Wheels of progress—A woman railroad worker greases a locomotive.

Precision worker—Operating a gear cutter in an aviation plant.

16,000,000 Women at Work

What will happen to them after the war? The head of the Women's Bureau gives an answer.

By Mary Anderson,
Director, Women's Bureau,
U. S. Department of Labor

THE Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Its short history spans two wars with the consequence that the day-by-day work in behalf of women in its peacetime years is lost sight of in the greater task which brought it into being and the one in which it is now engaged—mobilization of women for war work.

Once again, as in 1917-18, women are being called to "man" the factories, the mills and the shipyards, and elsewhere to take over the responsibilities of men. Sixteen million women and girls are now employed and more are on their way. Yet, almost before they have had a chance to get their faces smudged and their overalls grease-stained, some among us are worrying for fear they will not be willing to call it a good day's work and go home, when the war is over and Johnny comes back for his job. That fear, which is so large a part of the prejudice against employment of women, is being used in subtle ways to keep us from making full use of that great reserve of labor. It is time, therefore, that we count the cost of our prejudice in terms of war production and face this problem of what is to become of that army of women workers after the war.

Our prejudices have fixed certain patterns upon us which are hard to break. Great new factories have been built—for men, though surely those responsible must have known that they would sooner or later have to be "manned" in large part by women. As a result, in some instances, even the most rudimentary sanitary and health facilities had to be added before women could be taken on.

In the beginning dormitories were built without the special facilities necessary to women's living—a place to do the laundry, a place to make a cup of tea, a place to entertain. They were often miles from nowhere, with scant provision for transportation, shopping, or recreation, and frequently with no thought given as to where the women were to get their meals. The lot of the women with family responsibilities was no better, for the communities generally have not made the necessary accommodations that would enable the time-pressed and harassed mother to get her shopping done or to know that her children were safe while she was at work.

FURTHERMORE, within the factories, prejudice stood in the way. Since Pearl Harbor the situation has changed for the better, but there are still too many foremen who "know" what woman can and cannot do, and they do not want to have their minds changed. Often only a slight adjustment would bring operations within women's power to perform, but the change is resisted. Worse, even at this late day many concerns are still not employing women; they have not yet tried to use them on jobs so that men could be released for the armed services or for that work which cannot be done by women. And, although some unions are taking women into memberships, others, with what seems to us a short-sighted view of the matter, still hold their ranks—and their jobs—firm against them.

Yet, despite all these very real handicaps to their employment, women have made good on the job. They are not only doing work generally thought of as being within their own special province, but they are taking on more and more jobs that are commonly thought of as men's work. They are working in shipyards on all coasts: as shipfitters' helpers, welders, marine electricians, laborers, and at other tasks. In the steel mills they are operating cranes, tending furnaces, driving tractors. They are working above ground at the mines; some have taken on jobs in the lumber mills. Others are working at the airports; still others are trackmen for the railroad, or street car conductors, or bus drivers.

A QUARTER million women or more are working in plants manufacturing electrical equipment, work for which they seem singularly well adapted. Plants making ammunition for small arm and artillery now employ more than 100,000 women on the production lines, the great majority having been taken on in the last year. The most spectacular increase, though, has been in the airplane plants, where the figure has jumped since the war from 4,000 to 300,000.

Not only have women made skilled workers, they have also won for themselves a place in industry as technicians, designers, personnel directors, and in other professional jobs from which they were tacitly excluded before the war. The woman physicist had no chance, for instance, to apply her knowledge to a problem such as the demagnetizing of a ship, but now she, along with other women, is working creatively in the laboratories and drafting rooms of our war industries.

Women, both as skilled workers and as technicians, have made one other great gain. The principle of equal pay for equal work at last has won and is winning acceptance, through decisions of the War Labor Board and in union contracts. What now seems manifestly only a just due for any worker, nevertheless has had to be fought for ever since the first woman went to work, and it was a fight in which the Women's Bureau was always in the forefront.

More and more the men have come to realize that if women were paid less, they, the men, were apt to lose their jobs to them. Likewise, more and more of the unions are now admitting women into full membership, giving them the protection and opportunity which such membership affords.

Now we are undertaking another recruiting drive to get more women to work, and by fall we expect to have more than 17,000,000 women employed. Seventeen million women—and ten million veterans—so we roughly compute the post-war employment, or unemployment, problem, and are afraid, as well we may be if we think of our economy in the old terms. If so, then we accept the idea that either one or the other must lose out and ask whether it shall be the man or the women. Little thought is given to the idea that neither the men nor the women can, or should, give way. Yet, only by accepting such a premise are we on solid ground in planning for the future, and only then are we ready to take the next step which is to recognize that there is only one solution—full employment.

TRUE, many of the women will leave their jobs voluntarily to re-establish homes broken up by the war, and if high wages are being paid their men, more will be able to do so. Still others will no longer find the factory job desirable and will return to their former employment in stores and offices. Others will simply with-

A girl welds a plane part in one of the war arsenals.

draw from the labor market. In this group will be those rural women who looked upon the chance to work in the powder mill or shipyard as a bonanza.

OF these millions of women many will dispute the claim that they have a man's job, for a most fundamental reason, and that is that the woman who has to earn a living refuses to acknowledge any one's prior right to the job, even though she be forced out of it or denied an equal chance to compete for it. The majority of these women will need their jobs as much as any man. Almost 14,000,000 of them are not newcomers to the labor force. They are women and girls whose wages have gone not for luxuries but for support of themselves and their dependents. From time to time the Women's Bureau has looked into this notion that women workers have only themselves to keep, the traditional excuse for paying them less than men.

A survey disclosed that more than half of the women who were working were married or had been married, and that the majority of such women were supporting or contributing to the support of their children, and in many instances, their husbands. Of those who were single many had dependents.

If this need for the woman's wage was so pressing before the war, how can we think it will be any less so after the war? Many of the men are not coming back to provide a home for their women. Others will return unable to assume, or resume, the family's care. Many girls will not have the opportunity to marry. This is the tragedy of all wars as it comes home to women, but in this war an added burden will be placed upon them, for many will still have to carry on after the war, for considerable numbers of men will be in armies of occupation, for how long no one knows.

Yet peace must come some day, and when our men start coming home will we be prepared for them, or shall we, by failure to plan for them and for the women now employed, lose the peace as we lost it after the last war?

Those of us with long memories know what happened then, when the Army was demobilized at a time of great industrial unemployment. Men in uniform sold apples on the sidewalks. Is it any wonder, then, that women were forced out of their jobs to make way for the veteran?

Six weeks after the signing of the armistice—this provides an insight into the thinking of the times — the Central Federated Union of New York declared that the "same patriotic principle which induced women to enter industry during the war should induce them to vacate their positions after the war," and in this sentiment there was general concurrence by all except the women workers involved and those concerned with their problem. In some places men struck, refusing to work with women. Trade unions barred them. Every pressure was used to get them out of their jobs, the most effective, of course, being the refusal to continue their employment or rehire them after lay-offs.

WITHIN a little more than a year after the war's close the woman worker was effectively put in her place again, and to keep her there every propaganda force was used to extol the happy state open to women if only they would return to their homes and let the men provide for them. The truth, of course, was that the women had never left their homes. They managed them, as women are doing today, to carry a double responsibility, that of

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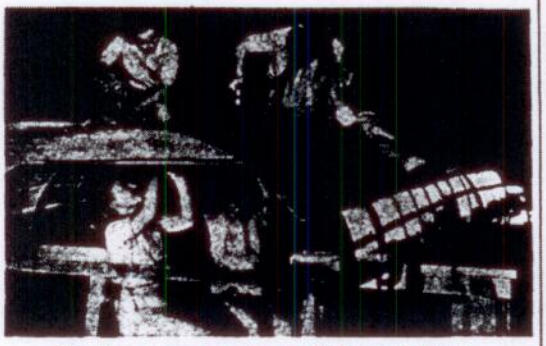
homemaker and wage-earner together, a role forced upon them more and more as work formerly done in the home was transferred to the factories. If their men had been earning a wage sufficient for the family's support, many, if not most, would gladly have stayed home, as the majority would do today, for they have a full-time job waiting for them there.

IF we think of the common lot of working women, instead of career women, so called, we must ask ourselves how much of a real gain has been made in the last twenty years. Women are still the lowest paid workers, and what is true of the white woman is even more tragically true of the Negro woman. Although progress was made in some industries and in some sections of the country, in others all that was accomplished for women, apart from the general improvement in the lot of working people, was to erase for the majority the substandard conditions under which they had worked, a change effected through minimum wage laws, Federal and State. Twenty-two States still have no such legislation, and the fact remains that millions of women still have little or no protection, State or Federal, either as far as working conditions are concerned or under the Social Security Act.



Girl riveting teams work on a huge cargo plane.

Thus, whatever material improvements in their status had been accorded women workers during the last war, for many they were most effectively canceled, as they will be for women workers now, and for the whole population, unless we have the courage to head off reaction by providing full employment for all who want and need it, without regard to sex or marital status, or to color or race. We have no alternative.

The numbers involved this time represent too great a part of our whole population to leave the adjustment to chance. The men will be coming home at a time when industry is shifting from war to civilian production, and when there is bound to be some unemployment, although it need not be as great as some expect. These men will come back believing and insisting that they have first rights to the jobs that are available, and if there are not enough jobs to go around, the women will again be forced out of theirs and the Negroes and other minority groups out of theirs.

THE question is, Are we going to meet the days to come in terms of the future or are we going to do what we did before—try to keep the world bound to an outworn order?

Fortunately, there are indications that we are not going to be without a mobilization plan for peace, as we were in November, 1918. In Congress, in industry, in the labor unions, in the factories and on the farms, people are asking now that we be prepared, with an insistence that cannot be denied. Our experience in dealing with the 1930 depression should stand us in good stead, and we now have on our statute books three great measures that will serve as a bulwark against recession—the Social Security Act, the benefits of which may be enlarged; the Wage and Hour Law, with its floor under wages and its ceiling over hours; and the National Labor Relations Act, which guarantees the workers' right to organize in protection of their interests.

Unemployment insurance and war savings will tide many over a job-hunting period and at the same time will provide purchasing power that will enable industry more rapidly to get into production again. Old-age and retirement benefits will make it possible for many to withdraw from the labor market, and a strict enforcement of such child labor laws as we have, and then may have, will draw many from industry back to the schools. Then, too, this time the facilities of the United States Employment Service will be available.

Extension of these social measures will temper somewhat the industrial shift to civilian production, but what we have is not enough. We must have the daring to produce what the people of this country need and want—the evidence of that great need is all around us—and if we undertake such a task we shall have not one man or one woman too many for the job.

Beauty

By Martha Parker

The passing of the pompadour is being celebrated by the hair stylists of New York. The stiffly pasted, high-piled confections so popular during the last few seasons are being replaced by soft bangs, deep horizontal waves, short, fluffy tendrils.

The triple-decker pompadour is now being replaced by "natural styles."

A new feather-bang, flat on top, fall on the sides, presented by Lurs de Gez.

Sculptured waves and bang designed by M. Louis for Bonwit-Teller.

The Indian Maiden has hair parted down the middle, brushed forward.

The "Mei Ling" coiffure has soft waves and curls. Designed by Mona Manet.