

# CHAPTER XIX.—LABOUR AND WAGES.\*

## PART 1.—LABOUR.

### Section 1.—Occupations of the Wage-Earning Population.

The occupations of the working population of a country are, at any time, mainly determined by its natural resources and the stage which has been reached in their development. The outstanding characteristics of Canada are its enormous extent, its immense natural resources and the comparatively slight development of these, only the resources of the southern portions being as yet at all well-known. The developed areas fall into four economic units with quite distinct physical characteristics: first, the Maritime Provinces, where lands, forests, mines and fisheries are the chief natural resources; secondly, Ontario and Quebec, with lands, forests, mines and abundant water power for manufacturing purposes; thirdly, the Prairie Provinces, where the land is the chief natural resource, except in Alberta which contains immense coal deposits; lastly, British Columbia, with fisheries, forests and mines, where agriculture plays a comparatively minor part.

In Canada, as in other new countries, the labouring population (using the term in its widest sense) bears a larger proportion to the total than is the case in older civilizations where there exists more realized wealth. In addition to our native-born workers, great numbers of young males and smaller numbers of females, have, in the past, immigrated from older countries to Canada to find here a better market for their labour. Thus both the sex distribution and the age distribution of the population of Canada is rendered somewhat abnormal, an unusually large percentage of that population being of working age and of the male sex—that is, of the sex which is most generally gainfully employed.

At the census, the total population in gainful occupations is recorded. At pp. 799-803 of the 1934-35 Year Book, the total gainfully occupied in 1931 were dealt with rather extensively under the heading "Occupations of the People". A treatment so broad is perhaps somewhat out of place as a subdivision of "Labour". Normally it is considered as a sectional heading under "Population" and in accordance with this view, this Section is now limited to occupations of wage-earners. The gainfully occupied population is composed of four classes of persons: (1) employers, (2) own accounts, (3) wage-earners, (4) unpaid family workers. The third class, *i.e.*, the wage-earners, comprises that portion of the gainfully occupied which in the course of its employment receives either wage or salary payment. In Canada the wage-earners numbered 2,570,097 at the 1931 Census, representing 31.50 p.c. of the total population in gainful occupations. The number of male wage-earners was 2,022,260 or 78.68 p.c. of the total of both sexes combined and the number of female wage-earners was 547,837 or 21.32 p.c. of the total.

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\* The sections and subsections of this chapter, with the exceptions of Sections 1, 3, 7 and 9, Subsections 3 and 5, and section 10, all of Part I, and Section 4 of Part II, have been revised by, or under the direction of, W. M. Dickson, Deputy Minister, Department of Labour, Ottawa. The information in Section 3, Part I, has been obtained through the courtesy of the Provincial Departments of Labour or Bureaus of Labour, and that in Section 7, Part I, has been revised by the chairmen of the respective provincial Workmen's Compensation Boards. Section 10 has been revised under the direction of Dr. W. C. Clark, Deputy Minister, Department of Finance, Ottawa. The remaining sections have been prepared in the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

† On the sex distribution of the population, see pp. 107-109; on the age distribution, see pp. 111-112.