



CERTAIN FEATURES OF THE N. R. A. LABOR COMPLIANCE IN OKLAHOMA

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Without going into hair-splitting discussions concerning whether or not the National Recovery Administration retarded recovery in Oklahoma and the United States, certain points should be discussed from the standpoint of economic and social welfare.

1. Private industrial employment in Oklahoma* increased from a low of 320,193 in April, 1933, to a high of 467,421 in August, 1934. More than a third of this increase had taken place before the National Industrial Recovery Act was passed in June, 1933. Part of the increase occurred during the operation of the President's Reemployment, which was the gentlemen's agreement authorized by the N. I. R. A., and additional increases occurred while the codes were in operation. In the main the fifty-hour working week of 1929 became the forty-hour working week of 1933. In some instances the week had already been shortened as a depression measure under the share-the-work movement.

Payrolls did not increase quite as rapidly as employment in Oklahoma during the operation of the N. R. A. This may indicate that minimum wage standards were more effectively established under the N. R. A. than the wage differentials for the more highly skilled. From March to June, 1933 (the month the N. I. R. A. was enacted), payrolls increased 11 per cent; from March, 1933, to September, 1934, payrolls increased 54 per cent.**

2. The experience of the Oklahoma N. R. A. State Labor Compliance Office indicates the need of a state wage collection law. Most of the cases of back-wage restitution involved failure to pay code minimum wages or time and a half for illegal overtime, but there were cases where the worker

*These estimates are based on the computations of the Federal Committee on Economic Security for the year 1933 in comparison with the indices for employment compiled by the University of Oklahoma Bureau of Business Research from the payroll and employment records collected by the State Department of Labor.

**Computed from reports from employers to the State Department of Labor.

had not received any wage at all. From the time the Oklahoma Labor Compliance Department was opened in February, 1934, until the Supreme Court's decision in the Schechter Case, May 25, 1935, 5,718 complaints were received by the Oklahoma State Office. Of this number 979 were rejected, 1,682 were adjusted and 357 were referred to Code Authorities. The total amount of back wages was \$85,283.88 under the codes and \$5,643.31 under the President's Reemployment Agreement. The number of people receiving back wages was 2,073 under the codes, and 70 under the P. R. A. The total of more than \$90,000 collected does not include the amounts collected by the Petroleum Code, the Bituminous Coal or the Cotton Textile Code Authorities, and only parts of the amounts collected in obtaining compliance to the Cotton Garment, Retail and Retail Drug Codes. The total of more than \$90,000 is the amount collected by the Oklahoma State Office in the cases which were not referred in first instance or on reference to code authorities.

In retrospect it appears that the N. R. A. was too large and covered too many industries which did not substantially affect interstate commerce; that labor should have had representation on all code committees where code authorities were established and that assessments to maintain code authorities were excessive in many cases.

Among the many features of the N. R. A. which are continuing in some form are the State Committees on Apprentice Training, the National Labor Relations Boards giving assurances of collective bargaining, the Guffy Bituminous Coal Control Administration with many features of the N. R. A. Bituminous Coal Code, the Motor Carrier Division of the Interstate Commerce Commission with many features of the Motor Bus and Trucking Codes, the new Alcohol Control Administration with many features of the N. R. A. Alcohol Code, the Wisconsin State Recovery Act in which many other states have manifested interest, and finally, enlarged duties of state departments of labor over child labor and minimum wages in certain instances.

