

Subsection 2.—Employment and Earnings in 1956

During 1956, exceptional economic advances were made in Canada. Expenditure by consumers on goods and services rose 8 p.c. and exports were up 12 p.c. over 1955. The developments were reflected in higher levels of employment, payrolls and per capita earnings. The annual average employment index (1949 = 100) reached a new high at 120.1, up 6.8 p.c. from 1955, and considerably above the previous peak of 113.4 set in 1953. The rate of increase from the previous year had been surpassed only in 1947 and 1951 during the postwar period. All major industrial divisions surveyed monthly, except logging, shared in the advance, employment rising to new peaks. In forestry, however, an 11-p.c. increase over 1955 did not suffice to bring the 1956 index up to the all-time high in 1947. The 13.8-p.c. increase for the construction industry was the greatest gain of the year. In other industries, the increases ranged from a high of 8.6 p.c. for services to a low of 3.3 p.c. for the finance, insurance and real estate group.

Manufacturing, which reports approximately 45 p.c. of all employees covered in the monthly surveys, rose by 5.6 p.c. over 1955. The expansion in the durable goods segment of this industry continued at a faster rate than in the non-durable goods group, the employment increases over 1955 amounting to 7.8 p.c. and 3.4 p.c., respectively. Iron and steel products recorded a 9.6-p.c. jump in staffs over the preceding year. There was a rise of at least 5 p.c. in each of the individual industries except agricultural implements, in which case a lack of export and domestic orders resulted in an employment decrease of 10.2 p.c. The most notable increases in the durable goods branch were in fabricated and structural steel, primary iron and steel, iron castings and machinery manufacturing, ranging from 12 to 19 p.c. Increased activity in motor vehicle and railroad and rolling-stock equipment was largely responsible for a considerable rise in transportation equipment. There were also noteworthy gains in electrical apparatus and supplies, non-metallic minerals, and aluminum products groups. Declines in employment continued in fur goods and hats and caps, while staffs in synthetic textiles and silk, tobacco and tobacco products, grain mill products and canned and cured fish were also smaller than in 1955.

Employment rose in many of the non-manufacturing industries surveyed, the most notable exceptions being gold and coal mining and urban and interurban bus transportation; in these, a downward trend had been noted for some years. Relatively, the greatest increases in staffs in 1956 were shown in oil and natural gas production, radio and television broadcasting and in building construction, in all of which employment was more than 20 p.c. above the previous year.

The annual average number of women reported in the surveyed establishments in 1956 was higher by 5.9 p.c. and that of men by 7.1 p.c. For manufacturing only, the increases were 5.3 and 5.8 p.c. respectively. The highest proportion of women in the nine major industries, according to the Oct. 1 survey, was in the finance, insurance and real estate division, in which 493 of each 1,000 employees reported. The service and trade classifications followed with figures of 474 and 366, respectively. The composite figure for Canada was 222. In manufacturing, which employs the largest number of women in the industries surveyed, 228 per 1,000 employees reported were of that sex. Provincially, Ontario continued to have the highest ratio of employed women—almost one-quarter of the total reported in that Province. This is partly accounted for by the fact that there is a great concentration of manufacturing in Ontario. In the metropolitan areas, the proportions of women ranged from a high of 315 in Kitchener, Ont., to a low of 53 per 1,000 in Sydney, N.S.

The expansion of employment during 1956 was widespread, all provinces showing gains of at least 2.7 p.c. over the preceding year. The largest increase was in Alberta, where reported staffs rose 11.1 p.c. as a result of increased activity particularly in construction, iron and steel products and oil, petroleum and coal products. British Columbia followed with a gain of 8.6 p.c. In that Province, construction showed the greatest upswing, but advances in iron and steel products and non-ferrous metal products were quite substantial. In both Alberta and British Columbia, employment in the coal-mining industry continued to decline, and lessened activity in gold mining in British Columbia