

YOUR JOB?

Six states and Puerto Rico have laws prohibiting the employment of women immediately before and after childbirth. In New York State, women may not be employed within 4 weeks after childbirth.

IT IS often believed that women have less mechanical ability than men. They may have less training in mechanical skills, but this does not mean that they lack the ability to learn these skills. Mechanical ability varies among individuals. It is not true that women "have greater dexterity than men and are therefore better than men in detailed work," says the Safety Council.

Another belief that is unsupported by facts is that women are particularly good at monotonous work. The Council also finds no adequate evidence to support the belief that women do not as a rule work out well in industrial situations, because they are given to petty jealousies and do not take their jobs seriously.

It is not always easy to distinguish between fact and myth in job-safety for women, because there have been few definitive studies of their accident experience. In Illinois, a recent study of compensated accidents indicated that for at least one injured woman out of four, the accident was a fall, either at floor level, or from an elevation such as a stair. In many cases the worker's heel caught. One out of every 14 accidents to women classified as a "fall" was really a slip or stumble in which a strain resulted from her effort to recover her balance, which she had lost because of the condition of the working surface.

A study in shipyards, made in 1944 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor



Statistics, of nearly 4,000 injuries to men and women doing the same work, is almost the only one that shows the difference between men and women in the same occupation working under the same degree of hazard. The investigation was initiated early in World War II because of the high injury rates of inexperienced personnel. The study found that, on the average, the women's injury rates were noticeably higher than men's, but these differences seemed to depend on the nature of the work. In the electrical department, where operations were routine and light, the number of injuries was about equal for women and for men. But in the heavy jobs—welding, ship assembly, etc.—where work in an awkward and strained position was required, women suf-

fered more strains and sprains than men. One reason, offered for this was that the men had had more experience than the women in this type of labor.

EXPERIENCE on a job means fewer accidents. This applies to men as well as women. Examining New York's work-accident statistics of the last few decades, it can be noted that the injury-rate record grows worse in times of prosperity and improves when business is slow. When employment is expanding, firms are taking on more people who have never worked before and who do not know how to guard themselves against the unaccustomed hazards. In times of expanding production, moreover, workers shift

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