

The *women's clothing industry* has two seasonal cycles. Not all clothing firms have the same employment pattern but in general employment is above average in late winter and spring and again in the autumn, and below average in summer and at the end of the year. Annual changes in styles force producers to concentrate manufacturing in a short period of time and demand is affected by the switch from winter to summer garments and back again. Some firms produce only on an order basis—orders follow fashion changes and production follows orders—which results of course in seasonal variations in employment. Seasonal fluctuations in supplies of textiles also affect some women's apparel establishments, particularly dress and suit manufacturers. Materials and colours change with styles and textiles are altered accordingly, putting a premium on speed and tending to compress employment into short periods.

The steps taken to reduce seasonal unemployment in this industry are mainly designed to increase demand in the slack season. Some reductions in employment variations have been made by distributing samples earlier and by encouraging retailers to order earlier in the season. New lines and styles have been added by some firms in order to increase slack season demand and sales are 'pushed' in the offseason by others. In addition the slack season is sometimes used for training unskilled workers and a few firms produce at or near cost during the months when they would otherwise be forced to shut down. Earlier ordering by wholesale and retail buyers, greater diversification of products and the stockpiling of standard garments in the offseason would also help to reduce seasonal employment variations.

The *building construction industry* is busy from spring to late autumn with the peak coming in summer. Winter is the period of greatest unemployment, because excavating, bricklaying, roofing, steel erection and concrete pouring are made more difficult by cold, ice and snow. Another contributing cause is the seasonal fluctuation in the demand for construction work. It is largely a matter of custom to associate construction work with warmer weather even though modern materials and methods permit winter work.

Many techniques are now being used to reduce seasonal unemployment in this industry. The most common is to plan early operations so as to get the building closed in by winter and then, with the use of artificial heat and light, complete the interior during the winter. New methods, such as the use of tarpaulins and the addition of calcium chloride to concrete, and improved equipment such as heaters for sand and gravel have helped to make winter work easier. Also price adjustments have had their effect—lower markups for winter work or no increase in prices for work done in winter even though it may be more costly than work done in other seasons. Further reductions are possible if tenders are called in autumn and winter so that actual construction may begin in early spring. Attempts too are being made to analyze the extent to which construction costs are higher in winter, the specific reasons for this and the possibility of erasing the differential.

The Federal Government has been pursuing research into the problem of seasonal unemployment for some years. In 1953 a detailed study of the question was undertaken at the request of the National Advisory Council on Manpower. The National Employment Committee, through the Regional and Local Employment Committees, questioned more than 600 employers in 18 of the most seasonal industries on the causes of seasonal variations in their employment and on the methods in use or recommended to reduce such variations. An analysis of the replies was made by the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour and published in 1954 in English and French in a pamphlet entitled *Seasonal Unemployment in Canada*. About 24,000 copies of this pamphlet were distributed throughout the country.

During the winter of 1954-55 an active publicity campaign was conducted through radio broadcasts, printed material and talks to employer and union groups and was participated in by 154 local employment advisory committees. Speakers for the broadcasts included the Minister of Labour, employers and industrial and labour organization leaders. Federal Government departments undertaking new construction and maintenance and repair jobs have been arranging to award the contracts for such work in the autumn and early winter