

The composition of the labour force has been subject to considerable change since the end of the War. The proportion of women in employment has dropped from wartime levels. The agricultural labour force declined from 1,186,000 in 1946 to 1,096,000 in 1948—a proportionate decrease from 25 p.c. of the civilian labour force to 22 p.c. Among non-agricultural industries, large absolute gains in the number employed have occurred in manufacturing, construction (particularly building construction), and in transportation and communications. In the group of manufacturing industries, markedly more than average gains have been made in the durable goods sector. Regionally, Ontario and British Columbia have registered both absolute and proportionate increases in the civilian labour force, while the reverse is true of the Prairie Provinces. Ontario had 35.2 p.c. of the total Canadian labour force in 1948, compared with 34.4 p.c. in 1946; British Columbia 9.0 p.c. in 1948, against 8.0 p.c. in 1946; the Prairie Provinces 19.5 p.c. in 1948, against 20.6 p.c. in 1946. Quebec and the Maritimes registered absolute increases in the working force but little change relatively; Quebec's proportion of the labour force remained unchanged at 27.8 p.c., and the Maritimes' showed a percentage decrease from 9.0 to 8.8. The post-war changes in the regional distribution of the working force continued the general trend that prevailed during the 1930's and also the war years. In 1947, the Government assisted workers to move from the Cape Breton Island industrial area to the mining and industrial areas of central Canada. This relieved unemployment on the one hand and helped satisfy a labour shortage on the other. About 2,650 persons were involved, of whom 300 were women.

Weekly wages and salaries in eight leading industries increased by 32 p.c. in the three years from the end of 1945.\* Over the same period of time, the cost-of-living index increased by 33 p.c., indicating little change in real income for the workers involved, as a group. During the years 1946-48 there has been a general decrease in average hours worked per week but, with the exception of a few industries, the decrease has been moderate. Time lost in labour disputes reached an all-time high in 1946 but registered successive decreases in 1947 and 1948.

The scope of the Federal Government's activities in the labour field was curtailed after the War with the dropping of controls over manpower and wages and the surrender of jurisdiction over labour-management relations falling within the scope of provincial powers. In 1948, however, Parliament passed the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act. The Act, which repeals the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, is in effect a codification of practices that developed before and during the War for the settlement of labour-management differences where government agencies are brought in as third parties. The application of the Act is limited to workers in industries under Federal Government jurisdiction or placed under its jurisdiction by the provinces. One of the objectives behind the legislation is that it may serve as a model for similar legislation by provinces.

The scope of activity of the National Employment Service continues to widen. It has added a division to assist in finding and placing professional and technical workers, and has given a good deal of attention to placement problems of older and partially unemployable workers. It has also been active in encouraging the development of vocational guidance and vocational rehabilitation.

\* *Statistics of Average Hours Worked and Average Hourly Earnings*, published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.