

**LEGAL
RECOGNITION OF
INDUSTRIAL WOMEN**

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Legal Recognition of Industrial Women by Eleanor L. Lattimore & Ray S. Trent

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ELEANOR L. LATTIMORE & RAY S. TRENT

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Foreword

THE Industrial Committee has had repeated calls for a simple text discussing briefly the problems involved in woman labor and the various legal remedies which have been devised for meeting these problems, giving some idea of what the laws should contain and what would be their desired effect. This pamphlet is offered in response to those calls.

While the authors have striven in the main for a simple and direct presentation of the subject, having in mind the primary purpose to which the book is dedicated—use among industrial women—they have also had in mind the varied sources of the call for the book. Wherever it was possible to meet the needs of college student, business man, club woman, social worker or others without detracting from usefulness for industrial women we have felt it was wise to fit the text to the broader use.

In the preparation of this pamphlet Mr. Trent of Indiana University and of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce has given most generously of his time and labor in an editorial capacity—this in addition to permitting liberal and unquoted use of extracts of his war time pamphlet on Women in Industry. We take this opportunity to make grateful acknowledgment of the cooperation Mr. Trent has so cordially extended to the Y. W. C. A. and to observe that his joint authorship seems to us indicative of new hope for the cause of women in industry and therefore for industry as a whole. Business man and university professor, he joins with the responsible leadership of Christian womanhood in our nation to set down as clearly as possible their mutual convictions regarding a just and Christian use of woman labor—not alone because it is *woman* labor but because of a mutual concern for woman as a new factor in the world of industry, that world whose after-war unrest is so deep-rooted and today so vitally concerns all nations. By such contributions is the thought and feeling of today crystallized and made a stepping stone to the justice and progress of tomorrow.

Preface

THE modern industrial system presents no graver aspect than its almost remorseless and insatiable demand for the time, strength and skill of women workers. Into factories and stores women have gone of late in such numbers, and with such consequences, as to compel public attention and public concern. To set forth the bases of this concern and the practical measures which are gradually being taken or ought to be taken to give expression to it, is the primary purpose of the pages which follow.

For many years students of economics, theorists in the field of industrial enterprise, have warned the public that our women were not receiving the protection which their welfare and the general wellbeing of society demanded. Long hours, lack of rest periods, low wages, unsanitary conditions, and over-time were pointed out as costly privileges in a *laissez faire* system of economics, and public action in woman's behalf was advised and even urged.

Later the physician and neurologist began to support this position of the economist. The effect of modern industrial processes was studied scientifically. Fatigue was connected with and related to efficiency in no uncertain manner; so that the humanitarianism of the economist and sociologist was reinforced by the practical advice of the medical specialist.

Last of all the intelligent employer has added the weight of his testimony to that of the economist and the doctor. The employer has tried shorter hours, adequate wages, more wholesome conditions, rest periods, and the like; and, how strange! They *pay*. Hence the legal recognition of industrial women has come as a matter of slow but sure progress, supported by the best theory and by actual results in an ever-increasing number of establishments employing women.

For years I have felt more and more keenly that we all of

us are responsible for whatever social injustice characterizes our industrial life, but the lot of our women workers has seemed to me particularly needful of improvement. In an effort to set forth the need and the responsibility, Indiana University last year published my bulletin on Women in Industry. This pamphlet having gone out of print, it has seemed to me both a pleasure and an opportunity for national service to join with Miss Lattimore in a further attempt to make clear the legal ways in which society may begin to mend whatever needs mending in the industrial life of to-day.

RAY S. TRENT.

Indianapolis, June 12, 1919.

Introduction

American Industry and Woman Labor

DURING the last quarter of a century great changes have taken place in America's industrial and social life. The country has been phenomenally prosperous. Nearly two hundred million acres of newly cultivated land have been added to our farms so that the farm land of the country is now worth more than three times as much as it was. During the same period the value of our manufactures has increased until it is twice that of the farms—an increase of from three to eighteen billion dollars in value. And although the population has not doubled the number of wage earners has more than doubled.

Thus we see what has happened—the rapid growth in manufacturing has created a great need for workers, and since the population has not increased fast enough to supply these workers from the men, women who were not wage earners before have been recruited into industrial work. This increase in the number of women in industry and their entrance upon kinds of work which they have never done before has created economic and social problems that had not been solved when the war came.

The changes in economic life which took place between 1880 and 1910, however great and numerous as they were, can hardly be compared to the upheavals of the four years which have intervened since August, 1914. Viewed superficially, the great war seems to have broken every precedent, shattered every tradition, and destroyed every so-called law. Private enterprise, private property, and personal liberty seem to have vanished, and in their stead have come public regulation, public ownership, public control.

While the war brought many new and intricate problems, in reality it precipitated progress in a number of ways. Our dream of national prohibition is being realized—woman suffrage is vindicating itself in the down-trodden races of Europe and has become one of the "common-places of the practically-minded, everyday citizen."

Into trade and transportation and into manufacturing and mechanical pursuits, woman's entrance has been comparatively recent; and her crowding into these occupations is going on at a greatly accelerated rate.

In all European countries the world war has already called into industry millions of women who might otherwise not have