

For practical reasons associated with problems of collection,\* the current inquiries are limited to firms and branches ordinarily employing 15 or more persons. The restriction results in the inclusion of industrial samples of varying size in the monthly survey, the variation depending upon the organization of the industry in large or in small units; from the equally important geographical aspect, however, much greater uniformity exists in the provincial coverage of total employees. It is important to note that in all cases the coverage is large; it is estimated that the more than 21,000 firms co-operating in the nine major industrial groups in 1949 employed approximately 82 p.c. of the total wage-earners and salaried employees in the same industries throughout Canada.

Employment continued to increase in 1949, the annual index for the eight leading industries at 196·2 (1926=100) was, however, only 0·2 p.c. above the 1948 figure, indicating some levelling-off in activity. Demand for producer and consumer goods remained at a high level as labour income and industrial production were well maintained. Reductions in the rate of income tax, extended welfare benefits and return of wartime compulsory savings all tended to bolster purchasing power. On Mar. 31, 1949, Newfoundland formally entered Confederation; data for this province are not yet available. There were 17 fewer labour disputes in 1949 than in 1948 but, the number of workers involved increased by 20 p.c., and the number of working days lost was 20 p.c. higher. The major strike in the Quebec asbestos mines was largely responsible for the substantial increase in the time lost due to industrial disputes. The devaluation of the British pound sterling led to a measure of uncertainty in some lines of business. The later devaluation of the Canadian dollar had a favourable effect upon the economy. Exports to the United States were well maintained in 1949 and the recession early in 1949, in employment in that country was not reflected to any extent in Canada.

As in preceding years, the trend of employment in Canada in the early months of 1949 was retrogressive. There was considerable recession in industrial activity at Jan. 1, repeating the seasonal movement for this time of year, when outdoor activity is curtailed and plants are shut down for the holiday season, or inventory purposes. There was further seasonal contraction in industrial employment at Feb. 1. Activity in some sections was hampered by unfavourable weather during these early months. Partly as a result of the industrial disputes in the Quebec asbestos mines, employment at Mar. 1 was slightly lower than at Feb. 1, but the index, at 188·9 was the same as the Mar. 1, 1948 figure. Seasonal curtailment in logging was largely responsible for the further decline of 1·3 points at Apr. 1.

At the beginning of May, the index started to advance with seasonal expansion in some industries, particularly construction.

The level of activity in manufacturing in 1949 was practically unchanged as compared with the preceding year; the 1949 annual index at 205·2 was 0·1 p.c. above the 1948 figure but was appreciably below the 1943 all-time maximum of 226·2. Employment in the durable manufactured goods section declined by 1·3 p.c.

\*The methods used in preparing the current statistics of employment and payrolls are explained in the Monthly Bulletin on these subjects issued by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.