

Section 3.—Employment, Payrolls and Hours*

Subsection 1.—Historical Commentary

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics has collected monthly data for many years on the numbers of men and women on the staffs of establishments (usually having 15 employees or over) in the main non-agricultural fields, both by industrial classifications and geographical distribution. Motives of economy in time and money exclude the smaller firms. Until 1941, a count of employees at work was made by firms for the last working day in each month. Since early in 1941, when collection of payroll statistics was undertaken, establishments have reported for their last pay periods in each month. Employees, by definition, include wage-earner and salaried staffs, salesmen and commission workers, but exclude proprietors, firm members and directors. The industrial classification includes nine main divisions: forestry—mainly logging; mining; manufacturing; construction; transportation, storage and communication; public utilities; trade; finance, insurance and real estate; and service. All components of these industries are covered by questionnaires except the service classification, in which only hotels, restaurants, laundries and dry-cleaning plants, recreation, business services and a few other groups are surveyed. Such important services as government administration, fishing, agriculture, education, health, domestic and personal service are not covered in the monthly series. Data are published for 32 metropolitan areas and the provinces. Since 1951, the grouping of data has conformed to the Canadian Standard Industrial Classification; statistics for a considerable number of earlier years have been converted to this basis.

From information available in the 1951 Census, it is estimated that 78 p.c. of paid workers at work in the reported industries are covered in the monthly surveys. If all paid workers were taken into account, including those in the non-reported fields and those in small establishments in the industries surveyed, the coverage would approximate 59 p.c. In the broad industrial divisions, estimates of coverage range from a high of 96 p.c. for mining to a low of 40 p.c. for services.

Collected information on labour was expanded in 1941 to include current earnings of the reported employees, and records of weekly payrolls and average weekly wages and salaries were subsequently carried back, on an annual basis, to 1939. Since the autumn of 1944, statistics have also been collected on the hours and earnings of wage-earners for whom establishments can furnish a record of hours actually worked. Monthly statistics on the sex distribution of employees were first published in early 1946, superseding the annual and semi-annual series of immediately preceding years. With the entry of Newfoundland into Confederation, separate data for that Province were recorded from 1950 to 1953; from then on, the statistics have been incorporated into Canada-wide series. The index reference period has been changed several times throughout the years, and the index numbers are now computed on the 1949 average as 100. The data currently compiled for manufacturing have been supplemented for a considerable number of years by a detailed annual inquiry into the earnings and hours of work of men and women wage-earners and salaried employees. More information on this survey will be found in Subsection 3, pp. 766-774.

Employment in the surveyed industries in 1956 was just about double the 1939 figure. The index was computed at 60.1 for 1939 and, reflecting steady population growth and greater industrialization, climbed to 120.1 in 1956. In the same period the annual average of weekly wages and salaries for the reporting industries showed uninterrupted advances: the industrial composite of average weekly earnings was \$23.44 in 1939 and increased to \$64.18 in 1956, a gain of 174 p.c. In manufacturing, earnings increased to a rather greater extent—from \$22.79 in 1939 to \$66.47 in 1956, or 192 p.c., reflecting a pronounced expansion in employment in the heavy manufacturing industries in which earnings were above the general average.

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