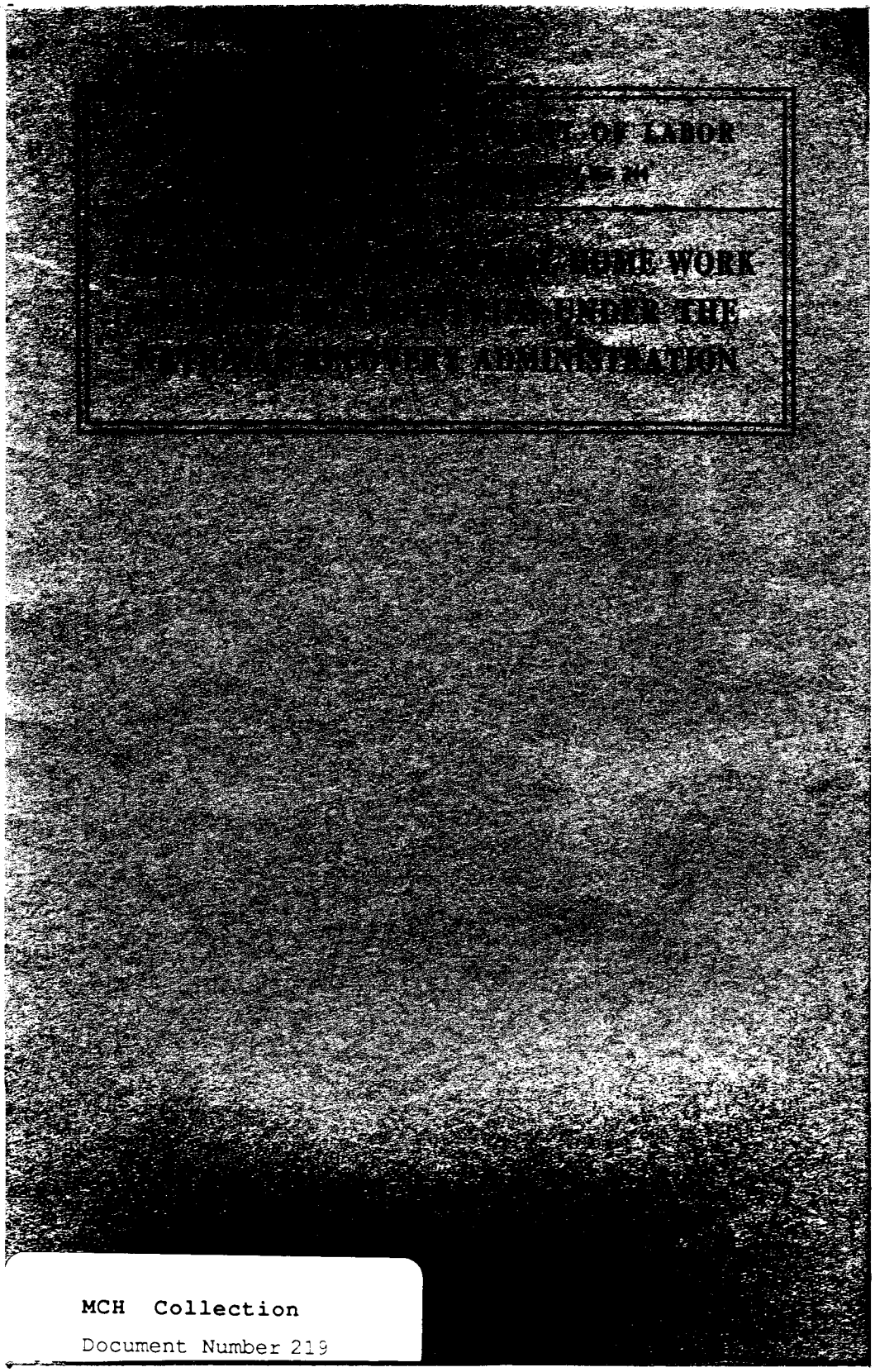

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
FRANCES PERKINS, Secretary
CHILDREN'S BUREAU - - - - Katharine F. Lenroot, Chief

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Prohibition of Industrial Home Work in Selected Industries Under the National Recovery Administration

By
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✦

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,
Washington, June 7, 1938.

MADAM: There is transmitted herewith a report on industrial home work under the National Recovery Administration in selected industries in which home work was abolished under the codes. This is the second of two reports dealing with the subject of industrial home work under the National Recovery Administration which were made jointly by the Women's Bureau and the Industrial Division of the Children's Bureau. The first, concerned with industries in which home work was not prohibited under the codes, has been published as "Industrial Home Work Under The National Recovery Administration," Children's Bureau Publication No. 234.

The study of the prohibition of industrial home work in selected industries under the National Industrial Recovery Act was made immediately following the invalidation of the act. Because the prohibition of industrial home work set up for the first time regulations which affected entire industries without regard to State lines, it was believed that the experiences of industries in adjusting to the prohibition would be valuable and should be made available for future use.

The field work for this study was carried on under the supervision of Rebecca Smaltz, of the Women's Bureau, and Mary Skinner, of the Children's Bureau. The report was written by Mary Skinner.

Respectfully submitted.

KATHARINE F. LENROOT, *Chief.*

Hon. FRANCES PERKINS,
Secretary of Labor.

Prohibition of Industrial Home Work in Selected Industries Under the National Recovery Administration

INTRODUCTION

This study is the second of two surveys dealing with the problem of industrial home work under the National Industrial Recovery Act, which were undertaken jointly by the Women's Bureau and the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor. The earlier study,[1] which was made at the request of the Administrator of the National Recovery Administration, covered industries in which home work was not prohibited by the codes and was concerned with the effect of code regulations on industrial home-work standards.

The present study, on the other hand, deals with conditions in industries in which home work was prohibited by the codes. Plans for the study were made while the National Industrial Recovery Act was still in effect, but before the field work could be gotten under way the act was declared unconstitutional. It was believed, however, that the experiences of industries in adjusting to the prohibition of home work would be valuable and should be made available for future use. In gathering information for the study interest was centered on the way in which manufacturers had adjusted to code prohibitions of home work, the extent to which home workers had been absorbed into the factories, and the effect of the prohibition of home work on the home workers and their families.

Five industries in which home work had been prohibited by the provisions of the codes were covered by the study—the men's clothing industry, the artificial flower and feather industry, the medium- and low-priced jewelry manufacturing industry, the men's neckwear industry, and the tag industry. All are industries in which home work was important prior to the period of the N. R. A. The men's clothing industry, in particular, had been outstanding from the point of view of the number of home workers employed. In the western centers of manufacture home work had already been very largely eliminated from this industry prior to the establishment of the codes, but in the eastern centers, especially New York City and Philadelphia, the finishing processes were still being done almost exclusively in the home at the time home work was prohibited.[2]

When the National Industrial Recovery Act was invalidated May 27, 1935, prohibition of home work had been in effect for varying periods in these five industries. The codes of the men's clothing industry and the medium- and low-priced jewelry manufacturing in-

[1] Industrial Home Work Under the National Recovery Administration. U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No. 234. Washington, D. C., 1936.

[2] Child Labor in New Jersey—Pt. 2, Children Engaged in Industrial Home Work, p. 11. U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No. 185. Washington, D. C., 1928.

dustry were among the first to be approved, and home work in these two industries was abolished in December 1933. Men's clothing manufacturers and medium- and low-priced jewelry manufacturers, therefore, had had approximately 17 months to adjust to the shift of work from the factory to the home when this study was made.

In the artificial-flower industry the home-work provisions of the codes went into effect at practically the same time as did those for the men's clothing and jewelry industries, but the code provisions for this industry permitted a gradual elimination of home work so that the period of complete prohibition was considerably shorter than in the other two industries. A 50-percent reduction in the number of home workers was required by January 1, 1934, but complete prohibition did not go into effect until May 1934—approximately 1 year prior to the invalidation of the codes.

In the men's neckwear industry the prohibition of home work became effective June 15, 1934, but home work was discouraged during the 2 months immediately preceding that date by a code provision prohibiting the employment of home workers at piece rates below those set by the code for the same or similar operations in the factory.

Because of difficulties in adjustment and vigorous opposition to prohibition on the part of some manufacturers, home work in the tag industry was prohibited at a much later date than in any of the other industries studied. Tag manufacturers, however, had a longer period in which to prepare for prohibition than did the manufacturers in the other four industries, and their adjustment, therefore, should have been more complete by the time abolition went into effect. The tag-industry code as approved February 1, 1934, provided for the elimination of all home workers by May 1, 1934, but two stays and an amendment to the code obtained by the code authority extended the date to January 1, 1935. During the brief period from November 1, 1934, to January 1, 1935, however, it was provided that home workers should receive rates of pay that would yield at least 80 percent of the code minimum.

PLAN OF THE STUDY

Field work for the study was begun in the summer of 1935, immediately following the invalidation of the National Industrial Recovery Act, and was completed the ensuing winter. Four States—New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island—were visited in the course of the investigation. In New York and Rhode Island only urban centers were included, but in New Jersey and Pennsylvania it was found necessary to include a number of smaller communities in order to reach the industries selected for study.

The findings of the study are based chiefly upon information obtained in interviews with manufacturers and contractors who had made use of the home-work system and with home workers formerly in the employ of those manufacturers and contractors. The data obtained from these sources are supplemented by information secured from directors of State departments of labor, code authorities, representatives of manufacturers' associations, and local union officials.

The following list shows the number and industrial distribution of the firms and of the families doing home work that were visited in the course of the study:

Industry	*Number of manufacturers*	*Number of families doing home work*
Total	117	505
Men's clothing	52	151
Men's neckwear	23	100
Artificial flowers	20	77
Jewelry	15	81
Tags	7	96

In selecting the firms to be visited effort was made to include only those that had been confronted with a real problem of adjustment when home work was abolished. In the case of the men's clothing industry —by far the largest home-work industry of the 5 studied—only 2 firms were visited that had employed less than 10 home workers. For the other industries, in which the number of home workers per firm was considerably less, the minimum was five home workers. As a matter of fact about two-thirds of the firms visited reported at least 20 home workers and more than half reported 30 or more (table 1).

With the exception of those in the men's clothing industry, the firms visited included all those, in the localities covered by the study, that had employed the minimum number of home workers. In the men's clothing industry, in which the number of firms reporting home work was considerably larger than in the other industries, the establishments were selected at random from among those meeting the requirements of the study.

Of the 117 firms represented, 96 were manufacturers or shop contractors and 21 were home contractors. Shop contractors, as the term is used in this report, are in reality manufacturers. They secure their materials from the manufacturer, who actually is often only the

owner of the material, and make up the merchandise in their own shops or factories, employing home workers for the finishing processes. Both manufacturers and shop contractors, in distributing materials to home workers, often make use of home contractors. Home contractors are distributing agents solely; no part of the work is done on their own premises.

TABLE 1.—*Industry and number of home workers employed by firm prior to abolition of industrial home work*

Industry	Total firms	Number of home workers employed						
		Less than 10	10, less than 20	20, less than 30	30, less than 40	40, less than 50	50 or more	10 or more (not otherwise specified)
Total	117	14	20	19	11	7	36	10
Men's clothing	52	2	9	12	4	5	16	4
Men's neckwear	23	5	3	3	3	1	6	2
Artificial flowers	20	3	5	4	3	----	3	2
Jewelry	15	4	3	----	1	----	6	1
Tags	7	----	----	----	----	1	5	1

The home workers interviewed were selected at random from lists submitted by the manufacturers and contractors visited in the course of the study. The number chosen to represent any one establishment was roughly in proportion to the total number of home workers employed by that establishment.

THE MANUFACTURER AND PROHIBITION OF INDUSTRIAL HOME WORK

ACTION TAKEN BY MANUFACTURERS IN REGARD TO HOME-WORK OPERATIONS

Of the 117 manufacturers and contractors interviewed in the course of the study, 93 (75 manufacturers and 18 contractors) had brought at least a part of their home workers into the factory during the period in which home work was prohibited under the codes, and 3 had brought the work inside without increasing the number of their factory workers. In these three establishments work identical with that done in the home had been done in the factory also, and a steadily decreasing demand for the product in question did not warrant bringing the home workers inside. Four other manufacturers had given the work formerly done by home workers to contractors who, in turn, had established themselves in shops and brought their home workers inside.

The remaining 17 employers (15 percent of those interviewed) had made no attempt to bring the home-work operations into the factory. The following enumeration shows the number and kinds of firms included in this group and their method of adjusting to home-work prohibitions:

Adjustment	*Industry*	*Number of firms*
Discontinued line of goods on which home workers were employed.	Men's clothing	1
	Artificial flowers	1
	Jewelry	5
Transferred line of goods to factory abroad	Artificial flowers	1
Went out of business	Men's clothing	1
	Men's neckwear	1
	Jewelry	1
Obtained special home certificates for all workers [3]	Artificial flowers	1
	Men's neckwear	2
Distributed home work in violation of code prohibitions.	Artificial flowers	3

NUMBER OF WORKERS GIVEN FACTORY EMPLOYMENT

In practically all the establishments included in the study preference in employment had been given to former home workers of the firm when the home-work operations were brought into the factory. Of the 93 firms bringing their home workers inside, 63 reported that they

[3] "Because the immediate abolition of home work in industries in which it had been a custom for many years might work a hardship to persons handicapped for factory employment, the President issued an Executive order on May 15, 1934, exempting certain groups of workers from the home-work provisions of the codes.

"This order was administered by the U. S. Department of Labor in cooperation with the National Recovery Administration, and workers desiring exemption under the order were required to obtain home-work certificates from their State department of labor or other designated agency. Certificates were issued only to (1) workers incapacitated for factory employment because of physical disability; (2) workers who had been accustomed in the past to earn their living by home work and who were too old to adjust to factory routine; and (3) workers whose services were absolutely essential at home to care for an invalid. Home workers obtaining certificates under the Executive order were to receive the same rate of pay as factory workers doing the same kind of work, and their hours of work were subject to the same limitations as those of factory employees."—Industrial Home Work Under the National Recovery Administration, p. 7. U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Publication No. 234. Washington, D. C., 1936.

had recruited all, and 30 reported that they had recruited half of their employees from among their former home workers. For the most part, other workers had applied in person or had been referred by the union. Manufacturers reported that the large majority were experienced workers, the former home workers of other firms, who because of some preference of their own or because there was no place for them in the establishment from which they had obtained home work, had sought employment elsewhere.

The following table shows by specific industry the number of home workers employed in the factory on home-work operations at the time of the study and the number of home workers employed prior to the prohibition of home work as reported by the firms included in the study.

TABLE 2.—*Industry and number of home workers employed prior to abolition of home work and number employed in factory after abolition*

Industry	Firms visited		Home workers employed prior to abolition	Home workers employed in factory after abolition	
	Total	Number reporting		Number	Percent of number employed prior to abolition
Total	117	108	5,352	3,094	57.8
Men's clothing	52	48	2,301	2,153	93.6
Men's neckwear	23	21	834	435	52.2
Artificial flowers	20	18	471	168	35.7
Jewelry	15	15	1,228	90	7.3
Tags	7	6	518	248	47.9

FACTORS AFFECTING THE TRANSFER OF HOME WORKERS TO THE FACTORY

The proportion of home workers taken into the factory for home-work operations in the five industries studied depended to a large degree upon three factors:

1. The extent to which manufacturers complied with code prohibitions of home work.
2. The demand for the home-work product at the time of the transfer of the work to the factory.
3. The changes effected in the home-work processes, when the work was brought into the factory, which resulted in a displacement of workers.

Code violations and special certificates.

In addition to the firms shown in the list on page 11 that made no effort to bring their home-work operations into the factory, 13 firms brought a minor part of their work inside but continued to distribute work to a large number of home workers. Twelve of these firms (3 artificial-flower and 8 men's neckwear manufacturers, and 1 tag manufacturer) had obtained special home-work certificates issued under the President's Executive order and 1, an artificial-flower manufacturer, had given out work in complete disregard of code pro-

hibitions. While these firms were the only ones encountered in the course of the study that were willing to admit that they had continued to distribute home work, it was reported by workers and employers alike that the effectiveness of the code home-work prohibitions were nullified to a considerable extent in both the artificial-flower and the men's neckwear industry by the issuance of large numbers of special home-work certificates and by continual violation of the codes' regulations by many employers.

According to a report published by the Department of Labor and Industry in Pennsylvania [4] the number of home-work-exemption certificates issued in the men's neckwear industry in that State had "assumed dangerous proportions" at the time the National Industrial Recovery Act was invalidated. This industry employed more than 30 percent of the workers granted special certificates, although in September 1933, the last date for which a report is available prior to the prohibition of home work, it had employed only 2 percent of the total number of home workers reported.

The number of artificial-flower firms giving out home work was negligible in Pennsylvania, but in New York City, where a large number of the firms making up this industry are concentrated, a member of the code authority reported that not only had they received complaints that exemption certificates had been made use of to circumvent the code prohibitions—certificated workers having been urged to accept a larger assignment of work than they themselves could do and to distribute it to neighbors and friends—but home work had also been distributed openly without pretense of conforming to code regulations. This had been done not only through contractors, whose names had not been reported to the code authority as required, but directly by manufacturers as well. One manufacturer, who had given out home work regularly during the period it was prohibited, frankly admitted in an interview that he made a practice of distributing work to his factory employees to be done by their friends and relatives. The work was delivered to the employees at a designated place several blocks from the factory when they left the plant in the evening. When completed it was deposited in parcel lockers in subway stations from which it was later collected by the firm.

Eleven of the twenty-three neckwear manufacturers interviewed in the course of the study and 8 of the 20 artificial-flower manufacturers had secured home-work exemptions for at least some of their workers. The number of certificated workers reported varied from 2 to 30, but in more than half it did not fall below 10, as the following list shows. In the other three industries combined, only two firms reported the employment of more than one certificated worker.

[4] Industrial Home Work in Pennsylvania Under the N. R. A., p. 10. Department of Labor and Industry, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, 1935. (Mimeographed.)

Number of home workers employed prior to prohibition	Number of home workers taken into factory	Number of home workers certificated
Men's neckwear:		
8	5	4
15	10	3
30	30	2
60	35	10
20	9	5
18	5	10
125	54	20
125	30	20
25	25	21
35	6	13
40	6	30
Artificial flowers:		
30	8	12
35	11	16
100	5	12
60	[5]	4
10	1	4
25	[6] 50	5
50	25	10
50	25	10

[5] Not reported.
[6] At time of prohibition of home work this factory was about to increase the number of home workers. Therefore when the work was brought into the factory the number of workers brought inside exceeded the number of home workers employed before prohibition.

Decreased demand for home-work product.

The situation in the jewelry industry, in which the number of workers given factory employment equaled only 7 percent of the number of home workers employed prior to abolition, cannot be attributed entirely to the prohibition of home work. It was due to a large extent to causes that would have affected employment for home workers even if employers had been permitted to continue the distribution of the work. Five of the fifteen jewelry manufacturers interviewed, who employed approximately 500 home workers, specialized in a cheap as well as a better grade of jewelry. Only the cheaper grade was sent into the homes. At the time the prohibition of home work became effective in the industry the demand for this product had decreased to such an extent that there would have been little or no work even for home workers. According to the manufacturers the slump in demand was due to a change in style of women's dress and to Japanese importations.

Even had the demand for cheap jewelry of the type made in the home continued, however, it is probable that the absorption of home workers in this industry would have been less than in the other industries, so far as the firms included in the study are concerned. One jewelry manufacturer, who employed some 500 home workers to restring styles of bead necklaces for which there had been no sale when styles changed, was forced to give up his business when home work was prohibited. This employer frankly stated that only the low wages paid to home workers had made it possible for him to continue in business in the past.

Changes in home-work operations.

To offset the increased labor and overhead costs attending the transfer of the work to the factory in many establishments, home-work operations were replaced by machine operations whenever possible and, to speed up individual production, such hand operations as could not be adapted to machines were broken down into simple repetitive processes.

In the men's clothing industry buttonholes had been made by machine on the cheaper grade of garments for a number of years, but, up to the time of the codes, hand buttonholing was still being done on

the better garments. With the prohibition of home work, however, manufacturers turned almost exclusively to machine-made buttonholes.

Machine operations also replaced some of the felling operations on men's clothing. As yet there is no machine that will do the more complicated work on the shoulders, neck, and armholes of men's coats, but in comparatively recent years machines have been perfected for felling the under-arm seams and the bottom of the garment. Even before the home-work provisions of the codes became effective felling machines were used by some manufacturers and, with the prohibition of home work, their use became more general.

Hand operations that could not be adapted to machines were sometimes broken down into as many as six processes; the usual breakdown, however, was into three processes. The more difficult work on the sleeves of the coat, known among the workers as "f lling whites" because of the color of the lining, was assigned to the most skilled workers; "felling blacks" (the work on the body of the coat) was given to the less-experienced workers; and "cleaning" (pulling bastings) to beginners.

In contract shops production was further speeded up by shop specialization. In general, contract shops had always specialized in one type of garment—coats, trousers, or vests—but, when the home-work operations were brought inside, specialization was carried even further and each shop confined its manufacture to only one or two styles of garment, such as sack coats, dress coats, full-lined coats, and so forth.

The men's clothing industry, it was generally recognized, made the greatest effort of any of the industries included in the study to eliminate home work. In spite of the fact that there was some displacement of workers by machines and by other improved methods of manufacture, the group of workers taken into the factory for home-work operations equaled 94 percent of the number of home workers employed prior to abolition. This was a much larger proportion than was brought inside in any of the other industries included in the study. This industry, however, unlike the other industries, had the interest and aid of a strong union in enforcing code regulations, and practically no complaints were received of violations of code prohibitions regarding home work.

Tag manufacturers substituted machine operations for hand operations to an even greater extent than men's clothing manufacturers. According to information furnished by the code authority, in connection with cost and time-study analyses made during the N. R. A. period, more than 150 varieties of tags are manufactured. Almost all these had been strung by home workers prior to the time that home work was abolished in the industry. With the prohibition of home work, manufacturers turned to machines for the stringing of their standardized products, putting existing machinery into more constant operation and installing new machines when necessary. Hand work was continued only on those varieties of tags that were in less demand or on those for which no machine had as yet been perfected. In order to speed up the work of hand workers, motion and time studies were made by the code authority, and on the basis of these studies assistance was given to individual producers in reorganizing their methods of production.

In the other three industries little change was made in the home-work processes when they were brought into the factory. Some neckwear manufacturers divorced the sewing and pressing operations, and a few artificial-flower firms, making a sincere effort to eliminate home work, reduced the amount of hand work on their goods; but in general no serious attempt was made to change existing methods of manufacture in any of these industries. The fact that a large amount of home work was still being distributed in the men's neckwear and the artificial-flower industry, either in violation of code provisions or by authority of special home-work certificates, undoubtedly accounts to a large extent for the comparatively small number of home workers taken into the factory in these industries.

EFFECT OF THE PROHIBITION OF HOME WORK ON PRODUCTION

A large majority of the manufacturers interviewed in the course of the study reported that once the shift from the home to the factory had been made home workers adjusted to factory employment with far less difficulty than had been anticipated. The 5-day week prevailing during the period of the N. R. A. in the industries studied made it easier, of course, for housewives to accept employment outside the home, and many firms allowed women with family responsibilities to report for work a little later and leave somewhat earlier than the regular factory force in order that they might be at home during the hours their children were free from school. Most of the firms reported that these concessions had been neither difficult to arrange nor inconvenient.

After 3 or 4 weeks in which to adjust themselves to the factory routine, most of the home workers were able to keep pace with other factory employees. A few manufacturers reported that they had been obliged to dismiss a considerable number of their former home workers because they had not been able to earn the minimum code wage, but the majority felt that there was little difference between former home workers and other workers in this respect. Nor did age seem to make a difference, many of the older women interviewed being among the higher-wage earners. In one shop a grandmother, 63 years of age, was the pride of the workers because in the first week of her factory employment she had earned the minimum code wage of $14 and in a few weeks had exceeded it. In fact, in the men's clothing industry older women were preferred to the younger workers because of their more "all-round" experience. When the work is done in the home the tasks of the younger members of the family are apt to be limited to the less-skilled processes.

Although the home workers chosen for factory employment were, so far as possible, among the most capable workers, selection depended also upon whether the worker could leave home, so that the choice of the employer was limited to a considerable extent.

With the concentration of home workers in the factory there was, according to a large number of the manufacturers interviewed, an improvement in both the amount and the quality of work produced. It was felt that steadier application on the part of the workers and improved methods of work, which it had been possible to inaugurate when the work was brought under closer supervision, had increased

output considerably. Also, the flow of goods from one department to another had been facilitated when the work was concentrated in the plant, and shipments, consequently, had been made more promptly. The loss from waste and spoilage—a large item when the work was done in the home, especially in the jewelry industry—had been reduced appreciably. Furthermore, it had been possible to demand higher standards of work.

Only in the artificial-flower industry were there consistent complaints or any considerable number of complaints regarding home workers as factory workers. Many manufacturers in this industry reported that, in spite of concessions made in the matter of hours of work, the labor turn-over among former home workers was excessive; that they were slow and unable to earn the code wage; that they were constantly complaining and moving from one factory to another. In this industry, however, it was found that many firms had brought their home work inside at the prevailing piece rates for home work and, according to manufacturers and home workers alike, at those rates "it was impossible for an individual to earn a fair wage in 8 hours." One manufacturer, arguing for the return of home work, frankly admitted that "the workers cannot make enough inside. At home neighbors and children can help with the work, but in the factory each worker has to do his job alone."

The complaints of workers in regard to their inability to earn the code minimum wage in the factory were intensified by the fact that some artificial-flower manufacturers were continuing to distribute home work in spite of the code prohibition and that, in some instances, neighbors, who were working long hours and utilizing the services of all members of the family, were making more at home work than the factory workers could make in their 8 hours at the factory.

THE HOME WORKER AND PROHIBITION OF HOME WORK

FACTORY EMPLOYMENT OF HOME WORKERS

The home-work group.

Although the name of only one member of the family appears on the manufacturer's pay roll under the home-work system, the family group rather than the individual is usually the working unit and others in the household assist with the work. In the families of the 505 home workers whose names were selected for study from the manufacturers' pay rolls, there were 1,211 workers. Of the 1,114 for whom age was reported, 578 were between the ages of 20 and 50, a potential labor supply of experienced workers.

TABLE 3.—*Age of industrial home workers, in families visited, who were employed in specified industry prior to abolition of home work*

Age	Industrial home workers											
	Total		Industry in which employed									
			Men's clothing		Men's neckwear		Artificial flowers		Jewelry		Tags	
	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution	Number	Percent distribution
Total	1,211	------	318	------	170	------	138	------	280	------	305	------
Age reported	1,114	100	293	100	146	100	108	100	274	100	293	100
Under 14 years	89	8	28	10	1	1	9	8	35	13	16	5
14 years, under 16	98	9	31	11	8	5	6	6	32	12	21	7
16 years, under 18	129	12	34	12	15	10	6	6	44	16	30	10
18 years, under 20	124	11	31	11	9	6	10	9	35	13	39	13
20 years, under 30	179	16	30	10	31	21	23	21	42	15	53	18
30 years, under 40	177	16	44	15	42	29	14	13	34	12	43	15
40 years, under 50	222	20	73	25	26	18	25	23	39	14	59	20
50 years and over	96	9	22	8	14	10	15	14	13	5	32	11
Age not reported	97	------	25	------	24	------	30	------	6	------	12	------

Number and age distribution of home workers taken into the factory.

In almost half of the 505 families visited (241) at least one member of the household had been taken into the factory when home work was prohibited under the N. R. A. As most manufacturers had attempted to compensate as many families as possible for the loss of their work in the home, factory employment was usually offered to only one member of the family; in several households, however, two and in one case three home workers had been given factory employment.

Altogether, in the 505 families visited, 277 workers had obtained factory employment—226 of these from the firm or contractor for

whom they had formerly done home work and 51 from new employers. The large majority were engaged in the factory on operations identical with those they had done in the home, or, where these operations had been broken down into simpler processes, upon some part of the home operations. A little over one-tenth were engaged upon new operations all or at least a part of the time.

Contrary to the argument frequently advanced in defense of the home-work system—that the older and more experienced home workers would be prevented by family responsibilities from accepting factory employment and that manufacturers, therefore, would be faced with a shortage of skilled labor—it was found that the home workers taken into the factory had by no means been recruited exclusively from the younger-age groups. In fact there was surprisingly little difference in the proportion of younger and older workers who were given inside employment. Of the 318 home workers 40 years of age and over in the families visited, 26 percent, and of the 480 between the ages of 18 and 40 years, 29 percent had been taken into the factory. Of the total number of home workers who had obtained factory employment and for whom age was reported, slightly more than one-third (35 percent) were 40 years of age or over (table 4).

TABLE 4.—*Age of worker and industry in which employed; industrial home workers, in families visited, who were employed in factory following abolition of home work*

Age	Workers employed in factory					
	Total	Industry in which employed				
		Men's clothing	Men's neckwear	Artificial flowers	Jewelry	Tags
Total	277	101	53	45	26	52
Under 18 years	18	2	1	1	7	7
18 years, under 20	39	7	1	6	11	14
20 years, under 30	46	9	12	7	6	12
30 years, under 40	54	27	12	6	2	7
40 years, under 50	68	37	9	13	----	9
50 years and over	15	8	2	3	----	2
Not reported	37	11	16	9	----	1

Older workers were particularly conspicuous in the group taken into the factory in the men's clothing industry, the artificial-flower industry, and the men's neckwear industry. In the first two industries approximately half and in the third industry one-third of the home workers who had obtained inside employment were at least 40 years of age. In the jewelry and tag industries, on the other hand, where nimble fingers rather than skill and experience are a requisite, the group given factory employment was younger. In the jewelry industry no worker 40 years of age or over, and in the tag industry only about one-fifth of those who had obtained factory employment, had reached 40 years.

Factory earnings of former home workers.

Home workers, corroborating the statements made by manufacturers, reported that piece rates paid to factory workers following the transfer of home-work operations to the factory were double and in some

instances even treble those paid home workers for identical operations. In factories where the home-work operations had been broken down into simple processes the rate paid for a single process often equaled or even exceeded the rate paid for the complete operation done in the home.

An estimate of hourly earnings from home work just prior to its abolition was obtained from the chief home workers in 325 of the families interviewed.[7] The median for the group was 14 cents. The median hourly earnings of a group of 1,715 factory workers [8] engaged on identical operations following their transfer to the factory were 44 cents—a little more than three times as great as those of the home workers. Unquestionably the effect of the codes had been to increase to some extent the earnings of factory workers, but even had factory wages not been raised there would have been a substantial increase in the earnings of the home workers taken into the factory.

A more accurate conception of the extent to which home-work wages had to be increased to make them commensurate with factory wages under the codes may be obtained from the figures in the following table, which represent the hourly earnings from home work and from identical work done in the factory of 107 home workers from whom information on earnings from both factory and home work could be obtained.

TABLE 5.—*Hourly earnings reported from home work and from factory work following abolition of home work; chief home worker in families visited*

Hourly earnings from industrial home work	Chief home workers employed in factory										
		Hourly earnings from factory work									
	Total reporting earnings	Less than 10 cents	10 cents, less than 15	15 cents, less than 20	20 cents, less than 25	25 cents, less than 30	30 cents, less than 35	35 cents, less than 40	40 cents, less than 45	45 cents, less than 50	50 cents or more
Total reporting earnings	107	1	1	6	10	13	13	22	24	8	9
5 cents less than 10	13	------	------	3	3	3	2	1	1	------	------
10 cents, less than 15	32	1	------	2	3	4	6	5	10	1	------
15 cents, less than 20	22	------	1	1	2	4	2	6	4	1	1
20 cents, less than 25	9	------	------	------	------	------	2	3	4	------	------
25 cents, less than 30	4	------	------	------	1	------	------	------	2	1	------
30 cents, less than 35	3	------	------	------	------	------	1	1	------	1	------
35 cents, less thna 40	8	------	------	------	------	1	------	3	1	2	1
40 cents, less than 45	5	------	------	------	------	------	------	1	2	1	1
45 cents, less than 50	3	------	------	------	------	------	------	1	------	1	1
50 cents or more	8	------	------	------	1	1	------	1	------	------	5

[7] This estimate was based upon the usual weekly earnings of the workers and the rate of pay received together with the worker's statement regarding the time required to complete a given unit of work.

[8] Median earnings of factory workers were computed from information obtained from the pay rolls of 48 of the 117 manufacturers interviewed in the course of the study.

As the table shows, 76 of these workers earned less than 25 cents an hour at industrial home work, while only 18 earned less than that amount in the factory. Only in the artificial-flower industry—and in that industry only in the case of learners during the first 3 months of their employment—was the minimum wage set by the code for factory workers as low as 25 cents an hour. The figures quoted, however, represent the actual earnings of the workers exclusive of any "make up" paid by the manufacturer to bring their earnings up to the code minimum.

In analyzing the weekly earnings of the home workers taken into the factory it was found that in 80 percent of the families in which home work was replaced by factory work the earnings of the one factory worker in the household exceeded the usual earnings of the entire family from home work and equaled the amount in another 8 percent of the families.

No comparison of weekly earnings is possible on the basis of the individual worker for the group interviewed as a whole, since home-work earnings usually represent family earnings, but for the 67 families in which there was only 1 home worker for whom earnings were reported, figures show that the weekly earnings from factory work were at least half again as high as those from home work in 11 instances; they were at least double in 24 instances; and in 7 instances they were at least 3 times the home-work earnings.

REACTION OF HOME WORKERS TO FACTORY EMPLOYMENT

Adjustment to factory employment.

In spite of the fact that in the 505 families visited 35 percent of the home workers taken into the factory were 40 years of age and over, the great majority (90 percent) reported that on the whole they had experienced little difficulty in fitting into the factory routine and otherwise adjusting themselves to factory employment. Most employers had allowed their workers a period of 2 to 6 weeks in which to become accustomed to the work, but the majority of the workers interviewed reported that within a few days, or a week at the most, they had become used to the work. Many of them had been accustomed to working long hours at home work, and the opportunity to work without the confusion of family life around them was a relief rather than a hardship.

Of the 277 home workers who had been taken into the factory when home work was abolished 150 were still employed at the time of the study. Of the 127 whose employment had been terminated only 19 reported that they had left their jobs or had been laid off because they could not adjust to the work or because they had been unable to earn the minimum code wage. These 19 workers were not entirely from the older-age group, as might have been expected; 11 of the workers in this group were under 40 years.

The specific reasons given by the workers interviewed for terminating their factory employment are shown in the following list:

Reasons for terminating factory employment	*Number of workers*
Adjustment satisfactory	108
Work slack	21
Illness	17
Firm closed down temporarily or permanently	14
Factory returned to home work after invalidation of N. R. A.	8
Needed at home	5
Machines installed	4
Other members of family obtained employment	3
Obtained better job	3
Marriage	3
Discharged for reasons other than slack work and inability to make code wage	3
Factory gave work to contractor	2
Under age for factory employment	2
Wages reduced after invalidation of N. R. A.	2
Factory or family moved	2
Obtained special home-work certificate	1
Other reasons	5
Reason not reported	13
Adjustment unsatisfactory	19
Discharged for failure to make code wage	11
Unable to do the work	4
Did not like factory work	2
Earnings too small	2

A manufacturer interviewed in the course of the study summed up the attitude of most home workers toward factory employment when he remarked to the Children's Bureau agent, "They have tasted better now; they will never go back to home work." The majority of the group taken into the factory were mothers with families and, as has been stated, more than one-third were 40 years of age or over; yet 79 percent of these women reported that factory employment was to be preferred to home work. Many who had dreaded making the initial break from the home—among them some who had had considerable difficulty for the first few days in adjusting to factory routine—were emphatic in their assertion that they would never again do home work.

Shorter and more regular hours of work, no night work, the opportunity of working without the interruptions of household duties, and well-equipped quarters in which to work, were among the advantages of factory employment cited by the workers. The two outstanding reasons given for their preference, however, were increased earnings and the relief of a home freed from the "everlasting clutter" of work—a boon appreciated by the entire family.

Even the comparatively few women who would have preferred to do home work, if it had been available, were impressed with the fact that conditions of work—wages in particular—were better in the factory than at home. In almost the same breath in which they asked for home work again they condemned the conditions under which it had to be done. Except for the fact that they had a family to care for and "felt that a mother's place is in the home" many of these women, too, would have preferred factory work.

The women who had been able to adjust to the new conditions had profited by their contact with the factory and with factory workers. As home workers, isolated from other workers and ignorant of the wages paid in the factory, they had accepted, under the pressure of daily needs, whatever wage was offered. The remark of a woman to a Children's Bureau agent, in the course of a study published in 1928, that "we don't get much for all the hard work, but we're lucky to get any work at all," typifies the attitude of home workers prior to the period of the N. R. A. However, once they have worked outside the home with more adequate wages and shorter and more regular hours, home workers are in a better position to evaluate their services. The statement of one woman encountered in the course of the present study is the opinion of most home workers now: "I would never take home work again, even at the factory rates, because I know the rates would be cut before long."

FAMILY PROBLEMS ARISING FROM PROHIBITION OF HOME WORK

On the assumption that most home workers are mothers with young children or persons otherwise handicapped for factory employment, much has been said regarding the hardships that loss of work would entail for home workers and their families. Home workers, it has been urged, would not be in a position to accept factory employment. If they were not actually tied to the home by family responsibilities or physical handicaps, the difficulties of providing adequate care for the family would be so great that both mother and children would suffer. So far as the findings of this study indicate, neither of these assumptions seems warranted. In fact, as the following enumeration shows, an analysis of the records of the 505 families interviewed indicates that for a much larger proportion of the families than is generally assumed, lack of opportunity rather than family responsibilities or physical handicaps prevented employment outside the home.

Employment status of 505 families interviewed	*Number of families*
Total	505
At least 1 home worker taken into factory	241
No home workers taken into factory	264
Other employment secured by some member of the family	35
Former home workers	29
Others in family	6
Employment outside home not secured but possible	156
Former home workers	100
Others in family	56
Employment outside home impossible	73
Physically handicapped	19
Family responsibility	45
Other reasons, and reasons not reported	9

Adjustment necessary for factory employment—home workers taken into factory.

In most of the 241 families in which the home workers obtained factory employment the problem of family adjustment was comparatively simple. In 95, almost two-fifths, of the 241 families in which home work was replaced by factory work either some member of the household other than the mother obtained inside employment or there were no children in the family under 16 years of age to require close supervision. For those families factory employment resulted in little or no change in the family routine.

In the remaining 146 families it was the mother of a growing family who was taken into the factory when home work was no longer available. Even for the majority of these families, however, adjustment did not prove difficult. In 67, almost half their number, another responsible adult was present in the home to assume the household duties and the care of the children during the mother's absence, and in 33 the children were all in school and old enough to prepare their own lunches and look after themselves and younger brothers and sisters until the mother returned from work. In another 24 families satisfactory arrangements were made for the care of the children outside the home. In some cases relatives in the neighborhood assumed this responsibility; in others day nurseries, settlements, and so forth, were utilized. In a few cases arrangements were made with schools whereby younger children were allowed to remain in the building until older brothers or sisters were released from the classroom. Less frequently neighbors and friends accepted the care of the children.

In only 22 of the 146 families was the adjustment so difficult that the mother reported she would have preferred to work at home had home work been available. In eight of these families the care of the children was left to brothers and sisters who were unable to cope with them or to older people who because of age or other duties were unable to bear the responsibility easily; in the remainder, relatives, friends, and neighbors assumed their care. In only 8 of these 23 families, however, were there any children under school age, and in only 1 was there a child under 1 year of age.

Possibility of accepting factory employment—home workers not taken into factory.

In almost half (49 percent) of the 264 families in which none of the home workers were taken into the factories, there was at least one home worker in the household who was free to accept outside employment. In fact, a number of the home workers were heads of families, or grown sons and daughters who had been assisting with the work during periods of unemployment. In another 23 percent of the families, although none of the home workers themselves were in a position to accept factory employment, there were other unemployed members of the household who could have done so. Thus in 72 percent of the families it should have been possible to compensate for the loss of home-work earnings with other employment. At the time of the study work had been obtained in only a little more than one-tenth of these families, but again it must be borne in mind that the period during which home work was prohibited was one of general unemployment. Undoubtedly under more normal conditions a larger number

of those workers would have been taken into the factory or would have obtained other employment.

With the more regular employment furnished those workers who went into the factory it could hardly be expected that the entire group of home workers would be absorbed even under more normal conditions. Also there would always be some displacement of workers by machines. In any case, technologic changes would have had to be faced by home workers sooner or later, just as they have been faced by factory workers. To a limited extent machines had been in use several years prior to the inauguration of the codes. Prohibition of home work may have hastened their general use, but their advent was inevitable.

Leaving out of consideration, then, those families in which under normal industrial conditions it would have been possible to replace home-work earnings by other employment (either of the home worker or of some other adult member of the family) there remain only 73 families, 14 percent of the 505 included in the study, in which, according to the statement of the home worker interviewed, no member of the household was in a position to accept outside employment. (See p. 23.) In a few cases the home worker was incapacitated by illness or was too old to adjust to factory routine; in one or two instances factory work had been attempted and discarded. In most of the families in this group, however, the home worker stated that she was prevented by family responsibilities from accepting employment outside the home, although in some instances it would seem that possibilities of adjustment might have been found that would release her for outside employment.

HOME WORKERS RECEIVING RELIEF

It can hardly be said in regard to the home workers included in the study, as has been suggested for home workers in general, that the loss of home-work earnings resulted in any large number of families applying for relief. It is true that of the 374 families visited in which home-work earnings were not replaced by factory work or in which factory work had been obtained but had terminated before the codes were invalidated, 162, almost half, had received some relief. However, a considerable number of these families had already been receiving relief prior to the period that home work was abolished, and their need can hardly be attributed to their loss of home work. Only 49 families had made their first application for assistance after the date on which home work was abolished, and in 31 of these families investigation revealed that it was not the loss of home work but the recent unemployment of other members of the family that had been the immediate cause of need. It is possible that if home work had not been prohibited these families might have managed on their home-work earnings without applying for relief, though it is doubtful, since prior to the prohibition of home work only eight of these families reported a weekly income from home work in excess of $5, and in only one were earnings as high as $10.

All in all, it seems safe to conclude that in only 18 families, 4 percent of the 505 interviewed, did the loss of home-work earnings cause the family to apply for relief.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The experiences of manufacturers and home workers in establishments that made a sincere effort to comply with code prohibition of industrial home work, particularly in the men's clothing industry, in which 94 percent of the home workers were taken into the factory, indicate that prohibition of home work is not impracticable from the standpoint of either the manufacturer or the home worker.

In general, manufacturers reported that the difficulties of complying with code prohibitions had not been so great as had been anticipated. Contrary to expectations, no shortage of experienced labor developed and, once the shift from home to factory had been accomplished, home workers adjusted to factory routine with comparatively little difficulty. With the concentration of the work inside, losses from waste and spoilage were appreciably reduced, shipments were being made more promptly, and both the quantity and the quality of the product improved. Steadier application on the part of the workers and more efficient methods of work, which it had been possible to inaugurate when the workers were brought under closer supervision, had their effect. Only in the artificial-flower industry, in which a number of firms had brought the work inside at the old piece rates for home work, were any appreciable number of complaints received regarding the failure of home workers to adjust to factory employment.

Home workers, as well as manufacturers, were impressed with the advantages of factory employment. Although the majority of the workers taken inside were women with families—a comparatively large number of them 40 years of age or over—79 percent reported that they preferred factory work to home work. As reasons for their preference they cited their increased earnings, shorter and more regular hours, and freedom from night work. They appreciated, also, the convenience of well-equipped working quarters, the opportunity of working without the interruption of household duties, and not least, the relief of a home freed from the clutter of home-work materials. Even women who had dreaded making the initial break from the home were often emphatic in their assertions that they would never again do home work under the conditions that existed prior to the code prohibitions.

Piece rates paid to factory workers for home-work operations, following the transfer of the work to the factory, were double and sometimes even treble those paid to home workers for identical operations. In factories where home-work operations had been broken down into simple processes in order to speed up production, it was found that piece rates for a single process often equaled or exceeded the rate paid for the complete

operation when it was done in the home. The median hourly earnings of 325 home workers reporting earnings prior to the prohibition were 14 cents. On the other hand, the median hourly earnings of a group of 1,715 factory workers engaged on the same operations they had performed as home workers were 44 cents.

For most of those families in which the home worker was taken into the factory when the work was brought inside it had not proved difficult to arrange adequate care for the family during the hours of employment. In fact, an analysis of the records of the 505 families included in the study reveals that in most families in which factory work was not secured to compensate for the loss of home work lack of opportunity rather than family responsibilities or physical handicaps prevented employment. In almost two-fifths of the 241 families in which the home worker obtained factory employment some member of the household other than the mother had been taken inside or there were no children in the family under 16 years of age to require close supervision. In 67 families the mother of a growing family had been selected for inside employment, but another responsible adult had been present in the home to assume the household duties and the care of the children. While other arrangements had to be made for the care of the children in the remaining 79 families, in only 23 had the adjustment been so difficult that the mother reported she would have preferred home work to factory work.

As for the families in which the home workers were not taken into the factory, it was found that in 49 percent at least one home worker in the household had been free and able to accept factory employment, and in another 23 percent, although none of the home workers themselves had been in a position to leave home, there were other unemployed members of the family who could have done so.

Even the small sums that can be earned from home work are significant in families of small means. The prohibition of home work, however, did not result in any large number of the families applying for relief. Although almost half of the 374 families in which no employment was found to offset the loss of home-work earnings, or in which factory work was terminated before the codes were invalidated, had received assistance at some time during the period in which home work was abolished, only 49 had made their first application for aid after the loss of their work, and in more than half of these families investigation proved it was not the loss of home work but the recent unemployment of regularly employed members of the family that was the immediate cause of need. The information obtained indicates that in only 4 percent of the 505 families included in the study did the prohibition of home work cause the family to apply for relief.

In considering the findings of this report, it must be remembered that the period during which home work was prohibited was one of general unemployment. Under more normal conditions a larger number of home workers would undoubtedly have been taken into the factory; but with the

more regular employment furnished those workers who went into the factory it could hardly be expected that the entire group of home workers would be absorbed. Also, there would always be some displacement of workers by machines. Tag-stringing and felling machines were installed quite generally in the tag industry and the men's clothing industry during the period in which home work was prohibited. In any case technologic changes will have to be faced by home workers sooner or later, just as they have been faced by factory workers. To a limited extent these machines had been in use for several years prior to the inauguration of the codes. Prohibition of home work may have hastened their general use; their advent was inevitable.

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