits of the statutory minimum but also the benefits of the overtime provision for time and a half after 40 hours in a workweek.

Mr. Walling also expressed hope that the next session of the Congress "will see some realization of the accord expressed in the last session, when all who spoke on the subject were apparently agreed that the 40-cent minimum is too low in view of the original intent of Congress and in line with present

economic conditions."

He recommended that the statutory minimum be raised to at least 65 cents an hour. He also recommended that the minimum wage provisions of the Act be extended to seamen, that inequities among employers in the same field and even among workers in the same plant be eliminated by extending coverage to include activities "affecting interstate commerce"; that recent moves in several states for unreasonably short statutes of limitation be countered by adding a reasonable statute of limitations to the Act for the protection of both employers and employees; that the child labor provisions of the Act be extended by making the coverage of those provisions co-extensive with wage and hour coverage; and that the exemptions be tightened in the seasonal industries so that the minimum wage applies to all agricultural processing and handling operations and the industries may operate on an equal competitive basis.

A resume of Wage and Hour and Public Contracts Divisions' activities during the past eight years shows that more than \$100,000,000 in restitution of unpaid wages for violation of the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the wage and hour law has been found due to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million of the nation's workers.

During the 1946 fiscal year alone, some \$13,000,000 in back wages was recovered for 271,000 workers through efforts of the Divisions. In addition, workers themselves have obtained millions of dollars in back wages through employee suits.

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