

§ 784.21

products (see part 570, subpart G, of this chapter). Such enterprises or establishments will, however, be concerned with the exemption from overtime pay in section 13(b)(4) of the Act for employees employed in specified “on-shore” operations (see § 784.101), and the exemption from minimum wages and overtime pay provided by section 13(a)(5) for employees employed in fishing, fish-farming, and other specified “off-shore” operations on aquatic products. These exemptions, which are subject to the general rules stated in § 784.21, are discussed at length in subpart B of this part 784.

§ 784.21 Guiding principles for applying coverage and exemption provisions.

It is clear that Congress intended the Fair Labor Standards Act to be broad in its scope. “Breadth of coverage is vital to its mission” (*Powell v. U.S. Cartridge Co.*, 339 U.S. 497). An employer who claims an exemption under the Act has the burden of showing that it applies (*Walling v. General Industries Co.*, 330 U.S. 545; *Mitchell v. Kentucky Finance Co.*, 359 U.S. 290; *Tobin v. Blue Channel Corp.*, 198 F. 2d 245, approved in *Mitchell v. Myrtle Grove Packing Co.*, 350 U.S. 891; *Fleming v. Hawkeye Pearl Button Co.*, 113 F. 2d 52). Conditions specified in the language of the Act are “explicit prerequisites to exemption” (*Arnold v. Kanowsky*, 361 U.S. 388). In their application, the purpose of the exemption as shown in its legislative history as well as its language should be given effect. However, “the details with which the exemptions in this Act have been made preclude their enlargement by implication” and “no matter how broad the exemption, it is meant to apply only to” the specified activities (*Addison v. Holly Hill*, 322 U.S. 607; *Maneja v. Waialua*, 349 U.S. 254). Exemptions provided in the Act “are to be narrowly construed against the employer seeking to assert them” and their application limited to those who come “plainly and unmistakably within their terms and spirit.” This construction of the exemptions is necessary to carry out the broad objectives for which the Act was passed (*Phillips v. Walling*, 324 U.S. 490; *Mitchell v. Kentucky Finance Co.*, supra; *Arnold*

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v. Kanowsky, supra; *Calaf v. Gonzales*, 127 F. 2d 934; *Bowie v. Gonzales*, 117 F. 2d 11; *Mitchell v. Stinson*, 217 F. 2d 210; *Fleming v. Hawkeye Pearl Button Co.*, 113 F. 2d 52).

Subpart B—Exemptions Provisions Relating to Fishing and Aquatic Products

THE STATUTORY PROVISIONS

§ 784.100 The section 13(a)(5) exemption.

Section 13(a)(5) grants an exemption from both the minimum wage and the overtime requirements of the Act and applies to “any employee employed in the catching, taking, propagating, harvesting, cultivating, or farming of any kind of fish, shellfish, crustacea, sponges, seaweeds, or other aquatic forms of animal and vegetable life, or in the first processing, canning, or packing of such marine products at sea as an incident to, or in conjunction with, such fishing operations, including the going to and returning from work and loading and unloading when performed by any such employee.”

§ 784.101 The section 13(b)(4) exemption.

Section 13(b)(4) grants an exemption only from the overtime requirements of the Act and applies to “any employee employed in the canning, processing, marketing, freezing, curing, storing, packing for shipment, or distributing of any kind of fish shellfish, or other aquatic forms of animal or vegetable life, or any byproduct thereof.”

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF EXEMPTIONS

§ 784.102 General legislative history.

(a) As originally enacted in 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act provided an exemption from both the minimum wage requirements of section 6 and the overtime pay requirements of section 7 which was made applicable to “any employee employed in the catching, taking, harvesting, cultivating, or farming of any kind of fish, shellfish, crustacea, sponges, seaweeds or other aquatic forms of animal and vegetable life, including the going to and returning

from work and including employment in the loading, unloading, or packing of such products for shipment or in propagating, processing, marketing, freezing, canning, curing, storing, or distributing the above products or by products thereof" (52 Stat. 1060, sec. 13(a)(5)).

(b) In 1949 the minimum wage was extended to employees employed in canning such products by deleting the word "canning" from the above exemption, adding the parenthetical phrase "(other than canning)" after the word "processing" therein, and providing a new exemption in section 13(b)(4), from overtime pay provisions only, applicable to "any employee employed in the canning of any kind of fish, shellfish, or other aquatic forms of animal or vegetable life, or any byproduct thereof". All other employees included in the original minimum wage and overtime exemption remained within it (63 Stat. 910).

(c) By the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1961, both these exemptions were further revised to read as set forth in §§ 784.100 and 784.101. The effect of this change was to provide a means of equalizing the application of the Act as between canning employees and employees employed in other processing, marketing, and distributing of aquatic products on shore, to whom minimum wage protection, formerly provided only for canning employees, was extended by this action. The 1961 amendments, however, left employees employed in fishing, in fish farming, and in related occupations concerned with procurement of aquatic products from nature, under the existing exemption from minimum wages as well as overtime pay.

§ 784.103 Adoption of the exemption in the original 1938 Act.

Although in the course of consideration of the legislation in Congress before passage in 1938, provisions to exempt employment in fisheries and aquatic products activities took various forms, section 13(a)(5), as drafted by the conference committee and finally approved, followed the language of an amendment adopted during consideration of the bill by the House of Representatives on May 24, 1938, which

was proposed by Congressman Bland of Virginia. He had earlier on the same day, offered an amendment which had as its objective the exemption of the "fishery industry," broadly defined. The amendment had been defeated (83 Cong. Rec. 7408), as had an amendment subsequently offered by Congressman Mott of Oregon (to a pending amendment proposed by Congressman Coffee of Nebraska) which would have provided an exemption for "industries engaged in producing, processing, distributing, or handling * * * fishery or seafood products which are seasonal or perishable" (83 Cong. Rec. 7421-7423). Against this background, when Congressman Bland offered his amendment which ultimately became section 13(a)(5) of the Act he took pains to explain: "This amendment is not the same. In the last amendment I was trying to define the fishery industry. I am now dealing with those persons who are exempt, and I call the attention of the Committee to the language with respect to the employment of persons in agriculture * * * I am only asking for the seafood and fishery industry that which has been done for agriculture." It was after this explanation that the amendment was adopted (83 Cong. Rec. 7443). When the conference committee included in the final legislation this provision from the House bill, it omitted from the bill another House provision granting an hours exemption for employees "in any place of employment" where the employer was "engaged in the processing of or in canning fresh fish or fresh seafood" and the provision of the Senate bill providing an hours exemption for employees "employed in connection with" the canning or other packing of fish, etc. (see *Mitchell v. Stinson*, 217 F. 2d 210; *McComb v. Consolidated Fisheries*, 75 F. Supp. 798). The indication in this legislative history that the exemption in its final form was intended to depend upon the employment of the particular employee in the specified activities is in accord with the position of the Department of Labor and the weight of judicial authority.