

Minimum Wages of Female Employees.

Minimum Wage Acts are on the statute books of Manitoba, British Columbia, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Alberta, but the Quebec Act, passed in 1919, and the Nova Scotia Act, passed in 1920, have not yet taken effect. Table 27 shows the comparative weekly rates for experienced adults fixed by the Boards of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan. In Manitoba orders were issued separately for each type of factory; these are grouped in the table under the heading "Manufacturing."

Minimum wage orders in all provinces fix special rates for learners, apprentices or minors, that is, workers under 18 years of age, and some make provision for the physically defective. The learning period ranges from three to eighteen months, according to the nature of the occupation affected by the order, and the rates of wages advance by stages of proficiency until the full minimum wage for experienced adults is reached.

The Boards have power to limit the number of learners and minors employed at a plant. The proportion of these classes to experienced workers varies widely. In British Columbia the proportion for factory workers is 14.3 p.c. and in Manitoba 25 p.c. In Ontario the proportion allowed is 50 p.c. of adult learners and minors combined; neither of these classes, however, can exceed 33 p.c. of the experienced adults employed. The orders so far issued by the Alberta Board have laid down no limits in this respect.

The Boards of all provinces, except Quebec, have power to fix not only the minimum wages, but also the minimum number of hours for which such wages shall be paid. There is, however, a wide divergence in the standards of working hours which have been fixed by the various orders. Many of these orders provide for a working week of 48 hours, but allow latitude in regard to the distribution of these hours throughout the week, to permit of a Saturday half holiday, with consequent lengthening of working hours beyond 8 hours on the other days of the week.

The Alberta Board has issued orders stating that the working week is 48 hours, except in the case of stores.

In British Columbia a week of 48 hours is prescribed for workers in offices, in public housekeeping, in personal service, in theatres, and in telephone and telegraph services; special rules to govern overtime work are laid down in that province for the fruit and vegetable industry. Working hours for women and girls in factories are subject to the provisions of the Provincial Factories Act, while no provision is made in regard to the hours of mercantile, laundry or fishery workers.

In Manitoba the regulations of the Board governing most types of factories provide for a nine hour day and a 48 hour week, but longer hours are permitted in some employments. Thus, bag makers and jewelry workers have a 9 hour day and a 49 hour week; auto top, bedding, glove, dyeing and cleaning workers have a 9 hour day and a 50 hour week, and millinery, knitting, tailoring and dress-making employees have an 8½ hour day and a 50 hour week. Laundry workers may be employed for 52 hours in the week, but not for more than 9 hours in any day. The Saturday working hours in shops and stores are 11½, with a weekly maximum of 49 hours, or 53 per week in 5 c., 10 c., and 15 c. stores. Office workers in the same province have a maximum week of 44 hours with a maximum day of 8 hours.

The Ontario Board has as yet fixed no definite limits for the working day or week, but the recent orders governing office workers provide that the minimum rates for part time workers shall be based on a regular working week of 48 hours.