

Subsection 2.—National Registration of Persons on Direct Relief

The National Employment Commission Act, 1936, under which the National Employment Commission* was established in May, 1936, required the Commission to undertake a national registration and classification of persons on direct relief throughout Canada [Sect. 6 (a)]. To meet this obligation there was set up the Registration Branch of the Commission, which, in co-operation with the governments of the provinces and municipalities, took a first national registration of persons on relief, where the Dominion contributed financially to such relief, in September, 1936. In order to secure current figures, comparable with those available for September, 1936, the provinces and municipalities were required to provide follow-up returns each month commencing with October, 1936. In September, 1937, a second registration was taken, based upon the experience of the previous registration, and this, too, was subsequently kept up to date month by month.

In Section III of its final report, the National Employment Commission recommended that the work of the registration be carried forward under the Minister of Labour, after the termination of the work of the Commission itself. Consequently, when the Commission ceased to exist at Feb. 1, 1938, the work of registration was carried out by the National Registration Board under the Department of Labour, where it has been carried forward on the same basis. Third, fourth and fifth national registrations, comparable with those of the two preceding years, were taken in September, 1938, 1939 and 1940.

From the commencement of the national registration, the number of local authorities throughout Canada issuing direct relief has averaged about 2,000; the success of the registration depends upon receiving complete and reasonably prompt returns from each of these authorities. Monthly reports, published by the Department of Labour, give detailed statistics as to numbers, classes, employability, etc., of persons on direct relief.

In addition to the registration of persons on direct relief† throughout the municipalities and provinces, special registrations have been maintained by the National Registration Branch of pensioners on relief, and of Indians on relief, through the Department of Pensions and National Health and the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, respectively.

Statistics of Persons on Relief.—Prior to the inception of national registration, general statistics of persons in receipt of direct relief were secured through reports furnished to the Dominion Commissioner of Unemployment Relief by the several provinces distributing relief. The Dominion monthly averages so reported up to the initiation of the national registration and the registration figures from September, 1936, are as follows: 1932 (8 months), 833,989; 1933, 1,227,558; 1934, 1,135,901; 1935, 1,162,563; 1936, 1,148,083; 1937, 965,907; 1938, 870,103; 1939, 808,040; and 1940, 508,995. Persons on urban relief constituted 85.3 p.c. while persons on agricultural relief were 14.7 p.c. of the monthly average for the Dominion in 1940. The monthly average of all persons on direct relief (as given in Table 6) showed the following percentage distribution by provinces in 1940: Prince Edward

* See the 1937 Year Book, pp. 1052-1053, and the 1938 Year Book, pp. 778-779.

† Direct relief, in the sense here used, does not include persons being provided with work on relief projects paid for in wages, even though such work was undertaken to alleviate unemployment. Direct relief is divided into urban relief and agricultural relief. Agricultural relief refers to assistance given to resident farm operators and their dependants for human subsistence, where such farmers would normally derive their livelihood from the land they occupy. Urban relief refers to all persons other than farm operators and their dependants, and thus includes the unemployed and unemployable persons.