

Section 2.—The Labour Force

The current pace of economic activity in Canada necessitates constant planning and study. To the labour leader, the business man, the social administrator and the legislator, this pace requires a continuous process of plan-revision. To provide up-to-date and reliable information concerning the Canadian labour force, a current and periodic analysis of the state of employment in Canada was organized. A labour force survey, on a sample basis, was conducted in the autumn of 1945 and quarterly surveys were carried on until November 1952, when the survey was placed on a monthly basis. A multi-stage area sample was used involving the selection of progressively smaller sample areas and ultimately of households. Random methods of choice were used at every stage of selection so that all members of the population had an equal chance of inclusion. The present sample covers over 35,000 households in more than 160 different areas of Canada. The estimates of the labour force are restricted to the civilian labour force; net strength of the Armed Forces is obtainable directly from official sources. Inmates of institutions and Indians living on reserves are excluded.

The labour force surveys provide a classification of persons 14 years of age or over on the basis of their activity during the week that precedes the beginning of the survey, and who had jobs or were seeking work during the survey week. These divisions of the labour force are defined as follows:—

- (1) **Persons with Jobs.**—This category comprises: (a) persons at work—those who did any work for pay or profit or who did unpaid work which contributed to the running of a farm or business operated by a relative; and (b) persons with jobs but not at work—those who had jobs but did not work because of illness, bad weather, vacation, industrial dispute or temporary layoff with definite instructions to return to work within 30 days of the time of being laid off. Persons who worked part of the survey week and also looked for work are classed as "persons with jobs".
- (2) **Persons without Jobs and Seeking Work.**—This classification includes those persons who were looking for work during the survey week and did not work. Persons who were temporarily away from their jobs during the whole of the survey week seeking other work were considered as without jobs and were included in this category. In addition to those who were actively looking for work, this classification includes persons who would have looked for work, except that they were temporarily ill, were on indefinite or prolonged layoff, or believed that no work was available.

Information relating to the population 14 years of age or over not in the labour force is also collected. Persons not in the labour force include such groups as those going to school or keeping house in their own homes, persons who are permanently unable to work because of old age or other reason, and persons who are retired or voluntarily idle. Persons such as housewives, students and others who worked part time are classed as "persons with jobs" or, if looking for work, they are classed as "persons without jobs and seeking work".

The estimates derived from the labour force surveys are subject to sampling error. In general the percentage of error tends to decrease as the size of the estimate increases. The chances are about 19 out of 20 that the difference between the estimate and the figure which would have been obtained from a complete count is less than that shown below.

<i>Size of Estimate</i>	<i>Sampling Variability</i>
50,000.....	8,000
100,000.....	11,000
500,000.....	24,000
1,000,000.....	33,000
5,000,000.....	58,000

Data in Table 2 for June 1, 1946 to 1959 are compiled from labour force surveys conducted in late May or early June of those years. The information for years before 1946 is taken from estimates based upon 1931 and 1941 Census material rearranged according to the definitional system used in the labour force surveys, the revised census data being linked with the June 1946 survey on the basis of monthly and annual employment and unemployment figures.