

Further Views on the

PLACEMENT OF WOMEN

in Industry

IN our last issue we gave a critical account of a Government publication on the question of women in industry. The following statements are the results of enquiries made by INDUSTRIAL WELFARE & PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT of persons with special experience in the matter

THESE are some of the reasons given by married women for working or wanting work in an American town where an investigation was recently made. A half found it necessary to work because the earnings of their husbands were insufficient to support the family. In many cases the reason given why the husbands' earnings were insufficient was irregularity of work. This same cause was obviously working in other instances, in which the wives were working in order to keep up payments on the house, as the husband's money was too uncertain to do it, or in which the women wanted to supplement the men's earnings, as they were not sufficient to start buying a home. Other women gave as the reason for working a special object such as saving, or paying debts incurred by illness or death, or other unavoidable cause. Only a few women said they worked, or would like to, in order to have a little money of their own.

There were many mothers amongst these working women with children under 12 years of age. Of these about 60 per cent. had one child, about 30 per cent. two children, and about 10 per cent. three to five children.

Mrs. Martin Leake, Employment Manager (Women's Section),

Rowntree & Co., Ltd., York, states:—

In trades where married women are not employed, the work of the women is, as the report says, governed by the fact that they are, in reality, only temporary workers seeking remunerative work between school leaving age and marriage. This certainly applies to at least two-thirds of these workers. Those who do not marry as often as not have heavy home responsibilities and are too burdened to be capable of work that involves any great strain. These considerations imply work that is comparatively simple and does not involve a long training period.

In work that requires some physical effort it is almost certain that the most carefully selected woman will not equal the man. In such work three women will do the work equivalent of two men.

The woman will, therefore, only be a paying proposition at a proportionately lower wage rate. In addition to this the employment of women will necessitate the more frequent training of new workers with its attendant waste.

Blind alley jobs for boys which mean dismissal at ages varying from 16 to 18 years, probably without a trade training, are usually better done by girls and women. In this case the efflux for marriage will keep up

THE restrictions on the employment of women are summarised for the convenience of our readers:

(a) The daily period of women's employment is limited to 12 hours and must take place between either 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. or between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. or (in the case of non-textile factories) between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (This restriction is temporarily modified by the two-shift provisions contained in section 2 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1920). (b) The overtime employment of women, that is, employment outside this period of employment, is limited both (1) by restriction to certain industries in which special conditions obtain and also (2) in amount. (c) Women's employment at night is not permissible. (d) Saturday is made a short day.

Industrial Welfare and

a flow of labour in and out, and a girl between 16 and 18 years of age can always be absorbed in other than industrial work should a reduction of staff be necessary. On light repetitive work, women with the right physiological and psychological make-up, are probably better than men, if they leave work on marriage. The man who has a lifetime of work before him will more easily tire of repetitive work unless hours and remuneration are favourable.

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 (e) Fixed meal times have to be allowed and, subject to exceptions, all women in the same factory must have their meals at the same time. The employment of women during meal times is prohibited. Women may not be employed for longer than 5 hours (4½ hours in textile factories) without an interval for a meal or rest. (f) Employment on Sunday is prohibited. (g) Six whole holidays or their equivalent in half holidays have to be allowed during the year. (h) Certain restrictions are placed upon women being given work to do outside the factory on any day on which they are employed inside the factory. The foregoing provisions are modified by a number of exemptions to meet the exigencies of particular trades.

exceptionally

We have very little machinery, and, as far as the making of clothing is concerned, it is all bespoke and not manufacturing. Consequently there is very little work of a repetitive or monotonous character.

In the store, three quarters of the employees are of course women, and it is interesting to note that in some of the departments which originally were run by men only (for example, the dress materials), women are now being employed.

In our factory, men do all the carpentry and polishing, also the heavier upholstery. In the latter trade the finishing is done by women, as is also the making of loose covers and curtains. Our dressmaking and millinery workrooms employ only women, but we have both men and women in our tailoring rooms. The men are employed chiefly for the constructive part of the work, and all heavier work, such as pressing, and the women do machining and finishing. The fitters assure me that in the latter process women are infinitely superior to men.

couraging their girls to go into industry, to enter on a period of training which will ultimately lead to such girls acquiring a knowledge and skill which will lead to more responsible work.

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Mrs. E. N. Tetley,
 Employment Manager,
 W. Rowntree and Sons,
 Ltd., Scarborough,
 states:—

This is a large store, with a small factory and workrooms for the making of clothing attached.

* * *
 Miss C. Haslett, Hon. Secretary of the Women's Engineering Society, states:

There are operations in the workshop for which many girls and women are temperamentally more fitted than boys or men. There are many reasons for this, amongst which may be cited the close analogy of some workshop tasks with certain household duties and the work performed in dressmaking; the lack of special technical training given to women and girls; the fact that industrial occupation is only a stop gap between school and married life; that so often work of an automatic or semi-automatic character is by its nature regarded as work proper for female labour and allocation, which inevitably follows such an idea.

In addition there are many reasons, economic and social, rather than sex, which serve to place women on tasks requiring less application and skill. This latter position is to some extent being remedied by the enlightened attitude of some headmistresses of secondary schools acting in conjunction with heads of industrial firms by en-